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CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS IN JORDAN

1951 - 1953

by

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Arab Studies Department of the  
American University of Beirut  
Beirut, Lebanon  
1963

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## ABSTRACT

King Abdullah of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan was assassinated, in Jerusalem, on 20 July 1951. The death of Abdullah, Jordan's first ruler who had been at the head of the Government for 30 years, appears to be one of the most significant and important events of the succeeding Constitutional Crisis. Immediately succeeding the death of Abdullah, Jordan experienced a period of intense Constitutional Reform, leading to a more liberal form of government, and more importantly, it also appeared to be subjected to activities destined, if successful, to obliterate Jordan as a political, constitutional entity.

While there is every indication that the crisis was never so severe as it appeared to those most concerned, it was no less real in that it was believed to be present and that the actions taken were based upon that assumption.

To understand why the ruler's death appeared to indicate the disintegration of his dominion, its absorption by another state or states, it is necessary to examine that dominion, Jordan, under the rule of Abdullah.

Here I have endeavored, first, to show how Jordan was artificially formed as a result of the ambitions of two non-indigineous groups, Great Britain and the Hashimite family of the Hijaz. From the time of its formation, under British Mandate, as the Amirate (Princedom) of Transjordan there have been conflicting

interests at work within the country. There has always been a desire for the reunion of all Arabs into one nation; there has been the personal desire of Abdullah to accomplish this union of "Greater Syria" under his personal rule, and there has been opposition to that ambition. There was the realization that Jordan was economically unviable and must depend on Great Britain or some other outside source for economic assistance; opposed to this there has been a resentment of Great Britain for her part as the Mandatory Power in Palestine and her support of the Balfour Declaration.

Secondly, I have tried to show, by tracing the pattern of Constitutional development during the lifetime of Abdullah that the country was progressing gradually to a more complete independence which was not opposed by either the Throne or Great Britain, but was carefully controlled by both.

As it is my contention that the person of Abdullah was such a decisive factor in the evolution of Jordan that his death touched off a panic regarding the continued existence of the state, I have tried, in a chapter devoted to his life, to present a picture of Abdullah that will facilitate an understanding of his importance.

The following chapter deals with the geographical, political, and constitutional growth of Jordan as well as Jordan's dealings with outside forces. This is an attempt to introduce those elements which were responsible for the death of Abdullah and the subsequent panic regarding the future of the State.

The final chapter depicts those events transpiring in Jordan during the two years immediately following Abdullah's death. The plots and intrigues, whose successful accomplishments would have meant the end of Jordan as a Constitutional entity, are examined in regard of the uncertainty in the matter of the succession to the throne. This method seems to be justified when, upon the inauguration of Hussein as King of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, the panic appears to be replaced by a determination to further the political independence and economic stability of the State.

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## CHAPTER 1

### TRANSJORDAN, A SHORT HISTORY

Jordan, that is the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, is one of the Arab states which had its beginnings shortly after World War I; however, the events which led to the formation of Jordan, and, in fact, of all of the Arab countries as we know them today, must be traced back a little further. We must go back in history to the consideration of the Eastern Question, the problem of the Sick Man of Europe, the Ottoman Empire.

All of the countries that we know as the Arab Mashriq<sup>1</sup> had been for some four hundred years under the dominion of the Ottoman Turks, but during the latter part of the nineteenth century the Arabs, as well as the Young Turks, began to grow restless in a declining Ottoman Empire. These beginnings of Arab desire for better

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<sup>1</sup> The term Arab Mashriq refers to the Eastern portions of the Arab World which includes the territory bounded on the north by Turkey; on the East by Iran, the Gulf of Arabia (Persian Gulf); on the south by the Indian Ocean; and on the west by the Red Sea to the border of the Sudan, including the Sudan and the Western region of the United Arab Republic (Egypt), and bordering the Mediterranean Sea from the Eastern boundary of Libya to the borders of Turkey and Syria. Until the 1940's Egypt and the Sudan were not included in the Arab Mashriq, and for the purposes of this paper I have not included them within the Mashriq. When referring to Egypt and the Sudan with the other area, as a unit, I have used the term Arab Middle East, which should also be distinguished from the term Arab World, which properly includes all the countries of the Arab Mashriq, as defined above, and the Arab Maghrib which includes the North African countries of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

government and increased autonomy have been referred to as the Arab Awakening, and the movement had come to the notice of the Western Powers.<sup>1</sup>

After the Young Turk's revolution of 1908 the Arab Nationalist Movement was quieted for a while, but the Young Turks emphasis on Turkification again alienated the Arab Nationalists. When Turkey became aligned with the Central Powers, Great Britain, in fear of the power of the Sultan to influence Muslims against the Entente Powers, began to search for a way to lessen the influence of the Sultan.

The British found a man, Husain, Sharif of Mecca and Medina, a man of noble Islamic family and whose ambitions leaned toward Arab independence. Sharif Husain was approached by the British, and, after much discussion, his support against the Central Powers was gained in return for guarantees of British support in arms and money, and most importantly, in the British promise of Arab independence after the war was concluded.

My choice of words may be disputed by some persons, for it has been held that the British never did promise Arab independence; however, whether that is the case or not, the Arabs felt that they had been promised independence, and they base their arguments largely on the Husain-McMahon Correspondence, part of which it is worthwhile to include here. When Sharif Husain was approached by

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<sup>1</sup> For a thorough coverage of the movement described as the "Arab Awakening" the reader is directed to the following two books, upon which I have relied most heavily in the first chapters of this paper; Professor Zeine N. Zeine's Arab Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism, and George Antonius' The Arab Awakening.



the British he contacted other Arab Nationalists in Syria in order to see what demands must be met by Great Britain in order to gain Arab support. These Arab Nationalists formulated what has come to be known as the Damascus Protocol<sup>1</sup> and this protocol formed the basis of the Arab demands.

Ten letters were exchanged between Sharif Husain and Sir Henry McMahon, then British High Commissioner for Egypt. Of these ten letters, the most important are Sharif Husain's first letter to Sir Henry McMahon, which reads in part:

Whereas the entire Arab nation without exception is determined to assert its right to live, gain its freedom and administer its own affairs in name and in fact; . . . the Arab nation has decided to approach the Government of Great Britain, with a request for the approval . . . of the following basic provisions . . .

1. Great Britain recognises the independence of the Arab countries which are bounded; on the north, by the line Mersin-Adana to parallels 37° N. and thence along the line Birejik-Urfa-Mardin-Midiat-Jazirat (ibn Umar) - Amadia to the Persian frontier; on the east, by the Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf; on the south, by the Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden whose status will remain as at present); on the west, by the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin . . . .<sup>2</sup>

Great Britain's answer to these demands was included in the fourth letter of the series, Sir Henry McMahon's second letter to the Sharif Husain. It reads in part:

The districts of Mersin and Alexandretta, and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, cannot be said to be purely Arab,

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<sup>1</sup>See succeeding note; the Damascus Protocol was included in Sharif Husain's first letter to enumerate Arab demands.

<sup>2</sup>Extracted from "Sharif Husain's First Note to Sir Henry McMahon," dated "Mecca, Ramadan 2, 1333. (July 14, 1915. )" as translated by George Antonius. Cited in Antonius, op. cit., p. 414.

and must on that account be excepted from the proposed delimitation.

As for the regions lying within the proposed frontiers, in which Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interests of her ally France, I am authorised to give you the following pledges on behalf of Great Britain, and to reply as follows to your note:

(1) That, subject to the modifications stated above, Great Britain is prepared to recognise and uphold the independence of the Arabs in all the regions lying within the frontiers proposed by the Sharif of Mecca; . . . .<sup>1</sup>

With these assurances of British support the Arabs were ready to break away from the Turkish government, and it is basically at this point that negotiations stood at the time of the Arab Revolt. Throughout the war the Arabs never felt it necessary to formulate a more binding agreement with the British;<sup>2</sup> This was not the case with the British, for as the war progressed, one treaty or agreement after another was made, without the knowledge of the Arabs, promising portions of the Ottoman Empire, including Arab Lands as defined by the Damascus Protocol, to her allies.

The two agreements, rather one treaty and one declaration, which have proved most injurious to Arab hopes were the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement, officially concluded on 16 May 1916 (note that McMahon's second note to Sharif Husain was dated 24 October 1915) provided for the disposition, between France and Great Britain, of all the lands outlined in the Damascus Protocol,

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<sup>1</sup> Extracted from "Sir Henry McMahon's Second Note to Sharif Husain," dated "Cairo, October 24, 1915." ibid., p. 419.

<sup>2</sup> King Abdullah of Transjordan, Memoirs, p. 156.

with the exception of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>1</sup> The main provisions of that Agreement are as follows:

1. France and Great Britain are prepared to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States in the areas shown as (A) and (B) on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab Chief. France in area (A) and Great Britain in area (B) shall alone supply foreign advisors or officials on the request of the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States.

2. France in the Blue area and Great Britain in the Red area shall be at liberty to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they may desire or as they may deem fit to establish after agreement with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States.

3. In the Brown area there shall be established an international administration of which the form will be decided upon after consultation with Russia and after subsequent agreement with the other Allies and the representatives of the Sharif of Mecca.

4. There shall be accorded to Great Britain

(a) The ports of Haifa and Acre;

(b) Guarantee of a specific supply of water from the Tigris and the Euphrates in area (A) for area (B). His Majesty's Government, on their part, undertake that they will at no time initiate negotiations for the concession of Cyprus to any third power without the previous consent of the French Government . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

9. It is understood that the French Government will at no time initiate any negotiations for the cession of their rights and will not cede their prospective rights in the Blue area to any third power other than the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States, without the previous consent of His Majesty's Government who, on their part, give the French Government a similar undertaking in respect of the Red area. \* \* \* \*

11. The negotiations with the Arabs concerning the frontiers of the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States shall be pursued through the same channel as heretofore in the name of the two powers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Great Britain already controlled many portions of coastal Arabia, and in 1915 had concluded a treaty with Ibn Saud recognizing his independence within boundaries to be determined at the conclusion of the war; Sharif Husain controlled the Hijaz and throughout the war years was recognized as the Amir of Mecca (later as King of the Hijaz).

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from treaty as cited by Helen Miller Davis, Constitutions, Electoral Laws, Treaties of States in the Near and Middle East, pp. 515-517.

It was this Sykes-Picot Agreement which was, after the conclusion of the war, to form the basis of the Mandate System, destroying Arab hopes for independence, but leading to the formation of the country which we now know as Jordan.

The other factor affecting the eventual distribution of Arab lands was the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration came as the result of the activities of a movement among the Jews, Zionism, which had been striving for a return to the lands of the Jewish people, Israel.<sup>1</sup> Persecution of the Jews in Europe and the scientific ability of Dr. Chaim Wizemann had resulted in British sympathy for this movement which was expressed in this declaration.

This declaration, which has so often been interpreted as being a binding promise or treaty, was sent by Lord Balfour to Lord Rothschild on 2 November 1917. This letter, in effect, committed the allies as recognizing the Zionists as unofficial or semi-official allies, and it gave them a bargaining point for the eventual peace settlement. The declaration, as approved by the British Cabinet and modified by President Wilson,<sup>2</sup> reads as follows:

"I have the pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

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<sup>1</sup> Many books are available discussing the growth of Political Zionism, outstanding among them is Alan Taylor's Prelude to Israel.

<sup>2</sup> Great Britain, Foreign Office, Cmd. 5479 of 1937 (Peel Report), p. 22.

"I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation."<sup>1</sup>

While this declaration is clearly contrary to both the Sykes-Picot Agreement (in which the area desired by the Zionists constituted the Brown or International Area) and the content of the Husain-McMahon Correspondence, it was later accepted by France and Italy.

During this time the Arab armies of Sharif Husain, under the command of his sons, had been fighting in the Hijaz in accordance with the agreement with Great Britain. On 5 June 1916 the Amirs Faisal and Ali, sons of the Sharif Husain, had proclaimed Arab independence from Turkish rule, and active resistance had been begun.<sup>2</sup> Early in revolt disaster threatened, but supplies and advisors were obtained from Great Britain and the Arab armies gained impetus and began to move out of the Hijaz and through the area that is now Jordan.

It was with the Arab army of the Amir Faisal that a young British captain of intelligence, T. E. Lawrence, gained fame as

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Zeine N. Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, p. 14; Abdullah, op. cit., Chap. 12; Antonius, op. cit., pp. 194-195; Antonius writes: "it was, as a matter of coincidence, on the very day of Kitchner's death . . . that the Arab Revolt began . . . (the Sharif's) first project had been to provoke risings in Syria and in the Hejaz simultaneously, to time them to synchronise with a landing of Allied troops at some point near Alexandretta, and in that way to take the Turks between two fires . . . then, carrying the rebellion eastward, to strike at them in Iraq. But, owing to its rejection by the Allies, he had had to renounce that plan and content himself with a revolt in the Hejaz as the prelude to an attack on the Turkish position in Syria. Ibid., p. 184.

Lawrence of Arabia.<sup>1</sup> His book, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, gives us a very romantic, if not historically accurate, picture of the Arab Revolt. At any rate, as the war progressed in this area the Arab army of Faisal continued to move towards their goal, Damascus, operating on the British right flank. Finally on 1 October 1918 British and Arab forces entered Damascus.<sup>2</sup> With the fall of that city the Amir Faisal began establishing the Arab Government, which according to Arab belief would rule Syria.<sup>3</sup>

This Arab Government was immediately protested by the French, and Faisal was forced to withdraw the Arab Government from the coastal areas so that the western boundaries of Syria were formed by a line formed by the Lebanon Mountains and the Jordan River Valley.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lawrence was "discovered" and popularized by Lowell Thomas, an American newspaperman visiting the various areas where Allied troops were engaged. His pictures and narrations of an English soldier living as an Arab caught the imagination of the war weary Western populations. Since that time much has been written of and about "Lawrence of Arabia"; unfortunately much of the material written has been taken from Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom, an acknowledged literary masterpiece, but not the history or objective report it has taken the place of.

<sup>2</sup>General Allenby's Dispatch, The Times, 31 December 1918.  
p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>This, of course, refers to the "Greater Syria" and not the Syria which was formed as a result of the Mandate System. A very positive indication that this Arab Government was approved by the British Government is found in Zeine's Struggle for Arab Independence. Dr. Zeine writes: "It should also be remembered that the Arab Government which was established in Syria, in October 1918, under Faisal with British advisers, was financed by the British Government at the rate of £ 150,000 a month." Ibid., n., p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>The Times, 8 January 1920, p. 6.

French desires were made known in February 1919 before the League of Nations when they put forward their proposals that Syria be treated as a unit and that they, France, be appointed as a mandatory power.<sup>1</sup> Great Britain was subjected to French pressure to abide by the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement rather than promises made to the Arabs, and, to gain French approval of the plans for the establishment of Palestine, the British gradually yielded to French desires.<sup>2</sup>

In an effort to make clear to the Western world that any rule by, or negotiation with, the French was not to be considered, a congress of Syrian notables offered Faisal the crown of Syria, which he accepted.<sup>3</sup> It may be said that this very act doomed the newly established kingdom of Syria and provided an initial step in the chain of events leading to the establishment of Transjordan.

On 24 April 1920 the Peace Conference, meeting at San Remo, assigned the Arab areas, as covered by the Sykes-Picot Agreement, to France and Great Britain as mandated territories.<sup>4</sup> On 14 July 1920 the French sent King Faisal an ultimatum demanding acceptance

<sup>1</sup> Albert Hourani, Syria and Lebanon, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, First Series Vol. IV, Ed. Woodward and Butler, as cited by Zeine, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> The General Syrian Congress, convened by Faisal before he had gone to Paris, had been influenced by the King-Crane Commission, and had resolved to exercise their right of self-determination. Faisal was proclaimed King of the United Kingdom of Syria on 8 March 1920. The resolution of the General Syrian Congress has been translated and cited by Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, p. 138.

<sup>4</sup> U.S.A. Department of State, The Paris Peace Conference, Vol. 13, p. 95.

of the French mandate, the disbanding of the Sharifian army and the dismissal from office of the extremists among his followers. Even though Faisal complied with the French demands the French forces in Lebanon moved against Damascus, defeating the remnants of the disbanded Syrian army at Khan Maisalun, and on 1 August Faisal was compelled to give up his throne and leave Syria.<sup>1</sup>

With the dissolution of the Arab Government in Damascus, that area of Syria East of the Jordan River and in Area "B" of the Sykes-Picot Agreement was without government. On 20 August 1920 Sir Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner in Palestine, met with local Arab leaders and proposed a system of local self-governments to which would be assigned British advisors.<sup>2</sup>

With the expulsion of Faisal from Syria, the Amir Abdullah, his brother, had gathered a group of his own followers as the basis of any army which was to march on Syria to restore Faisal to the throne. Abdullah left the Hijaz, with his father's blessings, travelling to Ma'an where, in November 1920, he issued a proclamation

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<sup>1</sup>In view of these facts as they are recorded by legitimate historians, it is of interest to read a contemporary account of the French occupation of Syria. The following is an extract from an article printed in March 1921, entitled "France's Colonial Empire":

"By the strict and straightforward dispensation of justice the colonizing people command the respect of the people colonized. . . It was thanks to this method, only a short while ago, that General Gouraud succeeded in pacifying an agitated district in Syria within a few weeks . . . ."

"In less than a year--between November 1919, and October 1920--she (France) pacified Syria, Lebanon and Hauran and secured by the impartiality displayed in her methods the good will of those populations artificially incited to revolt but a short while ago by the intrigues of the Emir Feisal." World's Works, Vol. 41, November-April, 1920-1921, pp. 360-361, 369.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick G. Peake, A History of Jordan and Its Tribes, p. 106.



stating his desire to drive the French from Syria; restore Faisal to his throne; and calling for support from the Syrian people.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the fact that many displaced Syrians were now in the Trans-Jordan area claiming the same motive, response to Abdullah's proclamation was not great. Abdullah, seeing that he was gaining nothing by waiting moved on northward into Karak where he was met by the British Advisor, Alec Kirkbride. Kirkbride subsequently notified the Colonial Office, which had taken control of the mandated territories from the Foreign Office in January 1921, that the local government had ceased to function with Abdullah's arrival.<sup>2</sup> Abdullah has noted in his Memoirs that after his arrival in Amman, the various districts were united, all administrative barriers removed and orders issued from himself in Amman.<sup>3</sup>

At this time the Colonial Office, headed by Winston Churchill,<sup>4</sup> was conducting a conference in Cairo, seeking ways to remedy the problems in the Arab countries. Churchill and his advisors (Sir Percy Cox, High Commissioner for Iraq; Sir Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner for Palestine; and a group of prominent Arabists; including T. E. Lawrence, Gertrude Bell, Gilbert Clayton, Cornwallis and others) were considering the revolution in Iraq, the problem of displaced Syrians raiding the French territory from the British mandated area, and now this new problem had come up. What were

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<sup>1</sup>Abdullah, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Sir Alec Seath Kirkbride, A Crackle of Thorns, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Abdullah, op. cit., p. 200.

<sup>4</sup>Sir John Bagot Glubb, Britain and the Arabs, p. 126.

they to do about Abdullah? It would not be in keeping with the policy of economy to send the British army to expel the Amir; The French were willing to take over the area and eliminate Abdullah and the Syrians raiders, but this too was not in accord with British policy towards the Arabs nor with British aims of maintaining a controlled land route from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf.

A third possible solution was to let Abdullah remain in the Trans-Jordan area, persuade Abdullah to renounce any claims to the throne of Iraq (which had been offered him in March 1920 when the Syrian notables offered Faisal the throne of Syria) so that it could be offered to Faisal in place of the Syrian throne he had lost (this might also help quieten the current Iraqi revolution).<sup>1</sup>

Churchill gained the approval of the British Government for this plan and arranged a meeting with Abdullah to be held in Jerusalem on 27 March 1921. At that meeting Churchill outlined the following proposals:

1. Abdullah to prevent action against the French by Arabs in the area;
2. He was to renounce his rights and claims to the throne of Iraq;
3. He was to undertake the maintenance of order in Trans-Jordan;
4. He was to recognize the British mandate over Trans-Jordan as part of the Palestine mandate; and to set up an Arab Government and administer the territory in the name of the mandatory;
5. Abdullah, himself, would receive, for six months a monthly subsidy of £ 5,000;

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<sup>1</sup>H. St. John Philby, Forty Years in the Wilderness, p. 86; Benjamin Shwadran, Jordan a State of Tension, pp. 132-133.

6. A British representative of the High Commissioner in Palestine was to be stationed in Amman as advisor to the Amir's government and to help set up the administration;

7. The British were to recognize the independence of Trans-Jordan at some future date, and would endeavour through their good offices to secure restoration of an Arab administration in Syria.<sup>1</sup>

Abdullah accepted these conditions, and with his acceptance in effect, a new state had been formed, Transjordan. The main problem remaining to Great Britain now was, in the League of Nations, to legalize their latest steps. The draft mandate for this area had been submitted to the League in December 1920, and there was no mention of the State of Transjordan;<sup>2</sup> however, by August 1921 the British had presented the Permanent Mandates Commission an additional article to be included in the draft of the Palestine Mandate, Article 25.<sup>3</sup>

This additional article clearly shows that the British had no initial intention of the creation of any state similar to Transjordan. In fact the area of Transjordan was defined, in Article 25 of the Mandate for Palestine, as "the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine as ultimately determined."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Abdullah, op. cit., pp. 203-204; Shwadran, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>2</sup>While the draft of the mandate had no effect until the mandates were declared in effect by the Permanent Mandates Commission which was not accomplished for two more years, the Western Powers had already implemented many of the powers which were granted within the Mandate, if approved. Inspection of the draft mandate clearly indicates that such a country as Transjordan had never been considered. The complete text of the Mandate for Palestine is to be found in Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1922, Cmd. 1785; also cited in Muhammad Khalil, The Arab States and the Arab League, Vol. II, pp. 493-498.

<sup>3</sup>See Annex A.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

The Council of the League of Nations approved the draft mandate for Palestine, including Article 25 (24 July 1922) and an attached British memorandum regarding the official interpretation of Article 25 (15 September 1922). This memorandum noted the boundaries between Palestine and a territory to be known as Trans-Jordan and also noted the articles of the mandate which were not applicable to Trans-Jordan; that the two countries would be under separate administrations.<sup>1</sup>

While all these legal steps were being taken on the international level, Abdullah was forming his government. Transjordan was to be organized on the timetested British Colonial lines; Julius Abramson had been named Chief British Representative, and the British Parliament had voted £ 180,000 as a grant to the new government.<sup>2</sup>

It rapidly became apparent that Transjordan was not and had no prospects of becoming economically independent; however, its problems were more than financial. This area had never had its own government, and there was a scarcity of qualified personnel.

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<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that France and Great Britain had been exercising their rights as mandatory powers since the late summer of 1920; however, the Council of the League of Nations did not declare the mandates to be officially in effect until 29 September 1923. Thus we see that France and Great Britain were maintaining their positions without legal right. The Council of the League had had to withhold their declaration of the mandates until Turkey had signed the peace treaty, which was finally accomplished at Lausanne on 24 July (see Annex A).

<sup>2</sup>Shwadran, op. cit., p. 138.

Still it seemed that both Great Britain and the Amir Abdullah were anxious for Transjordan to achieve an independent status. In this regard H. St. John Philby has written that he accepted the position of Chief British Representative (December 1921) "on the condition that Trans-Jordan should be treated as an independent State, free of Palestine control. Such an arrangement had already been envisaged, presumably on the initiative of Lawrence."<sup>1</sup>

This tendency is also exhibited in Great Britain's declaration of intentions which was issued on 25 April 1923 by the Palestine High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel, which reads as follows:

Subject to the approval of the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government would recognize the existence of an independent government in Transjordan under the rule of His Highness the Amir Abdullah; provided that such government was constitutional and placed His Britannic Majesty's Government in a position to fulfill its international obligations in respect to the territory by means of an<sup>2</sup> agreement to be concluded between the two governments.

While the required conditions were not fulfilled for another five years, with the signing of the Anglo-Trans-Jordan Agreement of February 1928, both Great Britain and Abdullah marked 25 April 1923 as the day of Transjordan's independence, but it was far from complete independence. Transjordan was still within the Palestine Mandate and, even though this government enjoyed a substantial measure of domestic autonomy, in reality, had no external autonomy.

Great Britain's control over the external affairs of Transjordan is demonstrated in the conflict between Ibn Sa'ud and

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<sup>1</sup>Philby, Forty Years. . ., p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>Cited by Arnold Toynbee, The Islamic World, Survey of International Affairs, 1925, Vol. 1, p. 362.

King Husain in the Hijaz. Husain and Ibn Sa'ud had been struggling for superiority in the Arabian Penninsula since before the First World War, but due to British intervention a peace had been declared during the war years. Both men were subsidized by Great Britain. Husain's appeal to the British lay, of course, in the part he had played in leading the Arab Revolt and in the matter of the Caliphate.

It was expected that the Caliphate might be vacated by the Turks, and Husain was a claimant for this high Muslim office. If Husain were accepted as the Caliph he would be a very powerful force in the predominantly Islamic Arab World, and for this reason the British were willing to protect his position while they waited. The Caliphate was abolished on 3 March 1924 by the Turkish Grand National Assembly; on 11 March Sharif Husain was proclaimed Caliph while visiting Abdullah in Amman. Within a matter of days it was clear that Husain was not a popular choice for the position, and Britain quickly decided to withdraw their protection and leave Husain to manage Ibn Sa'ud as best he could. On 20 March Sharif Husain, King of the Hijaz, was asked by the British Representative at Amman to leave Transjordan. Husain's subsidy was quickly stopped and Ibn Sa'ud launched his first attack on Husain on 24 August. During the period of hostilities between Ibn Sa'ud and Husain, neither of his sons, Faisal, King of Iraq, or Abdullah, Amir of Transjordan, came to his aid in any way. When Husain abdicated in favor of his son, Ali, and left the Hijaz he was unable to find asylum in either of the two countries.

This conflict in the Hijaz was important to Transjordan in another aspect, for Transjordan fell heir to the Ma'an-Aqaba area

with the fall of Husain's Kingdom. While this area had been included in the British Zone of Influence of the Sykes-Picot Agreement and within Faisal's Syrian Kingdom, it had also been claimed by Husain as a part of the Hijaz. During the time the British were supporting Husain they were willing to leave it under his jurisdiction,<sup>1</sup> but as his kingdom was collapsing they desired it to be ruled by someone more under British influence than Ibn Sa'ud. Husain would not cede the territory to Abdullah's Transjordan, but his son Ali did cede the area shortly before the fall of Jidda. Abdullah immediately proclaimed his hegemony over the area; this was, of course, disputed by Ibn Sa'ud. While the question has never been finally settled, Transjordan has managed to retain "temporary" possession of the area, through treaty agreements.<sup>2</sup>

It was not until 1926 that the Amir Abdullah began earnest preparations to meet the specifications of Great Britain's Declaration of Intentions of 1923. In October of that year an Assembly

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<sup>1</sup>Shwadran writes: "It would seem that Husain not only claimed Maan as part of the Hijaz, but that it was so recognized by the British . . . . In 1922 it was reported in Amman that Husain had transferred Maan to Abdullah; in 1924, while Husain was visiting in Transjordan, the report was again revived, but this time it was apparently so embarrassing to the Transjordan Government that the British found it necessary to deny the report officially." op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>2</sup>Saudi Arabia has, in its treaties with Transjordan, continued to maintain its position of a right to the Maan-Aqaba area, but it would seem that Jordan now has acquired a fairly firm right, through possession, to be supported by the International Court of Justice, if the matter were ever brought before that tribunal for settlement.

of Notables was convened to prepare an electoral law for the establishment of a legislative council, and while political maneuverings were being carried out there, Lord Plumer and the Amir Abdullah were working on the final negotiations for the Anglo-Transjordan Agreement. This Agreement was concluded on 20 February 1928;<sup>1</sup> it contained a preamble and twenty-one articles. The preamble was a declaration of independence for Transjordan, in essence the same as the 1923 declaration of intentions. The twenty-one articles generally confirmed the rights Great Britain had previously enjoyed; Great Britain was to control the budget, finances, army, economic development and foreign affairs.

It must be noted that this was not a full and complete independence by any means, for Transjordan remained under the mandatory control of Great Britain, but separate from the control exercised over the Palestine Mandate.<sup>2</sup> Not until 1946 was Transjordan to receive what might be called full independence, and we shall see that even at that late date Great Britain continued to have great influence in Transjordan activities, so much so that Transjordan was refused admission to the United Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> See Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 1930, Treaty Series No. 7, Cmd. 3488.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Article 2 of the 1928 Anglo-Transjordan Agreement with Articles 1 and 2 of the Mandate for Palestine. Article 2 of the 1928 Agreement is quoted, in part, on the following page; see Khalil, loc. cit. for Palestine Mandate.



## CHAPTER 2

### CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To understand clearly the development of Transjordan in the coming years it will be helpful to look at some excerpts from the 1928 Anglo-Transjordanian Agreement. Article 2 reads, in part:

"The powers of legislation and of administration entrusted to His Britannic Majesty as Mandatory for Palestine shall be exercised in that part of the area under Mandate known as Trans-Jordan by His Highness the Amir through such constitutional government as is defined and determined in the Organic Law of Trans-Jordan and any amendment thereof made with the approval of His Britannic Majesty.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be noted that Article 2 provides both for a constitutional government and "the Organic Law of Trans-Jordan," neither of which were in existence at that time. Directly connected with Article 2 is the following:

Art. 20. This Agreement shall come into force so soon as it shall have been ratified by the High Contracting Parties after its acceptance by the constitutional Government to be set up under Article 2. The constitutional Government shall be deemed to be provisional until the Agreement shall have been so approved . . . .<sup>2</sup>

It will be seen from this article that the British were taking steps to insure an Organic Law, a Constitution, and a constitutional Government were established before even this preliminary independence was granted.

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<sup>1</sup>J. C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, A Documentary Record 1914-1956, Vol. II, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

Two other articles of this agreement which emphasize the preeminent position of Great Britain in Transjordan were Articles 10 and 13, regarding the armed forces, which read, in part, as follows:

Art. 10. His Britannic Majesty may maintain armed forces in Transjordan, and may raise, organize and control in Trans-Jordan such armed forces as may in his opinion be necessary . . .

His Highness the Amir agrees that he will not raise or maintain in Trans-Jordan . . . any military forces without the consent of His Britannic Majesty.

Art. 13. His Highness the Amir agrees that all such laws, orders or regulations as may . . . be required by His Majesty<sup>1</sup> for the purposes of Article 10 shall be adopted and made . . .

On 16 April 1928 the Organic Law for Transjordan was promulgated, but it was not all that some of the Transjordanians had hoped it to be. The constitutional government which it would establish was quite limited in its powers, but the powers of the Amir, Abdullah, while limited in some respects, included emergency powers that gave him practical autocratic control. An example of the narrowness of the constitutional structure was the Legislative Council. While this council was largely elected (it was composed of 16 elected deputies and the appointed Executive Council of not more than six members) it could be dismissed at any time by the Amir. Even though a new Legislative Council must be elected within four months, the Amir could rule by decree in the interim, and the Legislative Council must veto a decree in two consecutive sessions to kill that decree.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 158-159.

<sup>2</sup>Article 41, Organic Law of Transjordan. See C. R.W. Seton, Legislation of Transjordan, 1918-1930, pp. 397-409.

Again, the Legislative Council had no power to initiate legislation; every law to be enacted must be submitted to the council by the Chief Minister, who was appointed by the Amir, or by a department head.<sup>1</sup>

The first elections were held in February 1929, and in a special session, opened by the Amir on 2 April<sup>2</sup>, considered the Agreement with Great Britain. The agreement was finally approved on 4 June and was ratified in Amman on 21 October of that year. This initial Legislative Council did not survive its three-year term, for it refused to ratify the annual budget law in the 1930-31 session, and Abdullah, at the request of the British Resident, dissolved the Council on 9 February 1937.<sup>3</sup> The budget was then, of course, passed by Abdullah, acting in the absence of a Legislative Council.

It was during this period that John Bagot Glubb was brought to Transjordan to form a desert force of bedouins which was called the Desert Patrol.<sup>4</sup> Glubb arrived in Transjordan in November 1930, began organizing his force early in 1931 and soon had the 90 man strength initially authorized. By 1932 border raiding between Transjordan and Saudi Arabia was virually non-existent, and whether

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<sup>1</sup>Article 37, ibid.

<sup>2</sup>According to Article 29 of the Organic Law, sessions of the Legislative Council were to begin the first day of November following the elections. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Shwadran, op.cit., p. 176.

<sup>4</sup>John Bagot Glubb, Story of the Arab Legion, pp. 77-113.

it was due entirely to the activities of this force or not, the prestige the Desert Patrol gained was great.

While the creation of this particular unit was to be of great military importance to Transjordan and to the entire Middle East, it is of primary concern to us only as an aspect of constitutional development of Transjordan. I will try to show that the creation of this military force and its later development into the famed Arab Legion (al-Jaysh al-'Arabi) does indicate increasing independence for Transjordan.

In accord with British desires,<sup>1</sup> the original Arab Legion, formed, in 1920, by Captain Frederick G. Peake had been reduced in size and relegated to the position of an internal security force, a police force. Great Britain, on the authority gained from the Anglo-Transjordanian Agreement of 1928,<sup>2</sup> undertook the defense of Transjordan by establishing the Transjordan Frontier Force, British troops under the command of the British Monarch.

The establishment, then, of the Desert Patrol, which received military training and operated as a military unit, was Transjordan's first step towards the establishment of a modern fighting force. We must keep in mind, however, that although this force was composed of Arab troops, it was commanded by a former British officer, Glubb, first as Peake's second in command, and later as the Commanding Officer of the Arab Legion. Glubb has titled himself a "servant of the Amir's Government," but he was still an Englishman and not

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<sup>1</sup>Britain had received the authority for this through Article 10 of the 1928 Anglo-Transjordanian Agreement, see above, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

deaf to British policies and needs. Since Great Britain was paying the bill<sup>1</sup> it was only natural that they insure their investment; moreover, Glubb had already proven himself capable of his task by organizing an effective border patrol in Iraq.

An important point here is that after the 1928 Agreement had been signed the armed forces of the Arab Legion had been relegated to the position of a police force by the British under authority of Article 10 of the 1928 Agreement. Now the British were forming a new nucleus for a fighting force, one that would in the near future be hailed as the finest Arab Army in the world. An army that the government of Great Britain has continued to subsidize even after Jordan had been granted "virtual and complete" independence was formed by Great Britain under the same authority as the previous army had been relegated to police force strength.

As has already been stated, the initial Legislative Council was dismissed by the Amir Abdulla in February 1931 after it had balked at passing the annual budget. In accordance with the Organic Law new elections were held in June 1931, and the new Legislative Council met for its regular session on 1 November. Within a matter of days it became apparent that the Legislative Council could not work with the appointed Executive Council. Abdullah, on 17 November dismissed the Executive Council, named Ibrahim Pasha Hashim as the new Chief Minister and had a new Executive Council formed.

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<sup>1</sup>By treaty, Transjordan paid the "cost of any forces raised for Trans-Jordan alone;" in reality the costs were paid by Great Britain, the money being included in the annual grant to Transjordan.

This new government was able to function, but, like the first Legislative Council, showed its resentment of Great Britain's almost complete control of Transjordan's budget. Transjordan's ministers, and to some extent the Amir himself, continued to press the British Resident for more latitude from foreign (British) restrictions, especially regarding the annual budget, which many Transjordanians felt was costing more than it was worth.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, in 1934, Great Britain and Transjordan concluded an agreement, an appendix to the 1928 Agreement, by which Transjordan was absolved of the responsibility of paying the maintenance costs of the British staff in the country.<sup>2</sup> A further development gained through this new agreement was Transjordan's right to make changes in the tariffs of customs duties without prior consultation with Great Britain, with the stated exception that there would be no customs barriers between Palestine and Transjordan except by agreement between those two countries.<sup>3</sup>

This supplementary agreement also contained an article somewhat widening the Amir's authority to appoint consular representatives to neighboring Arab states, but this stipulation was subject to further negotiations between the Amir and London, and the result

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<sup>1</sup>A primary objection of the Transjordanians was the requirement that they furnish the money for the salaries of the British resident and his staff, and furnish quarters for them. Shwadran, op. cit., p. 183.

<sup>2</sup>This was more of a psychological sop than any saving in expenditure, for these costs had been included in the grant-in-aid given annually by Great Britain to Transjordan.

<sup>3</sup>Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Agreement Between His Britannic Majesty . . . and His Highness the Amir of Transjordan Supplementary to the Agreement Signed on 20th February 1928.

was that Great Britain retained a fairly rigid control over the appointment of all consular representatives for the next three years.

Still the scope of authority exercised by the Amir and the Transjordanian Government was gradually widening, and the officials of the native government were becoming more and more qualified; however, it would appear that these few concessions had been granted not through British appreciation of the improved qualifications of the Jordanian statesmen but in an attempt to strengthen Abdullah's position within the country and thereby to strengthen Great Britain's position.<sup>1</sup>

Opposition and criticism of Abdullah's government existed in Transjordan and early in 1934, while the Legislative Council was not in session, Abdullah had greatly strengthened the Executive Council's position by issuing a decree prohibiting any public meeting unless sanctioned by the Executive Council.<sup>2</sup> This step was taken to eliminate criticism against the government, but it failed, and Great Britain then attempted to alleviate some of the criticisms by granting the above mentioned concessions.

Opposition was not completely stilled by these moves, but 1934 was an election year, and the country was solid enough politically that the newly elected Legislative Council (the third for the new State) was able to survive its full term and work with

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<sup>1</sup>League of Nations, Permanent Mandates Commission, Minutes of the 36th Session, p. 186. (Hereafter, P.M.C., Minutes of \_\_\_\_\_ Session)

<sup>2</sup>Official Gazette of the Amirate of Transjordan, No. 420 of 17 February 1934. The bill was introduced as "The Temporary Law for General Assemblies, year 1933" and was finally approved 11 February 1934.

the Executive Council of Ibrahim Pasha Hashim. Ibrahim Pasha was apparently working well in his second term as the Prime Minister, both with the Legislative Council and with the British Resident.

It is interesting to note that Abdullah comments in his Memoirs that the selection of Ibrahim Pasha Hashim as the Prime Minister was largely influenced by the British Resident, Sir Henry Cox. Abdullah as-Sarraaj was dismissed in November 1933 when the Executive Council could not work with the Legislative Council, and Sir Henry Cox asked Abdullah who would succeed as-Sarraaj. The Amir writes: "When I mentioned Hassan Khalid Pasha, I was astonished to hear Sir Henry say that he could not work with him. The Resident did not, however, object to Ibrahim Pasha Hashim who took over the task of government energetically and toiled continuously until he grew desperate because of the tiresome foreign restrictions which made his work so difficult."<sup>1</sup> This is again, an indication of British intervention and influence in Trans-jordanian affairs.

Ibrahim Pasha, in fact, headed the Executive Council of the Transjordanian Government until September 1938 when he submitted not only his own resignation but those of his entire Council without giving any reason. The Permanent Mandates Commission was told by Mr. Alec Kirkbride (who became British Resident in 1939) that "Ibrahim Hashim had resigned for reasons of health."<sup>2</sup> We have seen

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<sup>1</sup> Abdullah, op. cit., p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> League of Nations, P.M.C., op. cit., p. 188.



what Abdullah gives as the reasons for the resignations, and it would seem that Abdullah's reasons are the more valid. Certainly the health of the entire Executive Council did not fail at one time; however, Abdullah does say, of Ibrahim's reasons, "The British Government did not know this, although I never tried to conceal the difficulties of my ministers which resulted from undue interference by the Resident. I eventually informed the High Commissioner of the position and at last the appointment of Sir Henry Cox terminated . . . Colonel Cox . . . had great administrative capacity, but . . . liked to work only with persons with whom he felt at ease. This was a difficult time for Transjordan and the Hashimite family, and much patience and wisdom was necessary.

"The next Resident to be appointed, Mr. Kirkbride, 1939-46, is an old friend of the Arabs . . . ."<sup>1</sup>

It was, however, during the administration of Ibrahim Pasha that an important step in the early constitutional development of Transjordan occurred. In December 1937 the Legislative Council passed a bill amending the Organic Law of 1928.<sup>2</sup> The amendment curtailed the Amir's power to enact laws by decree during the time the Legislative Council was not in session. The noteworthy fact

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<sup>1</sup>Abdullah, op. cit., pp. 224, 226.

<sup>2</sup>Official Gazette of the Amirate of Transjordan (hereinafter referred to as "Official Gazette"), No. 594 of 2 April 1938, p. 203. A translation of the pertinent Article 41, as amended, is included in Great Britain, Colonial Office Report . . . Palestine and Transjordan for the year 1938, p. 312.

here is not that the Legislative Council passed such a bill, but that such a bill was presented. One must remember that the Legislative Council did not have the power to draft laws, but only to act upon such bills as were presented.<sup>1</sup> That such a bill was passed, without the Amir using his powers of "pocket veto" and return of the bill, shows that the Amir was willing to give up these powers. This in itself is indicative of Abdullah's growing confidence in his personal position and in the capabilities of the legislators of the country.

Following the resignation of Ibrahim Pasha Hashim, Tawfiq Pasha Abul Huda was appointed Chief Minister (Prime Minister) and a new Executive Council was formed. Abdullah lists the program of the government, at this time, as being mainly concerned with "loyalty to the Amirate, a resolve to raise the country to the same sovereign status within the Arab Union as that of her sister countries, and strict adherence to the principle of the Arab cause namely, national unity. The programme contained also the usual references to public security, finance, taxation relief and education."<sup>2</sup>

It was shortly after this that the Amir and some of his ministers went to London for the 1939 Palestine Conference regarding the Arab revolt in Palestine. More will be said of this in the succeeding chapter on foreign relations. While the Amir was attending the London Palestine Conference, which was a failure

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<sup>1</sup>Article 37 of the Organic Law of 1928. See Seton, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Abdullah, op. cit., p. 220.

in that the British could not even get the Arab and Jewish delegates to sit at the same table, Abul Huda, the Transjordanian Chief Minister, and Malcolm MacDonald, British Colonial Secretary, were engaged in separate negotiations regarding the 1928 Agreement. The concessions granted to Transjordan gave that country more control over their affairs and was another step in the constitutional development of that country.<sup>1</sup>

Noteworthy among the concessions were: (1) the deletion of the second paragraph of Article 10 of the 1928 Agreement (see above page 20) in which the Amir was not to raise or let be raised any armed forces without British approval (in this regard we must note that this was 1939, and Great Britain was greatly concerned about the growing threat of Hitler. If an adequate force of Transjordanians could be raised it might well leave British troops free for employment in other areas.) (2) the Transjordanian Executive Council was to become a Council of Ministers or a cabinet, and each minister would bear portfolio and be responsible to the Amir; (3) a relaxation of British control on details of administration and finance (a scheme was to be introduced which would eliminate the procedure of referring minor financial matters to the Colonial Secretary for approval); (4) the Amir was now to be given the authority to appoint consuls in certain of the Arab countries so long as they concerned themselves with purely consular duties (it is to be remembered that the 1934

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<sup>1</sup>League of Nations, P.M.C., op.cit., 186.

Supplementary Agreement to the 1928 Agreement also had empowered the Amir to appoint consular representatives in such neighboring Arab States "as might be considered necessary".); and (5) Palestinian-seconded officials were to be replaced, as and when possible, by Transjordanians.

While these agreements were accepted by the two governments and were, generally speaking, put into practice they were not formally ratified as a Supplementary Agreement to the 1928 Agreement until 19 July 1941.<sup>1</sup>

In August of that same year Tawfiq Pasha and his Executive Council resigned and Tawfiq was named Prime Minister and asked to form Transjordan's first cabinet. Abdullah assumed the title of Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and the Arab Legion was enlarged, Peake Pasha retired from government life and Major John Bagot Glubb succeeded as the Commander of the Arab Legion. It was also at this time that Sir Henry Cox was relieved of his post as the British Resident in Amman and replaced by Mr. (later Sir) Alec Kirkbride, a personal friend of the Amir Abdullah.<sup>2</sup>

Here I must change direction briefly to discuss the loyalty of the people of Transjordan to their Amir and to their new type of constitutional government. While the discussion carries us into the field of foreign relations, which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, it also concerns the factor of constitutional development of the country as reflected in the loyalty of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Glubb, Story of the Arab Legion, p. 238; Abdullah, op.cit., p. 226.

people of a country to the established government of that country, and their opposition to any attempts to undermine or overthrow that form of government.

During the 1930's a primary concern of the Arabs of the Middle East was the Jewish occupation of Palestine, the British supported plan for the establishment of a National Home for the Jews.

Glubb writes of the Palestine question:

The Palestine question has given rise to so much propoganda and aroused such bitter partisan feeling, that it is difficult for the uninitiated to form a clear picture of the main issues.

The Jews were originally a nomadic tribe, like hundreds of others. They settled in Palestine, as one of several tribes, but at a certain stage they acquired political domination over the others. Their greatest period was in the time of King Solomon, in the tenth century before Christ. A period of political extinction followed, with a partial revival in the time of the Maccabees in the second century before Christ. Jewish political influence in Palestine was destroyed by the Romans in the year A.D. 70. For the ensuing 600 years, the political control of Palestine remained in Roman hands. For the subsequent 1,300 years, it has rested with the Arabs and the Turks.

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The Jewish case in Palestine is based on two considerations. The first is historic, and refers to the former dominions of Solomon and the age of the Maccabees. The second is the British promise contained in the Balfour Declaration, and subsequently accepted by the League of Nations and incorporated in the Palestine Mandate. Yet habitation 2,000 years ago can scarcely be accepted as justification for a claim to the ownership of a country today. In the past 2,000 years every nation in Europe has changed . . . . The most striking example of all, however, is provided by North America, which not 2,000 but 500 years ago belonged exclusively to the Red Indians. Is it practicable today to hand back their national home to the Redskins?

A Jewish claim to the ownership of Palestine, based on the Balfour Declaration, is no less difficult to justify. When that Declaration was made, ninety per cent, of the people of Palestine were Arabs . . . . There may be much to be said for and against government by the majority, but there can be no doubt that it is the official doctrine of

the British Government. In every country in the world except Palestine Great Britain advises the adoption of this system. The Arabs of Palestine alone have not been allowed a voice in their own future.<sup>1</sup>

This Palestine question bears on the question of Transjordanian loyalty because, "to impose on the Arab majority in Palestine a policy so extremely distasteful to them required coercion by military force"<sup>2</sup> and the Arabs resisted. Great Britain, as the Mandatory Power in Palestine, furnished the military forces to effect this coercion, and this, of course, resulted in a rise of anti-British feeling among the Palestinian Arabs especially, but also among Arabs in neighboring areas.

Here again we must differentiate between the areas of Palestine and Transjordan. While Transjordan was technically a part of the Palestine Mandate, we have seen that Transjordan had been excluded from many of the offensive articles of the Mandate as applied to those areas West of the Jordan River and was recognized, de facto, as a separate Mandate. The term Palestine is, unless otherwise noted, used exclusively in reference to that area where "the principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917, by the government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people . . . ." <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Bagot Glubb, A Soldier with the Arabs, pp. 228-229. Lest some Americans become self-righteous from reading this criticism of British policy, it should be remembered that the Balfour Declaration was amended and approved by President Wilson, before its issuance in November 1917; see Great Britain, CmD. 5479 of 1937 (Peel Report), p. 22

<sup>2</sup>Glubb, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Khalil, op. cit., Vol. II, Preamble of the Mandate for Palestine, p. 493.

This anti-British, anti-Jewish sentiment of the Arabs had been growing from the time of the establishment of the mandate (it has continued to be evident in greater or lesser degree to the present day), during the 1930's became increasingly violent, and in 1936 the Arabs of Palestine resorted to active violence in what has been termed "the Arab rebellion."<sup>1</sup>

As the Arabs in Palestine resorted to overt violence they were assisted by Arabs from other countries,<sup>2</sup> and eventually Great Britain felt compelled to increase the number of troops in Palestine to combat the "revolution". During this time of unrest in Palestine attempts were made to stir-up the people of Transjordan in the hopes that some British troops would be withdrawn from Palestine to combat unrest in Transjordan; however, the situation in Transjordan never got out of hand, and it was never necessary to increase the number of British troops in Transjordan.

This is not to say that the people of Transjordan were not sympathetic to the troubles of the Arab neighbors in Palestine. There were demonstrations in Transjordan, and there were some very definitely anti-British groups; however, even though Arab guerillas entered Transjordan from the neighboring countries in an attempt to incite the Transjordanians to overt anti-British demonstrations,

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<sup>1</sup>The word rebellion has been applied to the activities of the Arabs in Palestine as applying to their action against British authority. Webster defines "rebellion" as "open, organized, and armed resistance to one's government or ruler. 2. resistance against or defiance of any authority or control." The people of Palestine had never recognized Great Britain as its government; however, the second definition may be accepted if the words "any authority" are interpreted to mean imposed authority.

<sup>2</sup>Great Britain Colonial Office, Palestine and Transjordan for the year 1938, p. 309. (Hereafter all Papers of this series will be referred to as "Palestine and Transjordan" with the concerned year affixed.)

control of the country was never lost.<sup>1</sup> This relative peacefulness of the people of Transjordan certainly cannot be attributed to any lack of empathy for the Palestinian Arabs nor can it be attributed to any real feeling for the British. We must look further for the decisive factor.

Alec Kirkbride, speaking before the Permanent Mandates Commission as the representative of the Mandatory, said: "The Arab rebels in Palestine have throughout endeavoured to extend the rebellion to Trans-Jordan. They had failed because the Amir of Trans-Jordan had wisely made every effort to dissuade the population of his country from taking any part in the movement. The Amir's attitude had led the rebel chiefs to conclude that their best course would be to shake the authority of the Amir and his Government. The incursions of armed bands were the result..."<sup>2</sup>

Glubb has written of these armed incursions that:

The Arab Leaders in Damascus had mistaken the spirit of the people of Trans-Jordan, who indeed had been ardent supporters of the Palestine Arabs, but who were at the same time extremely proud of their own country and of the good order and loyalty which reigned in it. They were unwilling to be forced to rebel against their own Government by an invasion from Syria or Palestine, and indeed resented the attempt . . . .

The whole of this unhappy affair was a sad misunderstanding. For every man in Trans-Jordan and in the Arab Legion sympathized with the cause of the Arabs of Palestine. But their leaders made a profound miscalculation when they attempted to produce a rebellion in Trans-Jordan against an Arab Government, and that by force and without the prior consent of the people."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>P.M.C., Min. of 36th Session, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>Glubb, Story of the Arab Legion, pp. 237, 242.



In truth there were anti-British incidents occurring in Trans-Jordan during these years, Glubb even cites one instance where he was stoned by a group of demonstrating Transjordanians.<sup>1</sup> There are many recorded instances of Transjordanians crossing the border into Palestine to assist their Arab neighbors against the Jews and the British, but the Transjordanians refused to be incited against their own government.<sup>2</sup>

We have already seen how the British relaxed their control over the armed forces of Transjordan and gave the Amir the power to raise his own army and to strengthen it, and I have pointed out that Great Britain acted from its concern over the approaching European war. Their good judgement was rewarded shortly after the outbreak of World War 2 when Abdullah, on 16 September 1939, declared Transjordan at war with Germany.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the war years Transjordan remained loyal to the British, but that loyalty was put to severe tests; especially during 1941 when the war in Europe was going so badly for the forces of Great Britain. Almost all of the Arab Middle East had become pro-German; with the defeat of France the French army in Syria of nearly 100,000 men had turned from Britain's allies to enemies, and then came the coup d'etat in Iraq, the establishment of the pro-German government of Rashid Gailani; the besiegement of the British garrisons outside Baghdad and Basra convinced many Transjordanians that Great Britain had no hopes of achieving the final victory.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 227-228.

<sup>2</sup>P.M.C. Min. of 34th Session, Records of Complaints; op.cit., Min of 36th Session, p. 309.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, 17 September 1939, p. 6.

Alec Kirkbride writes that "these events not only destroyed any lingering hopes in our final victory but they convinced the Jordanians, including many of the Arab officers of the local forces, that it was high time to get in touch with the new conquerors and to make terms.

"In these conditions it was obvious that unless the situation in Iraq was restored quickly our position in Jordan would become untenable. His Majesty's Government decided to use force in Iraq, . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The Arab Legion, as a part of the British force used in the attack of Iraq, had its first real opportunity to participate in the fighting of the war. It should be noted that the Transjordanians, up to this time, had exhibited some anti-British sympathies, but there had been no evidence of anti-Jordanian feeling; however, with the fall of Iraq, both Alec Kirkbride and Colonel Glubb state that some of the Transjordanian officers had taken it upon themselves to contact the Axis forces, bypassing their own government.<sup>2</sup>

One also finds mention of the fact that soldiers of the Arab Legion were agitated by outside sources in attempts to persuade desertion, and it is claimed that these attempts were successful;<sup>3</sup> however, the desertion which is cited is the desertion of a squadron of the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force, and these were not troops of the Arab Legion. It has already been shown (above p. 22) that the T. J. F. F. was formed by Great Britain and was

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<sup>1</sup>Kirkbride, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>George Kirk, Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946, The Middle East in the War, n., p. 73; Shwadran, op. cit., p. 206.

under the command of the British Monarch. I have found no record that any unit of the Arab Legion ever mutinied or deserted. Indeed, though there was much dissatisfaction with the British and at times a certainty that Great Britain would be defeated, the country as a whole remained loyal to the Amir Abdullah and their government, and both Abdullah and his Government continued to support the Government of Great Britain.

Glubb has written:

At the beginning of the war, with British prestige at so low an ebb after the Palestine disturbances, many pessimists prophesied that any reverses suffered by Great Britain would be the sign for all Arabs to take their revenge on her. To their great honour be it recorded, however, that the people of Trans-Jordan, and even many of the Arabs of Palestine, reacted in precisely the opposite manner . . . .

In peace-time there were always sneerers who said that Trans-Jordan supported Great Britain because she knew which side her bread was buttered. The same people used to complain of the ingratitude of the Egyptians, who opposed the British in spite of all the money they had made out of them. Cynicism may not be a crime, but it is most certainly a mistake. . . . With the Arabs in particular, it is vital to remember the existence of a capacity for passionate and heroic courage concealed beneath their everyday venality. The Byzantines made the mistake of forgetting this no less than the Turks and the British.<sup>1</sup>

As we now know, history supported the choice of the Amir Abdullah and his Constitutional Government, and they were rewarded for their steadfastness. Abdullah had begun pressing Great Britain for Transjordan's independence in 1941, even before the invasion of Iraq. In a letter to General Wilson, Commander of the Allied Forces in Palestine, dated May 1941, Abdullah had protested British military inactivity in the Middle East, and more importantly his lack of power to deal with emergency situations. Pointing out that Transjordan was the only Arab country which had remained

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<sup>1</sup>Glubb, Story of the Arab Legion, p. 253.

loyal to the Allies, Abdullah requested that Transjordan be given its independence so that Abdullah could control his country and not remain a mere administrator for the Mandatory.<sup>1</sup>

Britain's answer to Abdullah's request was to advise the Amir that such matters could not be taken up in the midst of a war, but even after the fall of Syria to British troops later in the same year (the armistice agreement was signed at Akka on 14 July 1941) Great Britain failed to show any willingness to take action regarding Transjordan's independence.

Great Britain's proclamation of policy made by Foreign Secretary Eden:

It seems to me both natural and right that the cultural and economic ties between the Arab countries and the political ties, too, should be strengthened. His Majesty's Government for their part will give their full support to any scheme that commands general approval.<sup>2</sup>

had occurred in the interim, still Great Britain did not seriously consider the subject again until late in 1944 when an official note was sent to Abdullah assuring him that Great Britain would begin negotiations concerning independence as soon as the war was over.<sup>3</sup> Thus we see that even though Great Britain was willing to support any movement for Arab unity that would meet with general approval, they were not willing to take the immediate steps to give Transjordan her independence. It is surprising to me that I find no evidence that the Amir Abdullah might have felt the British were about to repeat their performance of the post-World War I period; however, the evidence shows that the Arab countries took Great

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<sup>1</sup>Abdullah, op. cit., pp. 235-236.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 30 May 1941, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Shwadran, op. cit., p. 211.

Britain at her word and began searching for a workable form of union.

The Amir Abdullah now felt that Transjordan was ready for complete independence, in fact his foremost ambition went beyond independence for Transjordan to include the area of Transjordan within an independent "Greater Syria" which would include the territories then known as Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan.<sup>1</sup> This "Greater Syria", which was to be ruled by Abdullah, was one of the two initial plans put forward in response to Great Britain's invitation. We will see in a subsequent chapter why these unity plans were not acceptable to the Arab countries; for the present, I will simply state that the plan eventually adopted was for the formation of the League of Arab States. As this "Arab League" was being formed in 1945, the deadline for taking membership in the newly organized United Nations' Organization was approaching. Transjordan again became concerned over her Mandated status, and the Legislative Council, on 27 June 1945, adopted a resolution which would have the Prime Minister demand Transjordan's independence from Great Britain.<sup>2</sup>

It would appear, however, that such matters are not to be rushed into, for Great Britain still was slow to react. Not until the end of the year were Abdullah and his Ministers invited to London to discuss the problem, and then they were told only that Great Britain would inform the United Nations that the Transjordan

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<sup>1</sup> See Document 5 entitled "Political Memorandum Concerning the Settlement of the Arab Question in General and the Syrian Question in Particular, Submitted to Amir 'Abdullah by a Number of Transjordanian Dignitaries," Khalil, op. cit., Vol, II, pp.12-16.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that Transjordan had already been accepted into the League of Arab States as a charter member and an independent state, that charter being signed on 22 March 1945.

Mandate would be shortly terminated and that country should not be included under the authority of the trusteeship division of the United Nations Organization, and "regarding the future of Transjordan, it is the intention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to take steps in the near future for establishing the territory as a sovereign independent state and for recognizing its status as such."<sup>1</sup>

On 9 February 1946 the following comment was recorded in a session of the United Nations' General Assembly:

The General Assembly welcomes the declarations made by certain states administering territories now held under mandate, of an intention to negotiate trusteeship agreements in respect of these territories, and in respect of Transjordan to establish its independence.<sup>2</sup>

The following month the Amir Abdullah and his Premier arrived in London for discussions of a new treaty between the two countries. On 22 March this new treaty, which proclaimed the independence of Transjordan, was signed.<sup>3</sup> This treaty, while proclaiming the independence of Transjordan and naming or confirming Abdullah as the sovereign of that country also included an annex of ten articles providing for the stationing and maintenance of British troops in Transjordan and for British financial assistance in the maintenance of Transjordan's military forces (which at this time were the best

<sup>1</sup>Statement by Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, quoted in The Times, 17 February 1946.

<sup>2</sup>U. N. G. A., Supplement to the Official Record, First Session, 1946, pt. 1, p. 32; U. N. Year Book, 1946-1947, pp. 80-81.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Davis, op. cit., pp. 277-278. Mrs. Davis has proven quite reliable and accurate in her presentation of documents, and is preferred as a reference because of her grouping of documents under one heading. Text of this document: Great Britain, Colonial Office, "Transjordan No. 1," Cmd. 6779, 1946.

trained and best equipped troops in the Arab world, according to British and Transjordanian claims. Subsequent events have seemed to bear out this claim).

Within two months, on 25 May 1946, the Amirate of Transjordan was officially proclaimed "The Hashimite Kingdom of the Jordan" and Amir Abdullah was proclaimed King.<sup>1</sup>

In December of that year the Constitution of Transjordan had been formulated by the Legislative Council and was approved by King Abdullah on the seventh of that month. The Constitution subsequently became effective on 1 March 1947, one month after its appearance in the Official Gazette, as provided in Article 1 of the Constitution.<sup>2</sup>

We shall see, however, that this new independence of Transjordan's<sup>3</sup> was not universally accepted; some of the neighboring Arab states attacked King Abdullah for giving what they termed "official recognition" to British presence in Transjordan.<sup>4</sup> Transjordan's application for membership in the United Nations'

<sup>1</sup>See General Announcement No. 1, 14 May 1949 appearing in Official Gazette, No. 984, 1 June 1949, p. 155, for announcement concerning the proper name of the Kingdom. Translation of the Announcement appears in Davis, op. cit., p. 264.

<sup>2</sup>Official Gazette, No. 886, 1 February 1947, pp. 602-610; No English translation of this document is recognized as official; however, the translation cited in Davis, op. cit., pp. 235-252, was obtained through the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This translation differs slightly from that found in Middle East Journal, July 1947 and that appearing in Khalil, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 43-52.

<sup>3</sup>Although the Government of Jordan had published its announcement of the change of name, the term Transjordan continued to be applied inside and outside the Arab world. Treaties with Great Britain and the records of the United Nations continue to refer to Transjordan. Subsequent use of the term Jordan usually denotes a Jordanian source.

<sup>4</sup>The Times, 24-29 April 1946.

Organization was voted down in 1946 and again in 1947. While the direct cause of this action was the veto of the U. S. S. R., we shall see that other countries, including the United States and Egypt, though they announced their support for Transjordan's admission, were a factor in preventing her obtaining membership.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>While the United States, on principle, supported Jordan's application for admission to the United Nations, the Government of the United States refused to grant recognition to the Hashimite Kingdom. This recognition was withheld until 1949.



### CHAPTER III

#### ABDULLAH IBN HUSAIN

Here we must pause for an examination of the person who was, in so many instances, synonymous with the Government of Transjordan, the Amir Abdullah. Indeed the student of the history of Transjordan will find quite as many references to the "British and Abdullah" as he will to the "British and Transjordanian Governments". This is observable throughout the period of Abdullah's rule, even after Transjordan's declaration of independence and the adoption of the Constitution; however, there can be no great doubt that many of the references to Abdullah in conjunction with the British Government are no more than a cover for the fact that Great Britain pressed actions on Transjordan. Acquiescence has been interpreted as Abdullah's agreement.

There are, however, ample indications that Abdullah was not without qualifications as a statesman, politician and diplomat. Even those persons who found fault with Abdullah recognized his abilities and his ambitions. Abdullah himself gives us the first indication that he had learned his political lessons well. He writes of an event occurring in 1908 when, while his father and his entire family had been in political

quarantine since 1891,<sup>1</sup> he carried his father's letter petitioning Sultan Abdul Hamid II for the appointment as Sharif of Mecca and Medina. He says he had presented the letter to the Prime Minister for delivery to the Sultan, but, not being satisfied with the Prime Minister's attitude, "I drafted the following telegram to the Sultan:

In view of the vacancy in the Amirate of Mecca and of my rightful claims I beg that the Sultan may consider favourably my appointment to the office of my forefathers.

"This telegram was dispatched to the Throne through three channels - - the Prime Minister, the Sheikh ul-Islam and the Chief Clerk of the Palace."<sup>2</sup>

Husain was appointed the Sharif of Mecca and the family returned to the Hijaz where both Abdullah and his brother Faisal were appointed deputies to the Ottoman Parliament. It is apparent from his Memoirs that Abdullah was not satisfied with the Turkish dominion over the Arab lands in general and over the Hijaz in particular,<sup>3</sup> and had determined that the Arabs must try to gain increased autonomy. George Antonius writes of Abdullah:

Like his father, he (Abdullah) was bent upon a trial of strength with the Turks. They were both ambitious and they dreamed of an autonomous Hejaz which should in the course of time lead the rest of the Arab provinces ( of

<sup>1</sup>King Abdullah of Transjordan, Memoirs, trans. G. Khuri, pp. 41-47. George Antonius places the year of Husain's arrival at Constantinople as 1893; Antonius writes of Husain: "Reports had reached 'Abdul-Hamid, depicting young Husain as a wilful and recalcitrant person whose views . . . revealed a 'dangerous' capacity for original and independent thinking. The family's standing in the Moslem world was so high that the sultans of Turkey . . . maintained an outward show of regard. Antonius, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Abdullah, Memoirs, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-44.

the Ottoman Empire) to a like autonomy. The main difference between father and son was one of . . . temperament. Husain was interminably cautious until the moment should come when he would risk everything with a fine recklessness. 'Abdullah was impatient, self-confident and hasty, with little of his father's depth or foresight; and he boldly went to Lord Kitchner to sound him on England's attitude.<sup>1</sup>

This meeting with Lord Kitchner occurred in February 1914, and Abdullah's account of the incident is that Kitchner first called on him and he only returned the call on the recommendation of the Turkish High Commissioner. Abdullah's account of the meeting seems anything but bold; he writes:

Lord Kitchner mentioned during the conversation that it was the intention of Turkey to carry out fundamental changes in the Arab countries. If such changes should include a change of Amir what would be my father's attitude? I replied that of course my father was an official and recognized the right of the Sultan to dismiss him. If, however, it appeared to be in the interests of our Sacred Homeland to defend his position, what, I asked, would be the attitude of His Majesty's Government to a request for assistance in that defence? He replied that the traditional friendship between Great Britain and Turkey prevented His Majesty's Government from interfering in her internal affairs.<sup>2</sup>

By the autumn of that same year the British position had changed somewhat, as it appeared that Turkey would cast her lot, in the coming war, on the side of Germany. On 31 October Kitchner, then Secretary of State for War, sent a cable to Storrs in Cairo; the cable reflected the change in Britain's attitude, and we should note the opening words of the cable:

<sup>1</sup> Antonius, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Abdullah, Memoirs, pp. 106-107. The description of this meeting, as contained in Memoirs differs in some respects from George Antonius' report of an interview with Abdullah which is cited in British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914, edited by Dr. G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley; however, the account as found in Memoirs agrees substantially with Lord Kitchner's dispatch to Sir Edward Grey, also found in Gooch and Temperley's book.

Salaams to Sharif Abdallah. Germany has now bought the Turkish Government with gold, notwithstanding that England, France and Russia guaranteed integrity of Ottoman Empire if Turkey remained neutral in the War. Turkish Government have against will of Sultan committed acts of aggression by invading the frontiers of Egypt with bands of Turkish soldiers. If Arab nation assists England in this war England will guarantee that no intervention takes place in Arabia and will give Arabs every assistance against external foreign aggression.<sup>1</sup>

This communication led to the Husain-McMahon Correspondence and the subsequent Arab Revolt. As for the role of the Amir Abdullah in the Arab Revolt, we have little information, especially after the appearance of Captain Thomas Edward Lawrence, better known as "Lawrence of Arabia".

In the first stages of the Arab Revolt there were three Arab armies, commanded by the three eldest sons of Sharif Husain, Ali, Abdullah and Faisal. These three Arab armies enjoyed an initial advantage of surprise and succeeded against superior Turkish forces; however, after the initial successes of the Arabs, the Turks rallied and it appeared the revolt might be crushed. Abdullah, serving as his father's Foreign Minister, cabled Cairo, requesting a meeting between himself and Ronald Storrs, to discuss the state of affairs in Arabia. Storrs came to Jeddah as requested and was accompanied by Lawrence, who was apparently already searching for his "War Prophet".

The two men did not take to one another, perhaps because neither man would submit to the other. Both men were patently ambitious and both insisted on the top position. It is interesting

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Ronald Storrs, Memoirs of Sir Ronald Storrs, p. 152.

to examine the reports of that first meeting between Abdullah and Lawrence as reflected in the writings of the two men.

Lawrence, writing in Seven Pillars of Wisdom says:

(Abdullah came) through the silent respectful salutes of the town. He was flushed with his success at Taif, and happy. . . . Life seemed very merry for Abdulla . . . . In manner he was open, or affected openness, and was charming on acquaintance. He stood not on ceremony, but jested with all comers in most easy fashion; yet, when we fell into serious talk, the veil of humour seemed to fade away. He then chose his words, and argued shrewdly. Of course, he was in discussion with Storrs, who demanded a high standard from his opponent.

The Arabs thought Abdulla a far-seeing statesman and an astute politician. Astute he certainly was, but not greatly enough to convince us always of his sincerity. His ambition was patent. Rumour made him the brain of his father and of the Arab revolt; but he seemed too easy for that. His object was, of course, the winning of Arab independence and the building up of Arab nations, but he meant to keep the direction of the new states in the family . . . . My visit was mainly to find the yet unknown master-spirit of the affair, and measure his capacity to carry the revolt to the goal I had conceived for it. As our conversation continued, I became more and more sure that Abdulla was too balanced, too cool, too humorous to be a prophet; especially the armed prophet who, if history be true, succeeded in revolutions. His value would come perhaps in the peace after success. During the physical struggle, when singleness of eye and magnetism, devotion and self-sacrifice were needed, Abdulla would be a tool too complex for a simple purpose, though he could not be ignored, even now.<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence continues then, in Seven Pillars, to belittle Abdullah's views on the state of the campaign, but when one reads his remarks carefully it is evident that he has not answered Abdullah's charges, but Lawrence would have us believe that he has successfully rebutted Abdullah.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Edward Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, pp. 67-68.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 69-70. It is to be noted that Lawrence had no official position at this meeting, and he probably did not participate to the lengths his use of "I" would lead one to believe. Seven Pillars is not meant to be a history, is only one man's impressions and opinions, and though they are valuable in that light, one must remember they were not intended to be objective.

An examination of Abdullah's Memoirs gives us a very different picture of this meeting. The important phase of this meeting is described by Abdullah in a conversation he had with the head of the French Military Mission, Colonel Bremond, immediately after leaving Storrs and Lawrence. Abdullah reports that conversation in the following words:

The British delegates have just informed me that they have decided to withdraw their military missions and yours too, and that they will only help us with arms, supplies and money. I am in desperate need of expert advisers as well as of aeroplanes, artillery and other war materials . . . . It means concluding peace . . . . The Turks have offered to concede our demands with the guarantee of the German Emperor and we shall have to accept. I am going back now and our Government will resign; another Government will be formed which will conclude peace.<sup>1</sup>

Abdullah continues, saying, that later that afternoon he delivered this same message to Storrs, as an ultimatum, adding, "I will, however, delay my arrival in Mecca by twelve hours. If your agreement to grant my demands, namely the retention of the missions and the dispatch of the aeroplanes for the Amir Faisal precedes my arrival in Mecca, I shall agree to continue the revolt."<sup>2</sup>

While neither Lawrence nor Storrs mention Abdullah's ultimatum, such threats, while probably not so bluntly put, were undoubtedly hinted at. Neither is there any mention, by the two Englishmen, that the Allies were to remove their military missions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Abdullah, Memoirs, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>3</sup>Lawrence, op. cit., Chap. 8; Storrs, op. cit., pp. 192-193.

At any rate the Arab Revolt was to continue, and Abdullah, Storrs and Lawrence were, each, able to claim their own personal successes.

After this meeting Lawrence remained in Arabia to meet the other sons of Sharif Husain, and it is a matter of record (mostly Lawrence's) that he was most favorably impressed with the Amir Faisal, and was convinced of the Arabs' ability to fight their war without the immediate support or intervention of Allied troops.<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence's preference of Faisal, the romanticism and publicity Faisal derived from Lawrence's presence with the Arab forces shifted the spotlight from Abdullah. Abdullah did not, however, disappear from the scene. He continued to command one of the three Arab armies of Sharif Husain and to serve as his father's Foreign Minister.

Abdullah's forte seemed to be in the political and diplomatic arena, but he made blunders; however, these were not of a nature to hurt Abdullah's personal chances. From the Memoirs of Abdullah, we find that he takes full credit for the proclamation of Sharif Husain as "King of the Arabs". Abdullah writes:

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence's views on the situation are contained in the following cable sent to the War Office in London by Reginald Wingate (soon to become the High Commissioner for Egypt):

Following observations of Lieutenant Lawrence a man of great experience and knowledge who has just returned from visit to Feisal's camp and also to Rabegh are very pertinent to the question of dispatch of brigade to Rabegh which seems again to be under consideration of government. Assistance in material especially quick-firer guns and machine-guns is vital if they are to be kept in the field. If given this there is no reason why they should not continue to operate successfully for an indefinite time. Their morale is excellent and their tactics and leadership well-suited to present objective. Cited by Robert Payne, Lawrence of Arabia, p. 63.

By this time (1916) I realized that there must be a declaration of our independence and that my father must be elected King of the Arabs, for the Turks were treating us as rebels and insurgents and it was necessary for us to have a recognized status . . . . my colleagues in the Government and in the Army . . . . all agreed . . . . I went to my father . . . but he was very much against the idea and strongly opposed it . . . . but when I made it clear that my colleagues and I were not prepared to continue with the revolt unless he agreed, he saw that he would have to give in.<sup>1</sup>

This proved in some ways to be a very unfavorable action.

Arnold Toynbee has written:

The British pledge to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs within the limits proposed by Husayn was not only made subject to certain modifications and conditions on account of French claims on Syria, but was given expressly without prejudice to existing British treaties with Arab chiefs; and, even apart from these specific limitations, there was no implication, that, in other portions of the area, Arab independence would be interpreted as the rule of the Amir Husayn.<sup>2</sup>

It is also to be noted that the Yemen remained garrisoned by Turkish troops throughout the war and apparently made no attempt to support the Arab Revolt nor did they recognize Husain as King of the Arabs.<sup>3</sup> Also within the Arabian Peninsula were the forces of Ibn Rashid, which remained loyal to the Turks, and the forces of Ibn Saud, which, while favoring the break-away from Turkish rule, refused to recognize Sharif Husain as King. Ibn Saud and his Wahhabis made their own treaty with Great Britain and obtained British recognition of Ibn Saud's independence. Indeed, Husain's position was so tenuous that H. St. John Philby has written that from 1917 on, Great Britain felt a need to divert Ibn Saud's

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<sup>1</sup>Abdullah, Memoirs, pp. 159-160.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold Toynbee, The Islamic World, Survey of International Affairs, 1925, Vol. 1, p. 287.

<sup>3</sup>George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, pp. 455-456.



attention to insure Sharif Husain freedom from attack by the Wahhabi forces of Ibn Saud.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, Sharif Husain, Amir of Mecca and Medina, proclaimed himself "King of the Arabs" in Mecca on 2 November 1916.<sup>2</sup> The British, however, refused to grant recognition of such a controversial title to Husain, but finally conceded him the title "King of the Hijaz" in a note dated 3 January 1917.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps Abdullah is not to be condemned overmuch for this action, for the Hashemites assumed they had the support of Great Britain. If this early claim had been recognized, the Arabs would have had a very strong position for arguing for Arab independence at the post-war peace conference. In this regard we must assume that Abdullah had a fairly strong feeling that the Husain-McMahon Correspondence did not grant all that the Arabs were taking for granted. Abdullah comments that he suggested to his father that he, Abdullah, "go to Egypt first in order to cast into formal agreement the correspondence exchanged with Sir Henry McMahon. I should return . . . and cross the Hejaz railway to Wadi-'Ais, thus causing the revolt to spread among the eastern tribes. My father agreed to this latter suggestion."<sup>4</sup>

The indication, here, is certainly that Sharif Husain did not agree with the former suggestion, for some reason Husain either

<sup>1</sup>H. St. John Philby, Sa'udi Arabia, pp. 272-274.

<sup>2</sup>Abdullah, Memoirs, p. 160; Antonius, op. cit., p. 213. Both Antonius and George Lenczowski say Husain was proclaimed "King of the Arab Countries" and Professor Zeine N. Zeine, in his book The Struggle for Arab Independence, p. 194, places the date at 30 October 1916.

<sup>3</sup>Antonius, op. cit., p. 213. <sup>4</sup>Abdullah, Memoirs, p. 156.

did not wish Abdullah to go to Egypt, or he did not wish to have the agreement formalized. The latter alternative is almost impossible to believe, and I can nowhere find that Abdullah has ever clarified the quoted statement.

At the end of the war there was a disaffection between King Husain and Abdullah. This disaffection arose over Abdullah's failure to reduce the Wahhabis who had taken control of Khurma, a town just to the east of Mecca. Abdullah's army was destroyed at Turaba and Abdullah escaped under apparently embarrassing conditions. When King Husain ordered Abdullah to lead another army against Khurma Abdullah refused and was in effect exiled to Taif.<sup>1</sup>

Abdullah was not recalled from Taif until Lord Allenby visited Jedda in November (1919). Abdullah participated in the meetings which dealt with the future status of Syria, Palestine and Iraq, and of course, no agreement satisfactory to King Husain was reached. About this time Abdullah, aware of his father's dissatisfaction with him, began to suspect that he was being bypassed on some policy matters.

He writes of the French Representative in Jedda asking him why some artillery pieces had been sent to Faisal in Syria. Abdullah says he knew nothing of the guns, but gave Catroux an answer. The next day he asked his brother, Ali, about the matter and why he had not been informed. Ali answered that Abdullah had not been

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<sup>1</sup>Abdullah, Memoirs, pp. 181-185; Philby, op. cit., p. 277; H. C. Armstrong, Lord of Arabia, pp. 141-142. This last reference is quite definitely anti-Abdullah, but is cited in this instance because of its agreement with Philby's account of Abdullah's escape. It should be kept in mind that both of the latter references reflect the Saudi viewpoint; however, Abdullah fails to give the details of his escape, saying only that he escaped by a "miracle".

informed because the guns were a purely internal affair (Abdullah being the Foreign Minister at this time). Then Abdullah was instructed not to give Catroux a definite answer if any new questions were asked, but to refer the matter to the Cabinet.<sup>1</sup> One cannot help but feel that Abdullah could not have been happy with such treatment, for he was always a person who wanted to know what was going on and why; however, events were occurring which were to return Abdullah to a position more to his liking.

Despite apparent British support in the matter of the disposition of the lands of the Mashriq, it appeared that the French would have their way and Syria would be dismembered. Thus it was that the Syrian notables, the members of the General Congress, had proclaimed Faisal as King of Syria on 8 March, and a similar delegation of Iraqi leaders had named Abdullah as their first monarch. (See above, p. 9)

It is with some surprise that we find Abdullah, as he travels to Cairo to return Lord Allenby's visit to Jedda, armed with an order appointing him head of the Arab delegation to the Peace Conference in Faisal's place. The reason given for this change of delegates was that Faisal was now King of Syria.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abdullah, Memoirs, pp. 188-189.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 190. The reasoning here seems somewhat faulty, for if Faisal was to be relieved of his duties only because he had been named King of Syria, then Abdullah, as King of Iraq, should also not have been considered. Several other reasons suggest themselves; they are (a) that Faisal's agreement with Clemenceau had so dissatisfied King Husain that he decided to relieve Faisal of his position (see Antonius, op. cit., p. 301); (b) that King Husain had been angered by the proclamation of Faisal as King of Syria, and decided that he was no longer working for a unified Arab kingdom, and tried to remove him from the Peace Conference negotiations; (c) that King Husain realized that Faisal was not a successful politician and diplomat, and he wished to replace him by Abdullah who had shown an aptitude for such dealings; or (d) that King Husain was disgusted with Abdullah's military abilities and wished Faisal to be on hand to command the Hijaz armies against the Wahhabis of Ibn Saud.

Lord Allenby, however, informed Abdullah that the Allies did not recognize Faisal as the King of Syria, that Faisal was recognized as the Arab delegate to the Peace Conference, and that he, Abdullah, would not be recognized as a delegate replacing Faisal.<sup>1</sup>

Abdullah, who was quite disturbed at this intervention of the Allied Powers in the internal affairs of the Arabs, writes:

It was one of the worst situations I have ever experienced. I submitted the matter to Mecca by telegram and then returned to the Hejaz. There the situation was so unsatisfactory that I resigned from the Foreign Office.<sup>2</sup>

From this last statement many assumptions can be drawn, but they must be regarded as assumptions. One might, for instance, assume that Abdullah resigned from the Foreign Office because he could not tolerate foreign interference in the internal affairs of his country, but subsequent relations with the British in Trans-jordan hardly support such a position. One might, likewise, assume that he resigned because of the recent proclamation naming him King of Iraq, but there is every indication that this was never taken seriously by Abdullah (n. 2, p. 53).

Perhaps more likely, in view of the fact that it was a foreign office position from which he resigned, is the assumption that he could not accept the division of the Arab Middle East into the fragments to which it was clearly headed. It is known that

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<sup>1</sup>Abdullah, Memoirs, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Abdullah was not in favor of the division of "Greater Syria"<sup>1</sup> into an independent Syria, and independent Iraq, a French controlled coastal area in the north and a Jewish controlled Palestine along the southern coast. In this matter, Abdullah has said that the action of 8 March, by the Syrian National Congress and the Iraqi notables was the greatest mistake of the Arabs after the First World War.<sup>2</sup>

One argument to this last assumption is Abdullah's subsequent willingness to support Faisal's claim to the Syrian throne, which he proved by marching into the Trans-Jordan area of Palestine to raise troops to expel the French; however, this was after the French had moved into Syria. Abdullah may well have changed his mind regarding independent Arab states when presented with the alternative of a French dominated area. Any number of independent Arab states would be preferable to foreign domination.

Abdullah was a practical man, and time and again demonstrates his willingness to accept a compromise when he cannot obtain everything he wants. Here, it appears, lies the main difference between Abdullah and the other Arab leaders of the time. We have seen in the preceding chapter that Abdullah had definite views regarding the formation of a Greater Syria, but was willing to compromise and accept an Amirate over the Eastern part of the area of Palestine;

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<sup>1</sup>The area included in this "Greater Syria" is generally coincident with the areas covered by the Sykes-Picot Agreement; it is the Arab lands of the Damascus Protocol, minus the Arabian Peninsula. The term came into fairly common use after 1942 when Abdullah presented a scheme for Arab unity, in response to British invitation; his project or scheme was known as the "Greater Syria Plan".

<sup>2</sup>Abdullah, Memoirs, pp. 247-249.

we will see that Abdullah, while opposed in principle to the presence of Jews in Palestine, was willing to make a separate peace with them (see below, p. 77 ).

Abdullah we have recognized as an ambitious man, that ambition apparently directed toward the formation of an independent Arab state, under Hashemite rule; we must be prepared to suppose that this Arab kingdom would include all the lands delineated by the Damascus Protocol. Abdullah's first realization was that the Hijazis could not, by force of arms, conquer the followers of Ibn Saud,<sup>1</sup> and he became disgusted with his father's failure to realize this; he became further disgusted and disappointed when Faisal began to divide the Arab lands of the Mashriq into kingdoms, and his father, King Husain allowed this to happen.

With the introduction of the Mandate System Abdullah realized that he could not hope for one Arab state to be established through diplomacy. Now Abdullah was willing to support Faisal's Syrian Kingdom, and he marched or prepared to march into Syria to restore Faisal to his throne, through use of force. Then, after his (Abdullah's) presence had had such an effect on the Arabs in the Trans-Jordan area of the Palestine Mandate, the British offered him the Amirate of Transjordan and a promise for the eventual return of Syria to the Hashemites (through Great Britain's good offices).<sup>2</sup>

Abdullah was once again able to change his methods without changing his goal, the eventual formation of a Hashemite Kingdom of Greater Syria. This one ambition governed the life and actions

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 181-182, 184.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., n. 1, p. 204.

of Abdullah, permitted him to accept British aid at the cost of British interference in the internal affairs of Transjordan, permitted him to consider making a separate peace with the Zionists of Palestine during the war in 1948, furnished the motive for the annexation of what is now referred to as Jordan's West Bank, and led to a bitter rivalry with other Arab States, principally Egypt, which also meant to dominate the Arab Middle East.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Abdullah and Transjordan became bothersome to the rest of the Arab States. While they could understand his motive and appreciate his goal, they feared his ambition and could not abide his tactics, which involved compromise with an enemy.

Some of these points will be made more clear in the subsequent chapter as we examine the events which occurred between Transjordan and other Arab States, and between Transjordan and Palestine (subsequently and now known as Israel).

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<sup>1</sup>All of these matters are dealt with at length in the succeeding chapter and are mentioned here only as examples of actions taken or considered by Abdullah which were generally unsatisfactory to the majority of Arab leaders of the countries of the Arab Middle East.

## CHAPTER IV

### JORDAN AND THE ARAB STATES

As we have seen, Transjordan's foreign relations were extremely limited by various treaty agreements with Great Britain. Not until 1939 was Transjordan permitted to have consular representation in even the neighboring Arab countries. Thus any study of Transjordan's relations with other countries is largely limited to the Arab countries of the Middle East.

We have already seen how Great Britain, in 1941 offered to support any scheme for Arab Unity that "commands general approval" (see p. 38 above). Several plans for unity were proposed, among which the most prominent were the Fertile Crescent Plan of Nuri es-Said, then Prime Minister of Iraq, and the Greater Syria Plan of King Abdullah.

Nuri es-Said's recommendation was, first, that a "Greater Syria" be formed, that Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan be re-united into one state; and that an Arab League be formed by this new Syria and Iraq, but a league which could be joined by the other Arab states at will. This plan also provided for a Jewish National Home in an Arab Syria, and, if necessary, a "privileged regime" for the Maronites of Lebanon.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 236-237.



This scheme was generally not acceptable to the Arab countries, for in the years since the Damascus Protocol, the Arab Revolt, and the establishment of the various mandates, many Arab governments had been formed, and countries possessed individual ambitions; it was no longer possible to dream of a single Arab Government, or even of a close federation, including a union of some of the Arab states.

Abdullah's plan did not differ greatly from that of Nuri's; in addition to the points listed above, Abdullah's plan called for a constitutional monarchy with Abdullah as King, and where Nuri's plan implies a cessation of Jewish immigration into Palestine, Abdullah's specifically provides for that cessation.<sup>1</sup> It should also be noted that Abdullah included an alternate plan, and that neither plan was originally referred to as the "Greater Syria Plan."<sup>2</sup>

The objections to Abdullah's plan were even greater than those against Nuri's-Said's plan. Carl Brocklemann has written; "The discord, suspicions and jealousies among the Arab States and their leaders were strong, and though the countries were ready to pay lip service to unity, each had its own axe to grind."<sup>3</sup> Lebanon, with its half-Christian population, was guarding its independence against the predominantly Muslim populations of the neighboring states; King Saud did not desire such a large, strong state as a "Greater Syria" under Hashemite leadership on the border of Saudi Arabia; and Egypt, also, did not favor the plan.

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<sup>1</sup>See paragraph 3. d) of Annex B.      <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Carl Brocklemann, History of the Islamic Peoples, p. 512.

Such a large state might well successfully challenge Egypt's ambitions to power in the hoped leadership of a looser Arab union.

It will be noted that Egypt had not previously been considered as being within the Arab Middle East. The Arab lands, as defined by the Damascus Protocol of 1915 was bordered, on the west, by the Red Sea (see above, p. 3), thus excluding Egypt. Brigadier John Bagot Glubb is one of the writers who have expressed the opinion that the Egyptians were not regarded, by the Arabs, as being Arabs. He also writes that the Egyptians "considered the Arabs to be a backward and ignorant race. The inclusion of Egypt in the list of Arab States was profoundly to modify the position of the Arabs in subsequent times."<sup>1</sup>

It must be said that Glubb's opinion is not unanimously held, though it is far from a minority opinion. George Lenczowski has written:

Owing, among other things, to the existence of El-Azhar University, the highest seat of Moslem learning, Egypt has always aspired to spiritual and political leadership in the Arab world. One of King Farouk's tutors and closest advisers has been Sheikh El-Maraghi, president of El-Azhar, and it is known that the King, in contrast to Mustafa Kemal of Turkey, believes in stressing Egypt's Arab and Mohammedan character as well as her links to the past . . . .<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Glubb, Soldier, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup>Lenczowski, op. cit., p. 417. Albert Hourani would apparently identify the Egyptians as Arabs, but points out that it was sometimes difficult to convince the Egyptians. He writes: "Since a nation is defined ultimately in terms of language alone, it includes all those who speak the language; its boundaries are those of the language, no more and no less. Thus (Sati al-) Husri . . . has spent much time trying to convince Egyptians that they are part of the Arab world. Even in the 1930's he was writing to this

It is not my purpose, here, to become involved in the discussion of the degree of Arabness of Egypt. Much confusion on this point has been caused by the synonomous usage of the words "Arab" and "Muslim." The words are not synonomous, there are Arabs who are not Muslims, and there are Muslims who are not Arabs. The question is not so easily solved as this, for there are inter-relationships between Islam and Arab Nationalism, and even here Egypt might qualify as Arab by virtue of their Islamic heritage and the fact that they speak the Arabic language.<sup>1</sup>

Being aware, then, that some difference of opinion exists, even among peoples in the Arab Middle East of today,<sup>2</sup> we are faced with Egypt's presence among the list of Arab States searching for a suitable form of union.

Egypt, then, finding common ground with Lebanon and Saudi Arabia in opposing the formation of a united Syria, and having her own ambitions, takes up her role as an Arab State.

Two years had passed since Great Britain had offered to support an acceptable plan for Arab unity, and Great Britain, recognizing that a united Syria was out of the question for the present at least, felt obliged to issue another statement on 24 February 1943. The statement, issued again by Mr. Eden, reads as follows:

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effect; and that is remarkable, both because the main current of Egyptian nationalism at that time was Pharonic or Mediterranean, not Arab, and because the Arab nationalists of his generation . . . tended to look towards Baghdad rather than Cairo, and to think of the Arab nation as ending at Sinai." Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939, pp. 315-316.

<sup>1</sup>Hourani, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>The work of Hourani's cited above deals at length with the question of Egyptian Arabism. Mr. Hourani has included translations

As I have already made plain, the British Government would view with sympathy any movement among the Arabs to promote economic, cultural or political unity, but clearly the initiative in any scheme would have to come from the Arabs themselves. So far as I am aware, no such scheme<sup>1</sup> which commands general approval has yet been worked out.

Ezzeldin Foda, describing this statement as a clear-cut change of British policy says:

Great Britain therefore abandoned -- temporarily -- the Hashimite projects . . . . When Egypt took advantage of this new policy and initiated the summoning of the Arab Premiers and delegated representatives for consultations to realize all-Arab Unity, the other countries -- Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia -- recognized her leadership as a counterbalance to Hashimite politics.<sup>2</sup>

A series of meetings was held in Cairo between the Egyptian Prime Minister, Nahas Pasha, and representatives of the other Arab States. These conferences showed that only Syria expressed any real willingness to cede her sovereignty, but only for the sake of an all-Arab Unity, nothing less. As has already been remarked, King Farouk and King Saud feared the influence of a united Syria; the new states of Syria and Lebanon also had their objections to the united Syria schemes, and Egypt was able to assume the leadership of this group, being fairly certain of her ability to control the policy of any league that might be formed.<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly a new stage of Inter-Arab relations began, and

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from the works of prominent Arab Nationalists: such as E. Rabbath (Edmond Rabat), Konstantin Zurayk, H. Z. Nuseibeh, Naguib Azoury, S. al-Husri and others. See Chapter XI, op. cit.

<sup>1</sup>The Times, 24 February 1943.

<sup>2</sup>Ezzeldin Foda, The Projected Arab Court of Justice, pp. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup>Tom Little, Egypt, p. 257.

from September to October 1944, the representatives of the Arab States conferred at Alexandria, trying to determine the extent and probable strength of unity which might be achieved. It was already clear that the creation of one central political authority for all Arab countries was out of the question, and it was soon evident that it would also be impossible to establish a federation with executive powers, one that would be agreeable to all the States, for the largely Christian Lebanon and the isolationist Yemen were not willing to cede any of their sovereignty.

With no hope of achieving real union the Arab leaders settled on a loose federation. "It was clear therefore that any fruitful scheme of cooperation would have to be conceived in terms of the unimpaired sovereignty of each of the Arab States in their existing boundaries."<sup>1</sup>

Transjordan and Iraq were, of course, included in these discussions, and it is interesting to note the instructions which the Amir Abdullah gave to the Transjordanian Prime Minister, Tawfiq Abul Huda, prior to his going to Egypt to discuss Arab Unity with Nahas Pasha. We will see from the following excerpt that Abdullah had not given up his plans for a "Greater Syria."

To our Prime Minister, Tawfiq Pasha Abu'l Huda:

Instruction regarding the question of Arab Unity  
 . . . The late King Husayn meant by the Arab countries those countries which are bounded on the west, by the Egyptian frontiers, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea;<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Marlowe, Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism (hereafter referred to as A.N.B.I.), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>It is significant that Abdullah did not define the western boundary in the traditional manner, but specifically mentions and excludes Egypt.

The British reservations included the western coast of Syria, such as Mersine and Adana, and the late King agreed that these should not be considered as purely Arab.<sup>1</sup>

Since both the coastal and the interior parts of Palestine and Syria were the object of the (Arab) Revolt, they constitute, therefore, the problem from which we should emerge either with total unity or with a confederation<sup>2</sup> . . . .

The federation which is being worked for today, and which depends upon Egypt and Iraq, will not be durable unless the Syrian territories - - Greater Syria - - are either united or federated. If the sovereignty of these territories remains incomplete under foreign mandates, or if locally disunited, their conformity with Egypt and Iraq will be so weak and inconsistent that they will be unable to carry out their obligations in this respect . . . . The Arabs of Greater Syria are determined to attain their rights in their country, namely, independence and either unity or federation . . . .

As for the Palestine question . . . There is no escape from the inclusion of Palestine in the federation or unity . . . .

As for Lebanon, there is no objection to leaving to her the choice between unity or federation with all these Arab countries, and to her maintaining the form and method she may choose; but the question of Great Lebanon is among those Syrian rights which should not be neglected . . . .

As for Egypt . . . . she is one of the leading Arab countries. . . . The Arab countries, therefore, welcome with all their might unity with this dear state, and laud those who are working for it, especially (her) respected leader. The Amir of Transjordan supports with all his power the efforts of Egypt and Iraq, and insists that Egypt and Iraq should work for the unity or federation of Syria before any other Arab federation. Let, then, Your Excellency's discussions with His Excellency (Nahas Pasha) be conducted on this basis . . . .<sup>3</sup>

The talks on Arab Unity progressed beyond these discussions to the drawing up of a Protocol for the formation of a League of

<sup>1</sup>The British reservations also included the Syrian coast west of a line drawn from Homs to Hama and Aleppo; see pp. 3-4 above.

<sup>2</sup>Abdullah always treats Palestine as a part of "Greater Syria"; this emphasis, here placed on Palestine, shows his concern of the matter, and it intimates an awareness of its especial importance as an issue among the Arab States.

<sup>3</sup>Letter addressed by Amir Abdullah of Transjordan to Prime Minister Teqfik Abul Huda, concerning the question of Arab Unity, dated 24 August 1943, trns. Muhammad Khalil, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 16-18.

Arab States. In the closing months of 1944, the Protocol of Alexandria was completed, and the plans were laid for a future meeting to refine the Protocol and confirm the proposed steps towards unity by effecting a pact among the concerned Arab States.

The Protocol of Alexandria, as signed by the participating states, provided for an organization of all Arab States and the establishment of a loose federation tying all the states together. Section three of the Protocol stated: "the Committee hopes that the Arab States will be able in the future to consolidate that step by other steps, especially if postwar events should result in institutions which bind various powers more closely together."<sup>1</sup>

It would appear from this that the various member states were in favor of closer unions being formed within the membership of the proposed League of Arab States, but the Pact of the League of Arab States was not nearly so decisive as the Protocol had been. Article Eight of the Pact states:

Each member state shall respect the systems of government established in the other member states and regard them as exclusive concerns of those states. Each shall pledge to abstain from any action calculated to change established systems of government.<sup>2</sup>

It would almost seem that this article in its particular form was included in the Pact of the League of Arab States (The Arab League) to serve as a warning to Abdullah that he should forget his Greater Syria Empire. It certainly is not in the spirit of the "Consolidation Article" of the Protocol; however,

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<sup>1</sup>Foda, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Arab Information Center, Basic Documents of the League of Arab States, pp. 12-13.

we must also note that Article Nine of the Pact "waters down" somewhat the prohibitive nature of the preceding article:

States of the League which desire to establish closer cooperation and stronger bonds than are provided by this Pact may conclude agreements to that end.<sup>1</sup>

It seems improbable that Abdullah would submit to such restrictions; the "Greater Syria" proposals of Nuri es-Said and Abdullah had been refused by the other Arab States, why should not Iraq and Transjordan refuse to accept such restrictions as the Pact of the Arab League would impose on them? It is not consistent with Abdullah's personality to give up his goal, the re-uniting of Syria, so easily.

A part of the answer, I think, lies in the question of Palestine. In August of 1944, during the drawing up of the Protocol of Alexandria, Abdullah had written:

. . . Now, however, I may say that, with the recent Zionist attempt against the departing High Commissioner, the danger constituted against Palestine by the Jews and their ambitions beyond Palestine has become evident. In view of our close proximity (to Palestine), the Zionist movement threatens us here before any other country; hence the question of preserving the very existence and safety of Palestine is vital to Transjordan.

. . . Your Excellency will therefore see that, under the circumstances, the question of representing Palestine at the Conference is of first (importance) to us, and that opinion is one in both Transjordan and Palestine concerning this national problem . . . .<sup>2</sup>

Interesting aspects, in retrospect, are presented here.

Professor Speiser has observed that the Palestine Question, based

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter addressed by Amir Abdullah of Transjordan to Mustafa an-Nahas, Egyptian Prime Minister, dated 14 August 1944, trns. Khalil, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 19.



on the Arabs' opposition to Zionism has "played a decisive role in the formation of the League of Arab States and it constituted the main single reason for that body's initial cohesion."<sup>1</sup> The Arab States were united in their desire to see a cessation of Jewish influence in Palestine, and to see the country returned to Arab control, but they could not agree who would rule Arab Palestine.

The first step in the Palestine Question, however, was not one of who would rule, but the reduction and elimination of Jewish control. This need was recognized and provided for within the Pact in the following Annex:

At the end of the last war Palestine, like the other Arab States detached from the Ottoman Empire, was liberated from Ottoman domination. Having become autonomous, she was no longer dependent on any other state.

The Treaty of Lausanne proclaimed that her fate would be settled by the interested parties.

But if Palestine has not been able to order her own destiny, it is no less true that it was on the basis of recognition of her independence that the Covenant of the League of Nations in 1919 settled her status. Her international existence and independence cannot therefore be questioned any more than can the independence of any other Arab country.<sup>2</sup>

If, for reasons independent of her will, this existence has failed to materialize, this circumstance does not constitute an obstacle to the participation of Palestine in the work of the Council of the League. The signatory States of

<sup>1</sup>Paul Speiser, The United States and the Near East, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup>The practical or "virtual and complete" independence of some of the signatories of the Pact of The League of Arab States could be questioned; Transjordan was still under Mandate, her independence was not recognized by Great Britain until 22 March 1946; Syria and Lebanon had declared their independence in late 1941; sovereign status had been conferred on both by the U. N. in March 1945, but French troops remained in both countries against the will of the native government until 1946; and the British were active in Egypt until the 1950's. Lanczowski, op. cit.

of the present Pact consider that, under these conditions and by reason of the special circumstances involving Palestine, until that country can exercise all the effective attributes of her independence, it behooves the Council of the League to designate an Arab representative from Palestine who will participate in the work of the Council.<sup>1</sup>

So, for its own reason, Transjordan acquiesced to this lesser form of union, and the Pact of the League of Arab States was signed, in Cairo, on 22 March 1945, by the seven original members: Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, Lebanon and Yemen. This was in no way to indicate that Abdullah's ambitions for a unified Syria had been forgotten. Evidence that mention of the "Greater Syria Plan" had been made is to be found in a statement issued by the Lebanese Foreign Minister in November 1945, just a few months after the signing of the Arab League Pact. In this statement the Lebanese Minister said that such a project would not be considered or discussed by Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> The following November, 1946, a group of Jordanian Deputies addressed a question to the Foreign Minister asking for the Jordanian Government's views regarding the Lebanese statement.<sup>3</sup> The Foreign Minister, ash-Shurayqy, answered, in part:

. . . The Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, while adhering to the Pact of the League of Arab States, will never give up the Covenant of Syrian unity or federation. (This is) not only in its character as a Syrian state, but also because of its conviction that any revocation of this Covenant will also constitute a revocation of Syria's

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<sup>1</sup> Arab Information Office, The Arab World and the Arab League, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Statement by the Lebanese Foreign Minister (Hamid Franjiyya), concerning the Greater Syria Plan, dated 13 November 1945, trns. Khalil, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Question addressed by a number of Deputies to the Jordanian Foreign Ministers about Syrian Unity, dated 11 November 1946, Ibid., p. 25.

natural rights and a rejection of her national struggle, geographic existence, and common regional interests - - (a revocation) which cannot be accepted by any Syrian who believes in his country.

Everybody has recognized, from the very beginning, the independence of Lebanon. . .

We have a right to ask why sister Lebanon should have been allowed to expand at the expense of Syria and without (Syria's) being consulted at the time, and yet why Syria . . . should not be allowed to unite by her own free choice. . . .

Reference has sometimes also been made to Zionism. Some have gone so far as to allege that the call for unity or federation is nothing but an (attempt) at expansion at the expense of Palestine . . . . On the contrary, Syrian unity or federation will constitute a new defensive power that would repel the Zionist danger . . . .

I believe that no Syrian who has faith in his country does not consider that the continuation of the estrangement between our regions is only in the interest of (others). The Jordanian policy will continue to consider the Syrian general unity as the basis and the main (principle) of its national programme. In this, it will be inspired only by the national covenants and by Arab ideals.

The speech from the Throne last week<sup>1</sup> so clearly explained this point that no further clarification will be needed . . . .<sup>2</sup>

Discussions and statements filled the Arab press for the remainder of that year, Jordan claiming that Syrian Unity was the will of the concerned peoples and in accordance with Article Nine of the Pact of the League of Arab States; Syria and Lebanon claiming the project to be a violation of Article Eight of the Pact and maintaining that the Arab League provided the necessary and desired degree of unity.

<sup>1</sup> King Abdullah's speech concerning question of Arab Unity, dated 11 November 1946, Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Reply of Jordanian Foreign Minister (ash-Shurayqy) to the Question of the Jordanian Deputies (re: Syrian Unity), dated 19 November 1946, Ibid., p. 26.

The Arab League and the "Greater Syria Project" were not Jordan's only diplomatic concerns at this time. The year was 1946, the year that Transjordan signed the Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain. That treaty, signed 22 March 1946, contained a Preamble which recognized Transjordan as an independent state.<sup>1</sup>

On 7 December 1946 the Constitution of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan was signed, to become effective upon its publication in the Official Gazette. The Constitution was so published in the Official Gazette, No. 886, dated 1 February 1947.<sup>2</sup> This Constitution officially changed the name of the country from the Amirate of Transjordan to the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan,<sup>3</sup> but few countries recognized the new name of the State, and fewer still, it would seem, recognized the State as independent.

Immediately after the signing of the Anglo-Transjordanian Treaty and before the adoption of the Constitution, Transjordan had begun applying for membership in the United Nations Organization. The initial application was submitted in July, 1946, but

<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, Colonial Office, "Transjordan No. 1 (1946)," Treaty of Alliance between . . . Great Britain and . . . Transjordan, (Cmd. 6779), dated Amman, 22 March 1946 (hereafter referred to as Cmd. 6779).

<sup>2</sup>op. cit., pp. 602-610; see n., p. 41 above).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Even the English translation of the Constitution read Transjordan; however, the Arabic reads "Dustoor al-Mamlakat il-Urduniyat il-Hashimiyah". While the writer has not had the opportunity to examine the Official Gazette containing the May 25th, 1946, declaration of the new name, it is to be noted that all issues of the Official Gazette for the year 1947 and after bear the title which translates "The Official Gazette for the Jordanian Hashimite Kingdom."

was voted down on 28 August when the Soviet Union vetoed the application.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Union vetoed Transjordan's application again the following year, serving notice that it would continue to do so if the matter was brought up again.<sup>2</sup>

A certain dualism may be recognized in the policy of the United States, which supported Jordan's application for membership to the United Nations (through principle), but refused to grant recognition to the new state.<sup>3</sup>

The reasons given for this failure to recognize Jordan as an independent state were that Jordan's dependence on Great Britain for such a large part of its ordinary budget made Jordanian existence without British support highly improbable if not impossible, and the presence of British troops on Jordanian soil, authorized by the 1946 Treaty of Alliance, was an indication that the integrity of Jordan was dependent on British military support.<sup>4</sup>

In attempts to alleviate this criticism, a new treaty between Great Britain and the "Hashimite Kingdom of Transjordan" was executed in Amman on 15 March 1948.<sup>5</sup> It was hoped that this new treaty would eliminate many of the existing criticisms of

<sup>1</sup>United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, 1st year, 2nd Session, No. 5, pp. 91-102.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2nd Year (1947), No. 78, pp. 2039-2041.

<sup>3</sup>The United States did not grant recognition to Jordan until 1949, after the annexation of Arab Palestine. Jordan was not admitted to the United Nations' Organization until 1955.

<sup>4</sup>U. N., Security Council, loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office, "Transjordan No. 1 (1948)," Treaty of Alliance between . . . Great Britain and . . . Transjordan, dated, Amman 15 March 1948, Cmd. 7368 (hereafter referred to as Cmd. 7368).

British financial support of the Jordanian Government; however, while the wording of the treaty was changed to some extent, Great Britain still maintained a great deal of control over Jordan, especially the army. Article 6 paragraph 5 of the Annex, an integral part of the treaty, reads as follows:

(5) His Britannic Majesty will (a) afford all possible facilities to His Majesty the King of the Hashimite Kingdom of Transjordan for the military instruction of Transjordan officers at schools of instruction maintained for His Britannic Majesty's forces, and (b) provide arms, ammunition, equipment and aircraft and other war materials for the forces of His Majesty the King of the Hashimite Kingdom of Transjordan.<sup>1</sup>

While this article does not limit the number of troops or their means of employment, it was effectively controlled by the British through the restriction of arms and equipment, as well as military schooling, to British sources. It should be noted, however, that the Jordanian Government had made a separate agreement, while Abdullah was in London in 1948, regarding the role the Arab Legion was to play in the Palestine situation.

Glubb Pasha, then Commanding Officer of the Arab Legion, had been a member of this treaty delegation to London in the Spring of 1948, and he has given us an account of a meeting which took place between Jordan's Prime Minister, Tawfiq Abul Huda, and the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Earnest Bevin. Glubb reports that Tawfiq Pasha informed Mr. Bevin that when the British withdrew from Palestine the Palestinian Arabs would be in sore straits, for the Jews had prepared a police force and also had an army, in the form of the Hagana, but the Arabs had made no preparations to govern themselves and had no army. Tawfiq Pasha feared that,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

with the withdrawal of the British, either the Jews would disregard the U. N. Partition Plan and seize all of Palestine or else Haj Amin al-Husaini, the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, would return and attempt to make himself ruler of Arab Palestine. As neither Great Britain nor Transjordan would be satisfied with either event, the government of Jordan, Tawfiq said, proposed to send the Arab Legion to occupy those parts of Arab Palestine contiguous to Jordan.

According to Glubb, Mr. Bevin replied: "It seems the obvious thing to do."<sup>1</sup>

Glubb writes further: "It should be recollected that, when this conversation took place, neither the British nor the Trans-Jordanians had any idea that the Arab League would intervene - - much less that the Arab States would send troops to Palestine."<sup>2</sup>

To fully appreciate this statement we must take a quick look at events as they had been developing, regarding the Palestine question. Throughout the period between the wars, there was conflict among the Jews, the Arabs, and Great Britain (the Mandatory Power). It had become evident that the Zionists intended the creation of Palestine as The Jewish National State and not the creation of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. During the early years of the Mandate the Arabs were powerless, for the Jews had British military support and the support of world opinion.

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<sup>1</sup>Glubb, Soldier, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

By 1939 Great Britain finally began to gain a more pro-Arab perspective. The British White Paper of 1939<sup>1</sup> provided for a curtailment of Jewish immigration and the eventual establishment of a "unitary state" under Arab rule.<sup>2</sup> World War II and the Palestine White Paper<sup>3</sup> had somewhat eased the long-lasting tensions in Palestine, when the Jews again tried to renew their immigration program, claiming Palestine as a refuge for Europe's persecuted Jews. Finally in May 1942, a Zionist Conference in New York produced the Biltmore Program, which demanded the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. Following this resolution, which was the first time the Zionists had openly declared their intention of forming a Jewish National State, the Jews, in the summer of 1942, initiated terrorist activities against British officials and the indigeneous Arab population.

These terrorist activities in Palestine were supplemented outside the Middle East with intensive propaganda campaigns, especially in the United States. The British, who were on the spot, were beginning to realize the impossibility of peacefully accomplishing the Zionist interpretation of the Balfour Declaration, the establishment of Palestine as a national home (state) for the Jewish people.<sup>4</sup> The Zionists wanted all of Palestine, but the land was an Arab country, and the Arabs were not willing to give it up.

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<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers (Peel Report), Cmd. 6019 (hereafter referred to as Cmd. 6019); see Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>See p. 6, above, with n. 2.



In 1945 the British, in a final attempt to resolve the Palestine Question presented the Provincial Autonomy Plan.<sup>1</sup> This would have established largely autonomous Arab and Jewish provinces under a central government. But this plan was not acceptable to either the Arabs or the Zionists; neither were willing to have Great Britain remain in any sense in the Central Government.

Succeeding events have shown that the Arabs have never again been offered so much, and indeed, have only lost more and more, but in their traditional manner, they refused to compromise. Glubb has written that "this unrealistic attitude was largely due to the fact that the Arab League had now taken over the conduct of the Arab cause in Palestine, and the Arab League at this time was dominated by Egypt."<sup>2</sup>

With the failure of the Provincial Autonomy Plan, Great Britain notified the United Nations that she would surrender her Mandate and would be withdrawn from Palestine by 1 August 1948 (this date was later advanced to midnight 14/15 May 1948).<sup>3</sup> Great Britain was ready to admit her failure to cope with the situation. She had hoped to gain the support of the United States for the Provincial Autonomy Plan, but, when asked to participate in an Anglo-American Commission to study the feasibility of forcing the Provincial Autonomy Plan on the Palestinians,

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<sup>1</sup>Cmd. 7044, pp. 3-8.

<sup>2</sup>Glubb, Britain and the Arabs, p.283.

<sup>3</sup>U. N. G. A., 2nd Session, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Records, pp. 170, 249 (hereafter referred to as Ad Hoc).

the Americans had irresponsibly used the opportunity to gain the Jewish vote in the American elections of 1946. Despite the tensions and terrorism found in Palestine, the Americans on the Commission had urged Great Britain to reopen Palestine for Jewish immigration, and to admit 100,000 Jews into Palestine immediately.<sup>1</sup>

Following the May 1946 report of the Anglo-American Commission, the Arab League States held a conference to discuss future Arab policy. A first conference held at Inchas was closely followed by a secret session, held at Bludan, Syria. These two meetings were publicized as evidence of Arab Unity, but it soon became evident that the Arab League was unable to present a united front. Some of the League members desired to adopt threatening and uncompromising attitudes, and the secret agreement made at Bludan is said to have called for stringent economic actions against those foreign powers supporting partition.<sup>2</sup> It has since become evident that, if this was the case, the agreement certainly was not unanimous (it should be remembered that decisions of the Arab League are binding only on those states who support the decision)<sup>3</sup> Ibn Saud was restrained by prospects of losing oil royalties, and Transjordan had her loyalties to Great Britain as did Iraq. Abdullah, it would seem, was not violently opposed to either partition or the

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Seaburg, "The League of Arab States: Debacle of a Regional Arrangement," International Organization, Vol. III, No. 1. (February 1949), pp. 633-634.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 637.

<sup>3</sup>Arab Information Center, op. cit., p. 13.

making of a separate peace with the Zionists in Palestine, that is if certain conditions could be met.<sup>1</sup>

At this time the Arab Higher Committee<sup>2</sup> was boycotting the U. N. Special Committee on Palestine and it fell to the Arab League to represent the Palestine Arabs.<sup>3</sup> The U. N., at this time was considering the partition of Palestine, dividing it into Jewish and Arab territories,<sup>4</sup> and the Arab League found it could not stop approval of the partition plan. The Arab League, acting outside the U. N., had decided that "vigorous action" was needed to combat the partition schemes; it was decided to station military forces of the states of the Arab League on the borders of Palestine, prepared to occupy all of Palestine when the

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<sup>1</sup>Seaburg, op. cit., pp. 637-638. Glubb writes: "We in Transjordan . . . favoured partition, but we considered it essential to retain British garrisons in Jerusalem and Haifa . . . . Such parts of Palestine as were allotted to the Arabs would have been incorporated into the neighboring Arab States. Galilee would have joined Lebanon; Samaria and Judaea would have been united to Trans-Jordan; and the Gaza-Beersheba district to Egypt. Soldier, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>The Arab Higher Committee was the political organ of the Palestine Arabs. It was composed of six political groups which were divided into two main groups; the first was led by the Mufti, Haj Amin, who dominated the Committee; the second was led by Raghieb Bey Nashashibi, who was in favor of reaching some compromise with the British. This latter group, the smaller, was naturally drawn to Abdullah.

<sup>3</sup>It is to be remembered that Jordan and Yemen were not members of the U. N. at this time and Jordan was not even recognized as an independent state. The Yemen was admitted to the U.N. in 1947 and Jordan in 1955.

<sup>4</sup>U.N.G.A., Report to the General Assembly by the United Nations' Special Committee on Palestine (hereafter referred to as U.N.S.C.O.P.), Supplement No. 11, 1947, Vol. III, Annex A, pp. 42-46.

British Mandate was terminated in May.<sup>1</sup> In December 1947 an extraordinary Conference of Foreign Ministers was held in Cairo, and an Arab League Military Committee and a volunteer Arab Liberation Army were formed.

All of these events had transpired before the Jordanian treaty delegation had gone to London in the Spring of 1948, thus it seems odd that Glubb should write that the Transjordanians had no idea the Arab League would send troops to Palestine (see above, p. 73 ).

Throughout 1948 the situation in Palestine worsened. For all practical purposes the British had already given up her position as the Mandatory Power, and were only waiting for May 15th when they could withdraw their officials and army elements. In the meantime confusion and fighting increased in Palestine. Glubb has written:

The Jews began slowly and methodically to conquer the Arab quarters of the city (Jerusalem) . . . . While these house-to-house battles were in progress British units were only a few hundred yards away. Yet they intervened slowly and deliberately only if a particular battle lasted too long, or if heavy casualties seemed to be likely . . . . Perhaps the British were to be excused . . . when they knew that, a month or so later, the two sides intended in any case to fight it out.<sup>2</sup>

One finds a great divergence among reports of events from late 1947 through 1948. Most of the chroniclers of events are, while primarily British by nationality, to be associated with particular Arab countries, and their accounts reflect their personal feelings of derived loyalty or disaffection to these countries. It must be remembered that many of the official

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<sup>1</sup>Seaburg, op. cit., p. 658.

<sup>2</sup>Glubb, Soldier, p. 71.

documents of the period have not been published, and accounts are largely derived from personal observations and unofficial sources. One of these writers, John Marlowe, has cautioned us saying, "All the historian can do is to make objective use of, and draw such conclusions as are forced on him by, the available evidence."<sup>1</sup>

Marlowe then writes of the Arab League Conference held in the Lebanon during the winter of 1947. He writes:

The only person at Aley who apparently had any doubts about the wisdom of the proceedings was Nograshy, the Egyptian Prime Minister. He had no illusions about Egypt's military preparedness and realized that, even on the assumption of an Arab victory, Abdullah would be the only beneficiary.<sup>2</sup>

This account of Marlowe's seems strange when we consider that the great majority of writers speak of the Arab League, at this time, as an Egyptian dominated instrument, and in the case of Palestine, picture Egypt as supporting the militant Haj Amin al-Husaini against Abdullah's ambitions. It, therefore, appears strange that the Egyptian delegate would be alone in his stand, a stand that according to the following writers would have given Egypt and Jordan a common cause and should have permitted a unified League position.

Paul Seaburg, in his article "The League of Arab States . . .", writes:

The Greater Syria Plan of Abdullah constituted the chief obstacle to Arab unity on the (Palestine) question . . . .  
If the Arab portions of Palestine could be united with

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<sup>1</sup>Marlowe, A.N.B.I., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Transjordan, the scheme would have been greatly enhanced . . . . Transjordan denials to the contrary, it is probably correct that in February 1948 the Transjordanian Government engaged in secret negotiations in Washington and at Lake Success with a view to obtaining the support of the United States Government for its plan for Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

We have already noted Abdullah's plan for occupying Arab Palestine and the apparent approval of Mr. Bevin (above, p. 73); it is implied that had Abdullah gained the approval of the United States sufficient pressure would have been applied to permit their peaceful accomplishment. Much Arab criticism has been directed at Abdullah for his willingness to accept partition and a "separate peace" with the Zionists.<sup>2</sup>

Glubb, defending King Abdullah and Jordan, writes:

The Jordan Government was not admitted to the inner councils of the Egyptian and Syrian Governments, or of the Mufti, who was in Damascus. It would appear, however, that these Arab leaders, together with Abdul Rahman Pasha Azzam, Secretary-General of the Arab League, had already decided to use force . . . . The Arab Governments did immense harm to the cause of the Palestine Arabs, because they encouraged them to be defiant, and when it came to violence, they failed.

Only King Abdullah and Jordan were in a position to take a balanced view. They were near enough to know the extent and thoroughness of the Jewish preparations. They were in sufficiently close touch with the Arabs to know their inefficiency. . . . He (Abdullah) deprecated the idea of fighting and was immediately covered with bitter reproaches, and charged with treachery in the most approbrious terms.<sup>3</sup>

So we see that the Palestine Question was not merely a difference between Arabs and Zionists as to who would rule the country, but between Arab and Arab as well. Among the Arabs

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<sup>1</sup>Seaburg, op. cit., p. 639.

<sup>2</sup>George Kirk, Survey of International Affairs, The Middle East, 1945-1950 (hereafter referred to as 1945-1950), p. 310; Ann Dearden, Jordan, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup>Glubb, Soldier, pp. 78-79.

there was this considerable disagreement which may be said to have been between Jordan and the remaining members of the Arab League.

If the Arab League could secure the independence of Palestine as an Arab State it most probably would be ruled by the Husaini faction, the ruler of which was the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husaini. The Egyptians had invited Haj Amin to return to the Middle East to head the "Arab Government of All Palestine", which would take membership in the Arab League. This step was taken partly to prevent any realization of Abdullah's Greater Syria Plan.

The Mufti was so successful that Tom Little has written: In fact, Egypt's policy regarding Palestine was at the mercy of Haj Amin el-Husseini, who . . . had re-established through his Higher Committee complete ascendancy over Palestine policy in the League. Extreme opinion everywhere in Egypt and the Arab World was mobilized behind his policy, and those who opposed it . . . had an unfortunate tendency to die at the hands of an assassin. There could be no compromise.<sup>1</sup>

And so the two Arab factions were drawn up; Abdullah of Jordan hoping to join Arab Palestine to Jordan, and willing to accept some sort of partition of Palestine as well as concluding an agreement with Jewish Palestine to ensure peace, but violently opposed to the other, an Arab Palestine ruled by the Mufti; on the other hand Haj Amin was as violently opposed to Abdullah's rule of Palestine as he was to Jewish rule. "Any sort of amicable relationship, either political or personal, between the Husainis and Abdullah, had long been made impossible by the murderous feud

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<sup>1</sup>Little, Egypt, p. 176.

which the Husainis had been carrying on in Palestine since 1937 against their political opponents, most of whom were supporters or clients of Abdullah."<sup>1</sup>

Since Abdullah is known to have had knowledge of these Arab plans for Palestine it is surprising that he was able to send his Prime Minister to Mr. Bevin in early 1948 with the proposal that the Arab Legion occupy the areas of Palestine contiguous to Jordan, and that Glubb could say neither Jordan nor Great Britain knew the Arab States would send troops into Palestine (above, p. 73).

It would seem, however, upon an examination of events rather than speeches, that there was a basis for these beliefs. Apparently the Arabs had hoped there would be no necessity for the troops to enter Palestine, that the Jews in Palestine would be cowed by the threat of an Arab invasion. Glubb has reported:

Two days before the mandate ended . . . I was summoned to two interviews with Azzam Pasha (the Secretary General of the Arab League). He asked me how many men the Arab Legion had. I told him we could send about 4,500 . . . he said he thought we had far more. He then asked me how many I thought the Jews had. I replied that intelligence reports had spoken of 65,000 men. . . . Azzam Pasha again expressed great surprise. He said that he had no idea there were so many.<sup>2</sup>

The very day before the fighting began in Palestine . . . Abdul Rahman Pasha Azzam, admitted to me that they had never believed the issue would come to fighting. "We believed that the solution would be political," he said.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Marlowe, A.N.B.I., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Glubb, Soldier, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup>Glubb, Britain and the Arabs, p. 284.



Ready or not, the Arabs were now committed, there was no alternative to armed intervention. On 15 May 1948 the Arab armies moved across the borders into Palestine; the Jewish forces were already well across the United Nations partition line and had occupied, even while the British troops were still in nominal control, considerable areas allotted to the Arabs.<sup>1</sup>

Abdullah, surprisingly but logically enough, had been named Commander-in-Chief of the Arab armies, surprisingly because of the League's antipathy to Abdullah's ambitions, logically because the Arab Legion had the longest border to defend and probably had the most modern army among the armies of the Arabs. Events soon proved that this was to be no more than a title, for in military as well as political action the Arab countries remained suspicious of one another and were most reluctant to share or delegate authority, men, material or even information.<sup>2</sup>

"The Egyptian appeared to be the largest of the Arab armies, but no information of its strength, operations or intentions was ever made available to the Arab Legion. An Egyptian liaison officer . . . saw all our operational reports, knew our order of battle and visited our fronts whenever he wished. But not one

<sup>1</sup>Glubb, Soldier, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Marlowe, A.N.B.I., p. 51. Glubb writes that Noqrashy Pasha had offered him the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Arab armies; Glubb says he refused and "later on, Egypt offered the title of supreme commander to King Abdullah, but when His Majesty requested an order of battle of the Egyptian Army, his request met with no reply, nor did he ever receive or dispatch a single official letter in his capacity as commander-in-chief. In spite of this; however, the Egyptians (after the debacle) on various occasions attributed the failure of the operations to the incapacity of the royal commander-in-chief." Soldier, p. 85.

word regarding the Egyptian operations was ever made available to us, in spite of many requests.

The total Arab forces which took the field on May 15th, 1948 may be estimated as follows:

Egypt	10,000
Arab Legion	4,500
Syria	3,000
Lebanon	1,000
Iraq	3,000

"This gives a total of 21,500, as against the Jewish figure of 65,000.<sup>1</sup> All these figures, however, are unreliable."<sup>2</sup>

In this initial phase both the Arabs and the Jews strove for land gains, for both were aware that the U.N. was on the verge of ordering a cease fire, for on 17 May, only three days after the open intervention by the Arab League, the United States had submitted such a resolution to the Security Council.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting here to note the degree to which Zionist propaganda was effective, even on the international representatives to the United Nations, whom one would expect to be better informed.

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<sup>1</sup>Marlowe lists the forces as follows: The Israeli forces at the outbreak of the war were made up of: (a) Palmach, the "regular" Hagana striking force consisting of about 3,000 men . . . (b) about another 10,000 combatants . . . . The strength of the five Arab armies invading Palestine has been put at a total of about 20,000 . . . . On paper therefore the Arabs had an overwhelming superiority. Seat of Pilate, p. 255. One wonders how Mr. Marlowe reaches such a conclusion, for with his figures the Arabs were "invading" an interior position with numerical superiority of only 20 to 13. Odds of 3 or 4 to 1 are considered necessary in such a situation.

<sup>2</sup>Glubb, Soldier, pp. 91-94.

<sup>3</sup>U.N., Security Council, Official Records, 3rd Year, No. 72, pp. 42-44.

On 22 May Mr. Warren Austin (United States delegate to the United Nations) declared that the Arab States justification of their intervention - - that Palestine was a single country whose future, after the end of the Mandate, would be determined by the will of the Arab majority - - was "the highest type of evidence of the international violation of the law;" he accused Jordan of contumace, and invited the Security Council to bind every member of the United Nations to "keep Abdullah where he belongs."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, on 29 May, the Security Council was able to communicate the following resolution to the concerned governments and to its mediator in Palestine, Counte Folke Bernadotte:

The Security Council, desiring to bring about a cessation of hostilities in Palestine without prejudice to the rights, claims and positions of either Arabs or Jews, calls upon all governments and authorities concerned to order a cessation of all acts or armed force for a period of four weeks; calls upon all governments and authorities concerned to undertake that they will not introduce fighting personnel into Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan and Yemen during the cease-fire and calls upon all governments and authorities concerned, should men of military age be introduced into countries or territories under their control, to undertake not to mobilize or submit them to military training during the cease-fire; calls upon all governments and authorities concerned, to refrain from importing or exporting war materials into or to Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan and Yemen during the cease-fire; urges all governments and authorities concerned to take every possible precaution for the protection of the Holy Places and of the City of Jerusalem, including access to all shrines and sanctuaries for the purpose of worship by those who have an established right to visit and worship at them; . . . invites the states members of the Arab League and the Jewish and Arab authorities in Palestine to communicate their acceptance of this resolution to the Security Council not later than 6:00 p.m. New York Standard Time on 1st June 1948 . . . .<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Folke Bernadotte, To Jerusalem, pp. 30-31.

The cease-fire finally went into effect on 11 June, to last for a period of four weeks. The Arab governments, particularly Egypt, immediately found themselves in political troubles at home. The local press had been regaling the people with accounts of glorious Egyptian victories so that the Egyptians were expecting a rapid defeat of the Jews, the disappearance of Israel<sup>1</sup> and the founding of the all-Arab State of Palestine. It seems quite clear that the truce was not extended beyond the four week period mainly for political reasons.

Glubb writes of an incident which occurred during the truce when he approached Tawfiq Pasha for an increase in the military budget. Tawfiq replied: "There won't be any more fighting . . . No more fighting! I and Nokrashy Pasha are agreed on that, and if we two are agreed, we can sway the rest . . . . No more fighting, and no more money for soldiers."<sup>2</sup>

Nokrashy had, however, experienced a change of heart, for criticism of his government in Egypt had become severe since the signing of the truce. A renewal of hostilities would distract attention. Glubb says: "The future of the Arabs of Palestine was sacrificed to Egyptian politics."<sup>3</sup>

Tawfiq Pasha has said he was forced to fight again. "I was a minority of one. All the others wanted to renew the fighting.

<sup>1</sup>The State of Israel had been proclaimed on 14 May 1948 with the surrendering of the Mandate by Great Britain. The United States had announced de facto recognition within sixteen minutes of the time of proclamation, yet it waited three years to recognize Jordan. Within one month eleven other nations had recognized Israel as an independent and sovereign state. Kirk, 1945-1950, pp. 269-270.

<sup>2</sup>Glubb, Soldier, p. 145. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

If I had voted alone against it, we should have been denounced as traitors, and the truce would still not have been renewed. Jordan cannot refuse to fight if the other Arabs insist on fighting."<sup>1</sup>

The Jews had agreed to prolong the truce, but the Arabs had refused, and the fighting recommenced. The Arab armies, although the ones choosing to renew the fighting, adopted the role of passive defenders, hoping only to maintain their positions until another cease-fire was ordered by the U. N. The second cease-fire was finally to become effective on 18 July 1948, but the Arabs were much worse off now than they had been just two weeks earlier. It was now clear to all that the Israeli's enjoyed a military superiority.

It was during this second truce period, however, that the Arab League again acted, on the political level, to salvage as much as possible of Palestine. In September 1948, the Arab League, led by Egypt and Syria, announced the formation of the "Arab Government of All Palestine." This government was headed by Abdullah's old enemy, Haj Amin al-Husaini, the Mufti of Jerusalem. The Arab League proclaimed that a "Constituent Assembly" would meet in Gaza on 30 September to pass a vote of confidence in this new government. Even while fighting the Israelis the Arab States were concerned over the balance of power within the Arab Middle East.

By early October the "Arab Government of All Palestine" had been recognized by all the members of the Arab League except Jordan,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

but Abdullah had not been idle. On 1 October 5,000 Palestinian notables of the "National Palestine Congress," formed by Abdullah, met in Amman to denounce the new government and to ask Abdullah to take Palestine under his protection.<sup>1</sup>

During the month of October, a time of political disharmony among the States of the Arab League, Israel broke the truce to move against the Egyptian army in the Negev, that southern desert area separating Jerusalem and Haifa from the Gulf of Aqaba. The Egyptian army was driven rapidly southward as none of the other Arab armies felt they were capable of going to the aid of the Egyptians.<sup>2</sup> The Egyptian army was driven swiftly southwards towards and to Egypt, and Israel won the Negev and an outlet to the Gulf of Aqaba, giving them access to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean without the necessity of passing through the Suez Canal.

In the meetings of the United Nations the Arab League, led by Egypt, were not only condemning the Israeli's for their breach of the truce, but were objecting to Arab Palestine being attached to Jordan (still referred to as Transjordan within international circles). They (the Arab League) had recognized the Mufti's government and they accused Abdullah of "deserting" the Arab cause in July and of not coming to the aid of Egypt when Israel attacked them in October.

In Jordan some 2,000 Arab "delegates", meeting on 1 December in Jericho, had acclaimed Abdullah "King of all Palestine." On

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<sup>1</sup>Esmond Wright, "Abdullah's Jordan: 1947-1951, "Middle East Journal, Vol. V, 1951, pp. 445-446.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, October 1948.

3 December the United Nations voted against awarding Arab Palestine to Transjordan.<sup>1</sup>

The Jordanian Cabinet, disregarding the United Nations action, on 5 December gave approval to the Jericho resolution and announced it would take "every legal and international" measure possible to realize the desires of the Palestinian Arabs.<sup>2</sup> The Cabinet then submitted its decision to the Parliament, and it was expected that Abdullah would proclaim himself King of Palestine upon Parliamentary approval.

King Farouk of Egypt was the first to react. His letter of 10 December declared that the Jericho resolution "did not represent the decision of the Palestinian people" and was not binding. Other Arab leaders also warned Abdullah not to act on the Jericho resolution; even Iraq joined the opponents of Abdullah.<sup>3</sup>

The Jordanian Parliament, of course, approved the resolution, but Abdullah did not then proclaim himself "King of Palestine." He had decided to answer King Farouk's charges; Tawfiq Pasha announced that the Jericho resolution would be implemented "according to constitutional, legal international rules," a public election.

Here we should take note that since 15 May 1948, when Great Britain had surrendered her mandate, Arab Palestine had, in fact if not in law, been under the dominion of Abdullah's Jordan. All parts of Arab Palestine which had been occupied by the Arab Legion had been put under military government upon occupation. With the

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<sup>1</sup>U.N.G.A., Official Record, 3rd Session, 1948, First Committee, pp. 887-890.

<sup>2</sup>Benjamin Shwadran, "Jordan Annexes Arab Palestine," Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. I, 1950, pp. 43-46.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

recent turn of events, Abdullah, on 1 March 1949, abolished the military regime in Palestine and instituted civil governments.<sup>1</sup> In May a new Jordanian Cabinet was formed, including three Palestinians (a fourth, the newly created Minister for Refugees, was added in August).<sup>2</sup>

Abdullah and the Government of Jordan took a further step to facilitate the absorption of Arab Palestine, when on 1 June 1949, General Announcement No. 1 concerning the name of the Kingdom was issued.<sup>3</sup> It has already been commented that other countries had persisted in referring to The Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan as Transjordan. A more literal translation of the old name "Sharq al-Urdun" would be East Jordan, and it is readily apparent that such a name was too restrictive and suggestive to accommodate the kingdom which Abdullah hoped to bring under his rule.

As Abdullah continued to lay a framework for the absorption of Arab Palestine into the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, Egypt began a personal attack on Abdullah in an attempt to counter his moves. He was labelled a traitor who had conspired with the Jews during the war. These accusations were based on evidence produced by Abdullah at-Tel, formerly a Lieutenant Colonel of the Arab Legion and Governor of Jerusalem, who had resigned his position

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<sup>1</sup> Official Gazette, No. 975, 16 March 1949, p. 69, "Law for General Administration in Palestine, Law No. 17 for year 1949."

<sup>2</sup> Shwadran, "Jordan Annexes . . .," pp. 104-105.

<sup>3</sup> Official Gazette, No. 984, 1 June 1949, p. 155. A translation of this communique is to be found in David, op. cit., p. 264; Khalil, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 53.



and later gone to Egypt where he produced copies of correspondence between Abdullah and the Israelis.<sup>1</sup>

In October the Arab League succeeded in isolating Jordan within the League by supporting a plan for internationalization of Jerusalem. Abdullah retaliated by letting the governorship of Jerusalem lapse in December and subsequently ruled it from Amman. He also dissolved the Parliament, announcing that the new elections would be held in April. Arab Palestine was to elect twenty deputies and Jordan twenty deputies.

In February 1950, during the election campaign and just prior to the Arab League Conference scheduled for 25 March, news was released that Israel and Jordan were about to conclude a five-year non-aggression pact. Again the Arab press, particularly the Egyptian, began virulent attacks against Abdullah.<sup>2</sup>

When the Arab League invited the "All Palestine Government" to attend the March conference, it appeared as if Jordan might relinquish her membership in the Arab League. Abdullah issued a statement declaring:

I have recently requested our Minister to Cairo to protest against the Egyptian press which has been attacking Jordan and its King. Indeed the Jordan Government has decided not to attend the League meeting as long as this

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<sup>1</sup>Glubb, *Soldier*, pp. 256-257. "King Abdullah looked upon the armistice (1948) as the first step to peace . . . . King Abdullah decided to explore the possibilities of peace. He wrote to certain Jews whom he knew. The letters were sent through Abdulla al-Tell. . . . It appeared that Tell had opened the King's letters confided to his safe keeping and had taken photostatic copies . . . . The photostats of these letters Abdullah al-Tell now presented to the Egyptian press . . . . King Abdullah was completely indifferent to this furor. He was in favour of peace with Israel, and said so perfectly frankly." Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Shwadran, "Jordan Annexes . . . .," p. 107.

malicious campaign continues. An additional factor in determining this decision is that the League has called in the representatives of what it calls "the Government of Palestine."<sup>1</sup>

After a bit of political maneuvering by both Jordan and the Arab League, Jordan's representative, Baha Uddin Toukan, joined the Conference, voted for a resolution to expel from the League any member contracting a separate peace with Israel, informed the Political Committee that Jordan's policy was to annex Arab Palestine, subject to the approval of the new Parliament, and then Toukan abstained from voting on the resolution stating "the entry of Arab armies into Palestine was a temporary measure, without any suggestion of occupying or partitioning the country, which must be surrendered to its inhabitants after their liberation from the Zionists."<sup>2</sup>

In Jordan King Abdullah went ahead with his plans and answered the Arab League threat of expulsion saying:

. . . If expulsion comes as a result of unifying the two parts of this besieged nation it will be welcome. We do not wish to be of those who oppose unity in the name of the Arab League, from which we had hoped good would come.<sup>3</sup>

The new Parliament met in joint session on 24 April 1950 and adopted a resolution supporting the annexation of Arab Palestine:

. . . Parliament, which represents both sides of the Jordan, resolves this day and declares:

<sup>1</sup>Cited by Benjamin Shwadran, Jordan a State of Tension, p.293.

<sup>2</sup>Shwadran, "Jordan Annexes . . .," p. 110. To Abdullah the most important and immediate issue was the annexation of Arab Palestine; to the League the more decisive issue was the peace negotiations with Israel. League members felt that Abdullah could not consolidate his position if he agreed to the separate peace ban, and they were satisfied with his seeming retreat.

<sup>3</sup>Abdullah, My Memoirs Completed, p. 35.

First, its support for complete unity between the two sides of the Jordan and their union into one state . . . at whose head reigns King Abdullah . . . .  
 Second, . . . to preserve the full Arab rights in Palestine . . . without prejudicing the final settlement of Palestine's just case . . . .<sup>1</sup>

Responding to this action Egypt demanded Jordan's expulsion from the Arab League, but found her control of the League not so complete as she had thought. After several delays, the Political Committee of the League agreed that the annexation was illegal; however, Iraq and Yemen had abstained from the voting. The League decided to postpone, until 12 June, any decision as to punitive measures against Jordan, and the vote taken on 13 June showed only Egypt and Saudi Arabia in favor of expulsion. In place of expulsion, a resolution "to treat the Arab part of Palestine annexed by Jordan as a trust in its hands until the Palestine Question is fully solved in the interests of its inhabitants" was adopted.<sup>2</sup>

Abdullah had succeeded, Arab Palestine was now part and parcel of Jordan, and Jordan remained a member of the Arab League. Within a year the attitude of the Arab League began to change. It was admitted that the Jews would probably exist in Israel for some time to come. For the time being they gave up their ideas of returning the Arab Palestinian refugees to their homes, but only for the time being. The desire to remove Israel remains the primary purpose of the Arab League and is the most outstanding example of "Arab Unity" extant. One noted Arab scholar has remarked, privately, that "the boycott of Israel is a seventh pillar of Islam."

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<sup>1</sup>Cited by Shwadran, "Jordan Annexes . . . .," p. 111.

<sup>2</sup>Cited by Dearden, op. cit., p. 84; Shwadran, Jordan a State of Tension, p. 298.

This, however, is no indication that all was forgiven and forgotten among the member states of the Arab League. Egypt was increasingly jealous of the enlarged Jordan and the increased influence of Abdullah. Of course all those countries which had not approved of the "Greater Syria Plan" were even more critical of Abdullah's actions now. These countries kept close watch on the Jordan, and, it seems, did their part in contributing to situations of unrest in Jordan. We should not forget Haj Amin al-Husaini either. While it is true that he had lost much of his influence and appeal when Arab Palestine was annexed to Jordan, we should remember that events of the preceding years had shown him a relentless and vindictive personality. The ex-Mufti still had his followers, and they formed a discontented element within the new Jordan.

Esmond Wright, writing in 1951, said that there were, within Abdullah's Government, some prominent Palestinians who were critics of Abdullah and of Great Britain, to whom Abdullah owed the existence of his country and the Arab Legion. He writes: "If they (the Palestinians) were anti-Israel in temper, they were equally anti-British, and after the acceptance of defeat, even more anti-British than anti-Israel."<sup>1</sup>

This feeling is understandable enough in Palestinians, but unfortunate and unappreciative for Jordanians. Nevertheless, the antagonism was there, and it spread, by association, to Abdullah. Wright continues:

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<sup>1</sup>Wright, "Abdallah's Jordan," p. 456.

The Palestinian deputies, supported by their colleagues in the Amman press, had on occasion a majority in the new Parliament, and criticism of Abdullah increased steadily: attacks were made on his failure to aid the refugees, on the Greater Syria notion, on the pro-Israel trend, on the reputed power of Glubb Pasha . . . . The final blow to hopes of easy constitutional development came with Parliamentary rejection of the budget in May 1951 . . . .

Whatever the ultimate significance of these new constitutional trials and experiments, Jordan's strength has increased over the last three years in a diplomatic, a military and a "prestige" sense . . . whatever the recent past may indicate there is in Jordan a political reliability that is not to be found in Syria or, perhaps in Egypt; the merger with Arab Palestine has been accomplished with an ease few could have foreseen in 1947 or early 1948.<sup>1</sup>

Many forces were active against Abdullah. Those Palestinians who were opposed to him because of his alliance with Great Britain; those who disapproved of his willingness to make a peace with Israel; those who begrudged him Arab Palestine and feared that this annexation was only one more step towards the realization of Abdullah's ambition of a Hashimite Kingdom of Greater Syria. King Abdullah is said to have told Nazim Qudsi, Premier of Syria, in regard to Saudi threats: "I was driven from it (the Hijaz) by Bedouin who have no place in their hearts either for you or Palestine. They have finished off their work in my native country by sending money to a band of mercenaries to murder me in this portion of the Arab homeland."<sup>2</sup>

In Egypt the ex-Mufti, Haj Amin, was openly advocating the overthrow of the Jordanian Government, and there were, in Jordan, those who were receptive to such violent means. Those new Jordanians of the West Bank had been made aware of their political

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 548-549.

<sup>2</sup>Abdullah, My Memoirs Completed, p. 41.

power through the years of the mandate, and could not reconcile themselves to a life with so little prospect for economic growths, to a political life that was so largely dependent on the pleasure of a monarch to whom they felt no emotional or ideological loyalty. These people were Palestinians, and in the years just passed they had advanced economically and educationally and they had been actively engaged in a struggle for independence. Suddenly they had become (including refugees) a majority in a new country, subject to a ruler they had not chosen and subject to laws they did not approve.

As we have already seen, Abdullah had provided for Palestinian representation in the Jordanian Government, but that representation was not in proportion to their numbers, and their positions were subject to the whims of the King.<sup>1</sup> Benjaim Shwadran has written of the situation in Jordan:

As it was, the Palestinians had just emerged from a defeat at the hands of the Israelis, a defeat which they blamed in no small measure on the very symbol of their new kingdom - - Abdullah. They were subjected to internal pressure from the old Palestinian Arab leadership, especially from the Husaini clan, which had nursed hatred of Abdullah for many years; to pressures from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and even Iraq; and to pressure from the Soviet Union through local communist and other agents. Add to all that the political pressure of intransigence toward Israel, and it becomes obvious that the annexation of Arab Palestine condemned Jordan at once to political instability and economic stagnation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Article 28 of the Constitution (1946); the King could dismiss any individual member or the entire Cabinet; Article 40 empowers the King to dissolve the National Assembly (Parliament). See Davis, op. cit., pp. 240, 242.

<sup>2</sup> Shwadran, Jordan a State of Tension, p. 300.

The Palestinians in the Government demanded that the Cabinet be made responsible to the Parliament rather than to the King. Abdullah, naturally enough, resisted these changes by this new element which would modify his prerogative and weaken his position in the Government. This power of Abdullah's to dismiss individual members of the Cabinet or the entire Cabinet if he so desired was a powerful weapon. Abdullah did not have unlimited trust in his governments, often justifiably, but being right is not necessarily enough.<sup>1</sup>

A contest for power began between Abdullah and the Parliament. Members of Parliament, led by some of the Palestinian deputies and supported by the press, attacked King Abdullah and his policies. Abdullah retaliated by reinstating press censorship, exiling some political leaders, arresting and trying others. The Parliament, in its turn refused to ratify the national budget, and, as he had done before, Abdullah solved this problem by dissolving the Parliament. It became clear that Jordan had reached a Constitutional impasse, and the major issue was the royal prerogative of dismissing the Cabinet and the Parliament.

Abdullah clearly did not wish this question to become a major campaign issue, for he suddenly promised that an amendment to the Constitution would be introduced to the Parliament after

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<sup>1</sup>The furor of 1950 came about when the Parliament wished the Arab Legion to expel the Jews from an area granted them by the Rhodes Armistice. Abdullah changed ministers to prevent such an attack and was severely criticized; however, we have already seen how he used this power to override the wishes of Parliament to ratify the British approved budget (p. 21, above).

elections, scheduled for 29 August, which would make the government responsible to the Parliament rather than to the King.<sup>1</sup>

Abdullah's motives for this sudden move may be subject to question; did he sincerely propose to submit such an amendment which was certain to be accepted, thus curtailing his power, or did he have some plan in mind to insure the amendment's rejection? I choose to believe that Abdullah was prepared to yield the point in an attempt to stave off the Constitutional crisis which was rapidly forming; however, this is only a conjecture, for that situation never arose. Abdullah was shot and killed by a hired assassin on Friday 20 July 1951 as he attended prayers at the Haram as-Sharif, the Great Mosque, at Jerusalem.

Esmond Wright wrote at the time: "With the dreamer's death, his Greater Syria Plan fades. And the center of the political gravity of the Arab East, which for some three years has been in Amman, moves back to Cairo. Whatever the ex-Mufti may gain, the Cairo-Saudi Arabia axis no longer has any serious opposition to face in the councils of the Arab League . . . ." <sup>2</sup>

The assassination, on investigation by a special military court, was proved to have been instigated by the relatives of Haj Amin al-Husaini, the implication being that the former Mufti had planned the whole affair. The assassin was killed on the spot and four accomplices were condemned to death. Abdullah at-Tel

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<sup>1</sup>See King Talal's reference to this promise in his address to the Parliament on 1 November 1951. The Times, 3 November 1951, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Wright, op. cit., p. 460.



was accused as accessory before the fact and was condemned to death in absentia.<sup>1</sup>

While Abdullah's death may have solved the problems of some of the States of the Arab League it solved nothing for Jordan. The question of governmental responsibility was still to be settled, and there was to be a question of succession to the throne. Indeed there was to be a question of Jordan's survival as a state. Abdullah's death solved none of Jordan's problems, but only brought about a deluge of problems and plunged the country into a political crisis that might have been worked out gradually had he remained alive.

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<sup>1</sup>Kirkbride, op. cit., pp. 166-167; Glubb, Soldier, pp. 280-281.

## CHAPTER V

### TIME OF CRISIS

One article appearing in the western press shortly after the assassination of King Abdullah reads:

King Abdullah's death sent half Jordan into deep mourning . . . . But there is no love lost between the thousands of indigent people who regarded his annexation of Arab Palestine as traitorous acceptance of the line that denies them from their former homes, . . . . The rift may well widen because he was shot on the west bank, in Jerusalem. In Cairo, a denial of complicity in the murder has been issued by his enemies . . . but the murderer's motive was clearly the same as Haj Amin's: vengeance on a man who admitted the realities of life and the existence of Israel.

Jordan without Abdullah therefore threatens to become a prey to internal quarrels. These could be more serious because the position about the succession is not clear . . . .

These internal difficulties play into the hands of all who want charge. Among those who wish it must be numbered the Mufti, who wants a territory; the refugees, who want their old homes and jobs again; the Russians, who want trouble for the west; and the "Greater Syria" aspirants of various nationalities who would like an excuse to annex part or all of Jordan (and of course Israel, which would welcome an opportunity to expand eastward). With so many pressure groups weighing upon it, the new government of Jordan, the Prime Minister of which is Tewfik Pasha Abulhuda, must work hard for strength at the center if it wants to preserve stability and independence.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter it is my intention to examine the events preceding and after the death of King Abdullah to ascertain, if possible, the cause and the extent of this crisis, which some

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<sup>1</sup>"Jordan without a King," The Economist, Vol. 161, No. 5631 (28 July 1951), pp. 200-201.

sources feared threatened the very existence of Jordan as a state.

The crisis did not, of course, come upon Jordan full-blown with the death of Abdullah, at least the seeds of dissension must have been present before this time, and it might well have been averted had the throne been constantly occupied. This too we must take into consideration. We have already seen the opposition of many of the Arab States to Abdullah's Greater Syria plan, and the attempts made to block the annexation of Arab Palestine; however, it would appear that these events were sufficiently far in the past that they would not be the cause of Abdullah's death, nor would they, in themselves, cause any threat to the internal affairs in Jordan.

Still, a sufficient number of contemporary sources refer to these events that we must consider them, at least, as contributory causes. It was the Greater Syria ambition of Abdullah that led him to consider the annexation of Arab Palestine. It was the annexation of Arab Palestine that suddenly increased the population of Jordan by about one-half with an exceedingly disproportionate increase in the general educational level and desire for self-expression. It has been frequently intimated that this annexation was accomplished only against the wishes of the Palestinian people, but we should also note the comment of George Kirk who writes: "Contrary to Egyptian and Syrian propaganda at the time, it is stated on good authority that the great majority of the ex-Palestinians favoured the union as giving them the support of a stable government and army, while some

Trans-Jordanians were more doubtful because they feared the encroachment of the better-educated Palestinians."<sup>1</sup>

If this latter were the case, it would seem that the "Trans-jordanians had reason for their uneasiness, for we have seen that the Palestinian members of the Parliament soon began urging for constitutional reforms that would give the Parliament more power, especially after King Abdullah had dismissed the Parliament in May of 1951. This dissatisfaction with the constitutional powers of the elected government has been more than hinted at as a possible cause for Abdullah's assassination, especially at the time of the event. An article appearing in the London Times on 28 July, only a week after Abdullah's death reads:

As it appears in Cairo, the immediate problem which faces Jordan since the assassination of King Abdullah is the maintenance of her stability and perhaps even her integrity against attack from within and without.

. . . within, trouble from Haj Amin's supporters and some politicians who consider Jordan's progress to full democracy too slow.

Jordan is not at the moment in the best position to stand severe internal pressure. Many younger men, especially among the Palestinians, are eager to hurry on with democratic development without understanding sufficiently what it is or how it works . . . . The elections in August will be a severe test of discipline.<sup>2</sup>

This point of view does not take into consideration the wishes of King Abdullah to avoid any such crisis within his government, for there is ample evidence that Abdullah was ready to yield to the demands of the impatient young men. The new Cabinet, which was formed after Abdullah's death, announced its program on 26 July 1951. The third point of that program was "as Abdullah

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<sup>1</sup>Kirk, 1945-1950, n. 2, p. 311.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 28 July 1951, p. 5.

wished, to extend the scope of Parliamentary life and to organize it on a sound basis."<sup>1</sup> Again, we have the words of King Talal as he addressed the newly elected Parliament on 1 November 1951 and promised them the opportunity to affect constitutional reform, in accordance with the wishes of King Abdullah.<sup>2</sup>

This leads us to a consideration of the "succession problem". This matter first came to the attention of the western world in May of 1951 when King Abdullah named the Emir Talal Regent of Jordan for the period when Abdullah would be in Turkey. Abdullah had only been out of the country one day when Emir Talal, the Crown Prince of Jordan, was taken ill, apparently one of the periods of mental instability which were to plague his life and cause his eventual deposition, and had to leave Jordan for medical care in Beirut.<sup>3</sup>

The Emir Naif, Talal's younger brother was then named Regent in Talal's stead.<sup>4</sup> Upon Abdullah's return from Turkey he met with Nuri es-Said, the Prime Minister of Iraq and the Abdul Ilah, Hashimite Regent of Iraq. Reports of this meeting said that the three were conferring on the question of the succession to the throne of Jordan, there apparently being some question, even then, as to Talal's ability to rule.<sup>5</sup>

At the time there also appeared to be other considerations, for it was reported that Abdullah did not get along well with his

<sup>1</sup>The Times, 27 July 1951, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 2 November 1951, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, 17 May 1951, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>The Times, 2 June 1951, p. 5.

oldest son, and that the Emir Naif was the favorite of the King. Nothing came of these reports except a communique from Amman, on 23 June, confirming Talal as the Crown Prince of Jordan<sup>1</sup> and, on 26 June, Jordan's Minister to Egypt announced his resignation. Reports were that the Minister, Hussein Seraj, had been asked to resign because he had told the Egyptian press that serious differences existed between Abdullah and Talal.<sup>2</sup>

At the time of Abdullah's assassination Emir Talal was in a mental hospital near Geneva, and Emir Naif was again named Regent. This caused the following comment from the Times: "His (Abdullah's) death may have unfortunate consequences for the future of Arab-Israeli relations and also -- in view especially of uncertainties about the succession - - give a disturbing stimulus to the dynastic and territorial rivalries of the Arab States."<sup>3</sup>

Time Magazine was one of the few sources reporting this series of events that did not appear disturbed about the succession problem. They matter-of-factly wrote:

Naif adopted Abdullah's pro-British opinions, but he seems to lack the old man's intuitions, statesmanship and drive (he was Abdullah's favorite). He is more interested in soldiering and women than in the business of government.

A Hashimite family conference, with the British kibitzing, will probably decide whether Talal is fit to rule, or whether his son, Emir Hussein, 15, will be King.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Times, 24 June 1951, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>"Chronology," Middle East Journal, Vol. VI, 1951, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, 21 July 1951, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Time Magazine (Atlantic Edition) Vol. LVIII, No. 5. 30 July 1951, p. 18.

While all the furor was going on in countries outside Jordan, that country was proceeding calmly with the matters at hand. On 24 July the Prime Minister, Samir Pasha el-Rifai, announced that the Cabinet would submit its resignation to the Regent,<sup>1</sup> the next day Tewfik Pasha Abdulhuda was asked to form a new government,<sup>2</sup> and the new Cabinet published the following program on 27 July: 1) To find means to improve the economy of the country, 2) a promise ensuring free elections in August, 3) to carry out King Abdullah's wish to extend the scope of Parliamentary life and to organize it on a sound basis, and 4) to cooperate fully with the Arab League States.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that this is a very liberal program, and very definitely one designed to avert any possible crisis and instill confidence in the Government. The fourth point in particular is a change from the previous policy of King Abdullah. It should be remembered that Great Britain and Egypt were at odds at this time concerning the Suez Canal and Egyptian claims to the Sudan, and Abdullah had not been willing to follow Egypt's lead in lending full Arab League support to Egypt against Great Britain. This traditional pro-British role of Jordan's also drew its share of comment. In connection with the matter of succession the Times Cairo correspondent wrote:

. . . As Emir Talal . . . has the reputation of being anti-British, some newspapers say that Britain is trying

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 25 July 1951, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 26 July 1951, p. 5. This Tewfik Abulhuda is the same Tewfik Abul Huda who served as Abdullah's Prime Minister; see p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, 28 July 1951, p. 4.

to secure the succession of Emir Naif . . . who is said to be pro-British, on the grounds of Talal's health.<sup>1</sup>

While political affairs continued to run fairly smoothly, it is clear from the amount of attention given to the health of the Emir Talal that the matter of the succession was held to be of importance. Rumours of plots for the taking over of Jordan continued to circulate, and it appeared that other Arab states had adopted the Greater Syria scheme, but with Abdullah dead and the throne of Jordan vacant, the seat of this new government was to change location. In late July the Times carried an article submitted by its Cairo Correspondent reporting "increased activity on the part of that group of Jordanians, exiled and self-exiled (in Syria), who hold that Jordan is naturally a part of Syria and who demand that it should be 'rejoined to its mother country.'"<sup>2</sup> It was further reported that these groups had sent representatives clandestinely into Jordan immediately after hearing of the assassination of King Abdullah.<sup>3</sup>

Of course there were reports involving the former Mufti, Haj Amin, who was actively trying to promote discord in Jordan; although, there really seemed to be no opportunity for his return to power. Haj Amin had immediately denied any connection with Abdullah's death, but he was still strongly suspected. In fact the Times reported, in the same article with Haj Amin's denial of complicity, the statement that the "two main enemies of the Holy War Organization (founded by Haj Amin) were the Jews and Abdullah,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 24 July 1951, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



Abdullah because he was the chief opponent of the Mufti's pretensions."<sup>1</sup>

Two days later the Times reported that Haj Amin had sent telegrams to the governments of the Arab States and to the Secretary of the Arab League in which he charged Jordan with terrorism against innocent Palestinians.<sup>2</sup> Haj Amin also appealed to the prevailing anti-British sentiment in the Middle East, and began searching among the opponents of Great Britain and Jordan for active support. In the weeks preceding the Jordanian elections we find reports of the former Mufti's activities such as the following:

. . . the Mufti . . . met with the Foreign Ministers of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, both oldtime opponents of Abdullah and the British. They agreed on a plan to tack Jordan on to a Greater Syria. In this way they would put a finish to (1) Jordan's British trained Arab Legion, . . . which has consistently opposed the Mufti, (2) Britain's old scheme for uniting Jordan with Iraq (one Pro-British Arab kingdom which would dominate the Arab World).  
 . . . Mufti's men promise a six weeks moratorium on killings. After that . . . John Bagot Glubb . . .<sup>3</sup>

It must be remembered that Haj Amin also had supporters among the Palestinians, some of whom were now Jordanians, and some who were in Jordan in the status of refugees. Even among those who were not active supporters of Haj Amin there were many who were quite openly anti-British and felt no loyalty to the Hashimite throne.

It is often thought that Jordan must have benefited greatly from the inclusion of Arab Palestine as a part of Jordan. This

<sup>1</sup>The Times, 23 July 1951, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 26 July 1951, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Time Magazine (Atlantic Edition), Vol. LVIII, No. 8  
 20 August 1951, p. 26.

portion of Palestine had, until the partition been the more developed part of that country, and it certainly was richer economically than Jordan itself; however, much of the economy of that sector depended on a market which became non-available after the partition and the blockade of Israel. In addition there was the problem of the refugees, people with skills but no employment and no homes.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Jordan, far from receiving any great benefit, suffered, at least in the short run, intensified economic problems.

Many of these people also held King Abdullah and Great Britain directly responsible for their plight. The following extract is not from a contemporary source, but was written by an Arab and, I think, reflects the opinions of a great per centage of the Palestinian dissidents:

(Great Britain) by withdrawing (from Palestine) in such a way as to leave behind no framework of law made fighting inevitable; by refusing to oppose the partition scheme in the United Nations she made it certain to be adopted. Above all there was one factor which made it impossible for her to maintain a policy of non-intervention: her control of the Arab Legion and through it of the Trans-Jordanian Government. To allow King Abdullah to act in a certain way was as much an intervention as not to allow him. Britain was therefore finally responsible for those of his acts which did so much to bring about the disaster of Palestine: his first decision to intervene militarily, which was decisive in inducing other Arab States to intervene; his separate negotiations with the Jews which helped

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<sup>1</sup>In 1952 the number of Palestinian refugees present in Jordan was set at 458,250. This figure is more than half the total number of refugees and exceeds by more than 100% the figure of the next largest group, 201,175, which Egypt had restricted to the Gaza Strip. Middle East Journal, Vol. VI, 1952, p. 298.

to break up Arab resistance; his disastrous armistice agreement, which separated Arab villages from their lands all along the frontier; and his refusal to accept the internationalization of Jerusalem at a moment when it still might have been enforced.<sup>1</sup>

These matters have all been discussed before, and their inclusion here does not indicate their truth, only that these opinions were held by a number of people, not all of them Palestinians. Thus there was present in Jordan those elements which were in favor of less British influence; these elements, largely located on the west bank of the Jordan, were in favor of Talal's ascension to the throne, as he was believed to be less pro-British than Naif and believed to be politically opposed to many of his father's ideas.

Crown Prince Talal, still under medical care in Geneva, was kept informed of affairs in Jordan, and the Jordanian Government kept itself informed as to the state of the Emir's health. In late August the Minister of Health, Dr. Jamil Pasha Toutunji, traveled to Geneva and returned to Amman to announce that Talal's condition was satisfactory, and the Crown Prince would be returning to Jordan in about two weeks.<sup>2</sup>

Time Magazine, writing of Talal's return, intimated that the choice was not entirely Talal's:

Talal began getting word of a plot at home (Amman). Naif, deciding he liked the feel of power, was conniving with two cabinet ministers and Jordan's chief justice to dissolve Parliament and proclaim himself King. He would be backed by the guns of the Arab Legion's Hashimite

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Hourani, "The Decline of the West in the Middle East," International Affairs, Vol. 29, 1953, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 24 August 1951, p. 4.

regiment, the King's bodyguard.

But Jordan's premier, Tewfik Pasha, quickly squashed the plot. The British quietly decided that Talal ought to take over from Naif.

Talal had told reporters, during a stop in Athens, that he would continue "the same old friendly relations" his father had with the British.<sup>1</sup>

Israel also expressed interest in the matter of the Jordanian throne, informing diplomatic representatives in Tel Aviv, on 29 August, that any change in the status of Jordan would be considered as a matter "affecting seriously the interests and security of the State of Israel."<sup>2</sup>

The immediate threat to Jordan's integrity was removed on 5 September with the proclaiming of Talal as King Talal the First of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan.<sup>3</sup> Within a week Talal's eldest son, the Emir Hussein, was proclaimed the Crown Prince,<sup>4</sup> thus assuring a line of succession to the throne which appeased those who feared the pro-British tendencies of the Emir Naif.

The elections had been held for the new Parliament on 29 August, and the local anti-Hashimite element had increased its strength slightly in the lower house, the upper house, the Chamber of Notables, still being appointed by the King.<sup>5</sup> Although the new Parliament had been elected it was not to hold its first session

<sup>1</sup>Time Magazine (Atlantic Edition), Vol. LVIII, No. 21, 17 November 1951, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 30 August 1951, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Official Gazette, No. 1082, 4 September 1951, p. 252.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., No. 1082, Supplement 3, 9 September 1951, p. 253.

<sup>5</sup>"Who Will Help Jordan," The Economist, Vol. 161, No. 5639, 22 September 1951, pp. 688-689.

until 1 November, and Talal used this period to some advantage.

In accordance with the Constitution of 1946, the Cabinet of Abul Huda had resigned after the proclamation of Talal. Talal had asked Abul Huda to form a new Cabinet, the program of the Government quite similar to that of the Regency Government. Talal wasted no time beginning to affect more compatible relations with the neighboring Arab States. While Talal had stated that he intended to maintain the same friendly relations with Great Britain that his father had, it quickly became apparent that Talal was not so sympathetic as his declaration had made him seem. King Talal mentions several clashes with the British Ambassador in Amman,<sup>1</sup> mainly clashes over protocol involving the British Representative's informality with the king. Talal also mentions an incident where he publicly criticized Glubb Pasha, in front of "a large number of officers and soldiers" for not carrying out an order. Talal reports that Glubb submitted his resignation in anger, but returned almost immediately to apologize to the King.<sup>2</sup> Other instances are recorded also, but it must be remembered that these memoirs were written or dictated after Talal had been deposed, and the truth of them is not proven.

There can be no doubt, however, that Great Britain's position

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<sup>1</sup>Great Britain did not establish an embassy in Jordan until 28 August 1952; until that time they had maintained only a legation. The incident referred to by Talal occurred almost a year before that date, but Talal refers to "as-Safir al-Britahni," usually translated as ambassador. Memoirs of King Talal (in Arabic), ed. Mamdouh.

<sup>2</sup>Memoirs of King Talal, pp. 131-132.

in Jordan did not suffer some setback, for Talal's attempts to effect a rapprochement with the Arab States, including Egypt, meant taking a stand against Great Britain in such matters as the Suez crisis.

How much this position of Talal's had to do with the Cabinet's request for constitutional reform, especially on the matter of the responsibility of the Government. It should be kept in mind, however, that such a reform had apparently been promised by King Abdullah; although the only references I have been able to find regarding this promise are in remarks made by King Talal and the Prime Minister, Abul Huda. Neither the press nor the Official Gazette carry such a promise directly from King Abdullah.

Nevertheless, when the King delivered his speech from the throne for the opening session of the new Parliament there was great emphasis on constitutional reform. In accordance with the request of Prime Minister Abul Huda, made to King Talal on 16 September, the King gave his approval for the submission of the Constitution to the Parliament.

A Times article regarding the opening session of the Parliament on 1 November 1951 takes this move as evidence of the remarkable stability of Jordan, commenting that the "new Jordanians (from the west bank)" have:

progressive ideas widely different from the original subjects of King Abdullah's Transjordan and have no particular affection for monarchy as an institution, yet under Talal it was possible to hold entirely free elections . . . (This because Talal's) behavior as Heir-Apparent to his brilliant father won him trust and confidence . . . King Talal has no enemies and few critics.

(A second factor) is the group of experienced and able Ministers trained under King Abdullah, who supply the hard core of continuity in administration.<sup>1</sup>

In January of 1952 it became quite evident that the Parliament did not have any "particular affection for monarchy as an institution." The constitution had indeed been reformed, and the major changes were to severely limit the powers of the throne. This revised constitution, consisting of 131 articles divided into nine chapters, was approved and promulgated by King Talal on 1 January 1952.<sup>2</sup> Here we should compare certain portions of the two constitutions to gain a more clear understanding of the degree of change effected.

The first noteworthy change is inclusion of Chapter Three of the Constitution of 1952, there being no similar section of the Constitution of 1946. Chapter Three reads as follows:

#### THE AUTHORITIES

##### GENERAL PROVISIONS

##### Article 24

1. The People is the source of authority.
2. The people shall exercise its authority in the manner provided in this Constitution.

##### Article 25

The Legislative Authority is vested in the King and the National Assembly consisting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

##### Article 26

The Executive Authority is vested in the King. He shall exercise his powers through his Ministers in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

<sup>1</sup>The Times, 2 November 1951, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Official Arabic text printed in the Official Gazette, No. 1093, 1951. English translations of this document are available in Khalil op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 55-73 and Amos J. Peaslee's Constitutions of Nations, 2nd Ed., Vol. II, pp. 527-544.

## Article 27

The Judicial Authority is exercised by the various courts and all judgments shall be rendered in accordance with the law and pronounced in the name of the King.<sup>1</sup>

The above cited chapter immediately precedes the chapter defining the position of the King and his prerogatives, which was altered by the inclusion of Chapter Three. Article 28 of the 1952 Constitution reads in part:

The Throne of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan is hereditary in the family of King Abdullah Ibn ul-Hussein and shall devolve on his male heirs in direct line through males in accordance with the following provisions:<sup>2</sup>

The corresponding article of the Constitution of 1946 is Article 22 (a) which reads:

Subject to the provisions of this law, all executive authority is vested in King Abdullah Ibn el-Hussein and his male heirs in direct line through males after him as is provided in the following paragraphs.<sup>3</sup>

Thus we see that in this instance the new Constitution, while the King retained executive authority, specified the limits of authority and the source granting that authority. These two articles continue to list the rights, responsibilities and limitations placed upon the King; not all of these were changed; however, it will be beneficial to examine some of those which did change. According to paragraph (g) of Article 22 of the Constitution of 1946:

The King before his departure from the country shall appoint by Irade a deputy or Council of the Throne to exercise his powers during his absence, subject to such conditions as may be therein imposed.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Khalil, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Davis, op. cit., p. 238.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



The corresponding part of the Constitution of 1952 would be Article 28 (i):

Whenever the King intends to leave the Realm he shall, prior to his departure, appoint by Royal Irade, a Deputy or a Council to exercise his prerogative during his absence. The Deputy or Council shall be bound by any conditions comprised in the said Irade. Should the King's absence exceed a period of four months while the National Assembly is not in session, it shall be summoned immediately to consider the matter.<sup>1</sup>

Article 28 of the new Constitution also contained a stipulation that was not found in the 1946 instrument. Paragraph (m) reads:

Should the King be unable to rule owing to mental disease proved to the satisfaction of the Council of Ministers, the said Council shall summon a meeting of the National Assembly immediately; and should the Assembly be satisfied of the existence of the disease, it shall terminate the reign of the King; thereupon the Throne shall pass to his heir in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. Should the Chamber of Deputies be dissolved at the time, or should its term have run its course and the new elections remain incomplete, the former Chamber shall be convened for the purpose.<sup>2</sup>

It is remarkable, not so much that the Parliament included such provisions in the Constitution, especially as Talal had demonstrated a tendency towards instability, that King Talal so readily acquiesced and approved the Constitution with these stipulations, not even using the legal delay provided by the Constitution.

These were not the only restrictions and limitations placed on the powers of the King, for, as we have already noted, the Parliament had specifically requested that the Cabinet be made responsible to the Parliament instead of the King. In the Constitution

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<sup>1</sup> Khalil, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

of 1946 the Ministers had been included in the section dealing with the rights of the King, but the new Constitution divided the Executive into two branches. Part I of Chapter Four dealt with the King and his prerogatives, Part II dealt with the Ministers.<sup>1</sup>

The offending article of the old Constitution, Article 28, reads:

(a) The Prime Minister together with the Ministers are collectively responsible to the King for matters of general policy of the State. In addition each Minister is responsible to the King for his department or departments.

(b) The King dismisses the Prime Minister or accepts his resignation from office.

(c) The King on the recommendation of the Prime Minister dismisses Ministers or accepts their resignation from office.

(d) In the event of the dismissal or the resignation of the Prime Minister all Ministers are automatically considered to have been dismissed or to have resigned.<sup>2</sup>

This article and its intent are not to be found in the new Constitution, excepting paragraph (d) which remained as Article 50 of the instrument of 1952.<sup>3</sup> This article 28 was replaced with the following articles:

Article 49

The King's orders, written or oral, shall not relieve the Ministers of their responsibilities.

Article 51

The Prime Minister and the Ministers are collectively responsible to the Chamber of Deputies for the general policy of the State; and every Minister is responsible to the Chamber for the affairs of his Ministry.<sup>4</sup>

Articles 53-61 have no parallels in the old Constitution; these articles deal with the question of dismissing, impeaching and trying Ministers and the steps to be taken by the Chamber of Deputies and the High Court.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup>Davis, op. cit., p. 240.

<sup>3</sup>Khalil, loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Other noteworthy Constitutional changes appearing in the 1952 instrument were Articles 90, 91, 95 and 126. Article 90 provided that no Senator or Deputy should be relieved of his position except by a two-thirds vote of the body of which he was a member.<sup>1</sup> Articles 91 and 95 replaced the restrictive Article 48 of the 1946 Constitution. Article 48 reads, in part:

- (1) Every proposal for a law shall be laid before the Council of Representatives by the Prime Minister. If the Council accepts what has been laid before it, it shall refer same to the Council of Notables . . . .
- (2) (a) The annual budget shall likewise be laid in the form of a proposed law before the Council of Representative and the procedure specified in the preceding paragraph shall be applied thereto.  
(b) . . . (f) . . . .<sup>2</sup>

According to this Article the Parliament had no authority to initiate or modify legislation; this authority was provided in two articles of the reform Constitution:

#### Article 91

The Prime Minister shall submit the project of every law to the Chamber of Deputies which shall have the right to accept the project, to modify it or to reject it. In all cases, the project is thereafter referred to the Senate. No law shall be promulgated unless it is passed by both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies and approved by the King.

#### Article 95

1. Any Senator and any Deputy may initiate a proposal for the enactment of a law. The proposal shall be referred to an ad hoc committee of the Senate or Chamber, as the case may be, for investigation and report. Should the Senate or the Chamber accept the proposal, the resolution shall be referred to the Government for the formulation of

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Davis, op. cit., p. 244. Paragraph (2) of this article is further elucidated in the Constitution of 1952, by Article 112; see Khalil, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 70-71.

a bill and submission of the project to the legislature during the session in course or that next following.

2 . . . . .<sup>1</sup>

The speed and force of these reforms leads one to believe that they had been well formulated before the Parliament had met on 1 November 1951, that these reforms most probably were formed by the Council of Ministers, during the time of the Regency, and presented to the Parliament, in accordance with the Constitution of 1946. While these reforms can clearly be seen to provide a beneficial framework for more democratic development than was previously enjoyed, they were adopted only because the King chose not to protest and readily accepted the reduction and limitations which this new instrument placed on his powers.

It is evident that the danger of establishing a precedent for reducing the powers of the monarch during time of a Regency had been recognized for the Constitution of 1952 further provided in Article 126:

1. The procedure laid down in the Constitution for the initiation of a law shall apply to the initiation of any project purporting the amendment of the Constitution, provided that the proposal is voted for by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Senate and of the Chamber of Deputies. If the matter is laid before the two Houses at a joint meeting as provided in article 92 thereof, the proposal must be voted for by a majority of two-thirds of the members comprising each House and in either case the proposal shall remain ineffective until it is approved by the King.
2. It shall not be lawful to amend the Constitution in respect of the King's prerogatives or the devolution of the Crown during a Regency.<sup>2</sup>

The new Constitution had been adopted, and the Parliament had obtained its demands; the Government was now responsible to the

<sup>1</sup> Khalil, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

Parliament and the members of the members of the Houses could now initiate legislation. The crisis was not to be put down so easily, for even before the reforms to the Constitution had been completed there was evidence that many of the members of Parliament would not be satisfied.

There remained two factors to be considered: the economic situation of Jordan and Jordan's relationship with Great Britain. The economic question had been considered by the Chamber of Deputies on 12 December 1951. The debates revealed that some of the Deputies considered Jordan "fundamentally unstable" and could hope to maintain itself only through union with another Arab country. This group contended that Jordan existed only through British aid, an unsatisfactory condition, and, in view of the present political situation, continuance of that aid could not be depended upon. If British aid ceased the Government must either lead the State to bankruptcy to keep-up the Arab Legion or else disband the Legion and leave 450 miles of Jordanian border undefended and exposed to Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Within this group there was disagreement regarding a neighboring state suitable for union. Those supporting the dynasty favored Iraq, and those opposed to the dynasty favoring Syria.<sup>2</sup>

There was a third group of Deputies who believed that the economic crisis was a temporary thing, a result of the drought and the refugee problem. In addition they held that there were

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 20 December 1951, p. 3; Middle East Journal, Vol. VI, 1952, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup>"The Throne of Jordan," The Economist, Vol. 163, No. 5677, 14 June 1952, p. 729.

practical political difficulties impeding unity with any other Arab State.<sup>1</sup>

As no firm agreement could be reached, a resolution was adopted requesting the Government to issue a statement, secretly, on the proposal of union with a neighboring state.<sup>2</sup>

The Prime Minister, Tewfik Abulhuda met with the Parliament on 18 December to discuss the "crisis of existence" which some of the Deputies feared. Tewfik Pasha succeeded in persuading the Deputies to shelve the union proposals for the time being as the moment was not auspicious for political union, Jordan was in no immediate danger of economic ruin and King Talal was embarking on a campaign to realign Jordan with the other Arab States.<sup>3</sup>

After the promulgation of the Constitution of 1952 King Talal did begin his campaign, and he was well received in the other Arab States. Jordan again took up an active role in the Arab League, and on 16 February 1952 finally joined the other Arab States as a signatory of the Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation Treaty.<sup>4</sup>

Talal's health could not stand up under the strain of ruling, and on 18 May 1952 the following decree was issued:

<sup>1</sup>The Times, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Middle East Journal, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, loc. cit., Middle East Journal, op. cit., p. 461.

<sup>4</sup>Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen had signed the treaty in June 1950 and Iraq had finally signed in February 1951; Jordan did not sign until 16 February 1952, only a month before the treaty became effective. An incomplete translation of the treaty, with comments, will be found in the Middle East Journal, Vol. VI, 1952, pp. 238-240.

We, King Talal I, King of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, in view of our desire to leave the country for Europe for rest and convalescence, and in accordance with Article 28 of the Constitution, order the following: In our absence a council of regency, formed of the Prime Minister, the President of the Senate and the President of the Parliament, will assume our responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>

On 4 June the Jordanian Government announced the establishment of a new Regency Council which would exercise the King's Constitutional Powers until medical reports showed Talal capable. The new Council, established under Article 28 paragraph (m) of the new Constitution, consisted of Ibrahim Pasha Hashem, President of the Senate; Suliman Bey Toukan (who resigned his post as Minister of Defence); and Abdulrahman Bey Rusheidat.<sup>2</sup>

The formation of this semi-permanent Regency Council caused much comment and considerable activity. The Iraqi Regent, Abdul Ilah, a member of the Hashimite family, quickly traveled to Amman where he pressed the Jordanian Government to install a "senior representative" of the Hashimites on the Regency Council. This senior representative could well have been Abdul Ilah himself, and the first step towards union with Iraq would have been taken, but the Cabinet rejected the proposal.<sup>3</sup>

Israel also expressed its concern over the future status of Jordan. Reports from Tel Aviv said Israel had found reason to believe that Talal would "prove to be a good neighbor as soon as the Palestinian element, lately become powerful in Jordan political life, allowed him to be so. He was known to be anxious for boundary adjustments which would lessen friction with Israel."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 19 May 1952, p. 6.      <sup>2</sup>The Times, 5 June 1952, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, 6 June, p. 6.      <sup>4</sup>The Times, 7 June, p. 7.

Even though unsuccessful, Abdul Ilah's visit to Amman had furnished the anti-dynastic factions with ammunition of a plot to unite Jordan with Iraq. This group largely favored union with Syria, but, perhaps fortunately, Syria at the time was not interested in absorbing Jordan. The Syrian Army leaders had effected a successful coup d'Etat in December 1951, and they believed that an "amalgamation of the Syrian Army with the western-trained forces of Iraq and/or Jordan would reduce their own importance."<sup>1</sup> Syria was mainly concerned that Jordan would not unite with Iraq, but remain independent.

On 7 June the Times published the following estimate of the situation in Jordan:

Jordan is a confused state, but Jordan has able administrators, trained by Abdullah, to safeguard the country until the throne is filled again. Already there is reason to hope that the Hashimite Kingdom, which held together after the shock of King Abdullah's murder, will now surmount the difficulties caused by King Talal's illness . . . . Yet until the constitutional position is absolutely clear, some at least of the matters which King Talal had at heart . . . must wait. Opposition to them is too strong to be overcome by anything less than royal leadership.<sup>2</sup>

Jordan was not to receive this royal leadership in the near future, for, on 11 August, the Government of Jordan announced that Talal had been deposed by reason of his continuing illness. Crown Prince Hussein was named King, but Hussein was still only 17 (lunar) years of age. A Regency Council was named to rule in his stead until he attained his majority. The Council was the same as that which had ruled, semi-permanently, during Talal's illness.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 1 December 1951, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 7 June 1952, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, 12 August 1952, p. 5.



Members of the Regency Council were present at the opening session of Parliament, on 1 November, when Prime Minister Tewfik Abulhuda (who had been asked to reform a Cabinet on 28 September,<sup>1</sup> read the opening speech. After referring to the illness of Talal, he said:

The calamity, however, has been mitigated by the transfer of kingship . . . to his youthful son, his Majesty King Hussein. The good omens of his reign have justified the hopes laid on him . . . , and have revealed his desire to follow in the footsteps of his great father.

Speaking of Jordanian relations he said:

We are faithful to our ties and pledges, and we are working for the consolidation of existing amicable relations . . . . (As for Palestine, it) is the pre-occupation of all Arabs, and is the subject of the Government's utmost interest and attention. The Government will spare no effort, within the scope of mutual Arab cooperation, to protect Arabs' rights in a way which will preserve their dignity and glory, and secure natural and legal rights of the refugees.<sup>2</sup>

The Government's program as outlined in the remarks of Abulhuda appear vague and indecisive, but this may be explained by the absence of a recognized head of government. We may assume that the Government did not wish to take any extreme steps which might be counter to the policy of Hussein. While it was known that Hussein was a great favorite of his grandfather, Abdullah and that he was sympathetic to the British, there was no sure way to know to what extent he would follow the pattern of his grandfather.

It is probably fair to assume that Hussein's returning to England to pursue his studies had some effect on the relations between the two countries, but there is another factor

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 29 September 1952, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 3 November 1952, p. 5.

that must be considered as affecting the improvement of relations between Jordan and Great Britain. Oddly enough that factor was Israel.

From the time of the signing of the Armistice Agreement at Rhodes,<sup>1</sup> on 3 April 1949, border incidents between Israel and Jordanian territory had continued to worsen. The Armistice line between Jordan and Israel had been very poorly laid out,<sup>2</sup> "it severs Arab villages from their land; it cuts off their water supply; it encourages them to make common cause with refugees rendered desperate by hunger or by desire for revenge. It is long and difficult to patrol effectively. So it offers full scope both for troublemakers and criminals, some of them like the hashish smugglers, highly organized."<sup>3</sup>

Border crossings and incidents had been frequent, and offenses committed by Arab civilians had called for reprisal raids carried out by the Israeli Army.<sup>4</sup> On 2 February 1953 Jordan invoked the Anglo-Jordan Treaty of 1948 to gain assistance in dealing with the border incidents. Israel immediately protested the right of Jordan to invoke such assistance, but

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<sup>1</sup>U.N., Security Council, Official Records, Fourth year, Special Supplements, No. 1, General Armistice Agreement between the Hashimite Jordan Kingdom and Israel, (S/1302/rev.1).

<sup>2</sup>See Glubb, Soldier, pp. 227-237 for discussion of circumstances leading to the establishment of the Armistice line; also see excellent map showing territory surrendered to Israel at Rhodes.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, 9 February 1953, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>The Times, December 1952-May 1953; Glubb, Soldier, pp. 302-307.

Jordan merely pointed out that Colonel Gaon, an Israeli Army officer had, himself, informed the Mixed Armistice Commission that the situation had already developed beyond the capacity of "normal armistice machinery."<sup>1</sup>

On 18 February General Sir Brian Robertson, Commander-in-Chief Middle East Land Forces, Great Britain, visited Amman to discuss, with Anwar Nuseibeh, Jordan's Minister of Defense, Great Britain's role in the Jordan-Israel clashes.<sup>2</sup> While nothing concrete came of these discussions, and Anglo-Jordanian relations were subsequently to worsen, there was a temporary favorable effect both on Jordanians and Israelis. It is interesting in this respect to examine the reason given by Tewfik Abulhuda for invoking the Anglo-Jordan Treaty.

Jordan invoked the Anglo-Jordan Treaty of 1948 rather than the Arab Collective Security Pact because the Anglo-Jordan Treaty laid down, clearly, provisions for Jordan's defence, whereas the Arab Pact, though ratified by the Arab Governments is not yet ready for practical application . . . . Jordan's policy towards Israel is to meet any further aggression by force.<sup>3</sup>

One, however, might assume that Jordan, having once fought the Zionists with the Arab League States as Allies, thought the forces of Great Britain might prove to be more of a deterrent to further Israeli attacks than the forces of the Arab League. There is no indication that Jordan wished to open hostilities against Israel at this time, only that she wished to

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 2 February 1953, p. 6, 3 February, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 19 February 1953, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, 20 February 1953, p. 5.

bring the Israeli raids to a stop.

At any rate, relations with Great Britain were a sufficiently harmonious basis that the Jordanian Government was able to gain acceptance for British cooperation in a five-year economic plan aimed at balancing the Jordanian Budget. Great Britain, in view of the general anti-British feeling prevailing in the Arab Middle East at that time, was only too willing to cooperate.

The Times reported on 10 March that Great Britain would contribute £ 1,250,000, a part of which would be used to balance the budget. Taking into account any assistance Jordan might receive from the United States and the United Nations' Relief and Works Association, it was hoped that the plan would sufficiently improve conditions so that, by the end of the period, Jordan would be able to balance her budget without assistance.<sup>1</sup>

With this aid to the Jordanian economy, and the prospect of continuing UNRWA assistance in dealing with the refugee problem, much of the fear for Jordan's economic future was temporarily dispelled, and with the time rapidly approaching for coronation of Hussein, the clamor for Jordan's union with some other Arab country was temporarily dispelled. Iraq wished principally for the continuation of the Hashimite dynasty which would be accomplished with the coronation of King Hussein, Syria,

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 10 March 1953, p. 8. Of this sum £ 750,000 was given as a grant-in-aid, and £ 500,000 as an interest free loan.

with the army leaders in power did not wish union with Jordan for fear that the Syrian army would take second place to the Arab Legion. Saudi Arabia, at this time did not wish to absorb the State of Jordan, as they were quite well off economically due to the oil operations in the country, and the political situation was favorable for the present.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the coronation of King Hussein on 2 May 1953, while not under the most auspicious circumstances, occurred under conditions much more satisfactory than those confronting his father little more than a year before.

The Times writing of the dual coronations occurring in Iraq and Jordan (Hussein's cousin, Feisal II becoming King of Iraq on the same day) stated:

The present unsettled situation in the Middle East confronts each young sovereign with difficult problems. Although the powers of both are subject to constitutional limitations the tradition of personal rule is so deeply imbedded in the Arab mind that each will exercise great influence over the fortunes of his country. Both will need cautious wisdom . . . .

Jordan . . . must still look for British and American help in overcoming the difficulties to which the tragic influx of refugees from Palestine is exposing a land with few natural resources.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Glubb writes, concerning the period, that a new group of terrorists had appeared, Arab terrorists armed with new Sten guns and hand grenades. "Investigation soon revealed the identity of the new movement. It originated with a group of refugees in Damascus, all of them former terrorists employed by the Mufti in Palestine. The Saudi Arabian Government was arming and subsidizing these men to infiltrate through Jordan into Israel and kill Jews . . . . As one of the leaders of this Damascus movement explained . . . : 'Ibn Saud does not wish the Hashemite family to rule Jordan in peace.'

"The Saudi King . . . was in a peculiarly happy position. . . . he was able to pose as a patriot . . . . and whichever way it turned out, the reprisals would be directed against his enemy, the King of Jordan." Soldier, pp. 305-306.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 2 May 1953, p. 7.

The Prime Minister, Tewfik Pasha Abulhuda, after a long and useful term, submitted his resignation of 5 May, and a new Cabinet was formed by Dr. Fawzi Mulki, who had been Jordan's Minister in London.<sup>1</sup> It would seem that the young King Hussein was trying to satisfy as many groups as possible in order to insure an operative, if not completely cohesive government. His Prime Minister was familiar with the British and could be expected to work satisfactorily with them. The ten members of the Cabinet were evenly divided between the east and west bank, five from each part of Jordan.

Immediately after the coronation of King Hussein, his father, ex-King Talal, had sent the following message to his eldest son: "I pray God to make this era one of prosperity, happiness and welfare. May God keep you always happy and successful."<sup>2</sup> Affairs, however, were not destined to be in accord with the wishes of Talal or the desires of his son.

On 24 May 1953 the Government attended the session of the Chamber of Deputies to present the Ministerial Declaration of Government Policy; however, even before this program was presented to the Chamber, a memorandum was introduced and adopted, in the presence of the Government, calling upon the Government to support Egypt in its struggle for independence and liberty, and to "take all possible measures to combat the British Government's present policy, 'a policy of enmity to the Arabs and their rightful cases.'"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 7 May 1953, p. 7.      <sup>2</sup>The Times, 4 May 1953, p.8.

<sup>3</sup>The Times, 26 May 1953, p. 4.

It would seem that the Government had foreknowledge of this memorandum, for the second paragraph of the declaration, as cited below, answers the resolution in the very words of the resolution:

The Government's internal policy is based on the preservation of the country's independence and the execution of its Constitution in a manner to meet the people's wishes. The Government will at the next meeting refer to the House all regulations and ordinances for the re-examination and revision of the Constitution to allow liberty of speech and the formation of political parties. As it is known that our country is agricultural more than industrial, the Government will execute a five year plan, supplementary to the previous Government plans, for the increase of agricultural products and the marketing of such products outside Jordan. Also it will do all in its power to make improvements in the fields of industry, health, education, commerce and communications.

The Government believes that the Arabs in their various countries are one nation, and that Jordan is a part of that nation. The Government will take part in the struggle of those Arab countries for their independence and liberty, will endeavor to strengthen the ties of brotherhood between Jordan and the Arab countries, and to reach a united economic policy. It will also endeavor to lift all barriers in order to strengthen political, economic, cultural, judicial and social ties between and the Arab countries. As a first step the Government will soon send delegates to all Arab countries for talks on these matters of common interest. The Government builds high hopes on the Arab League, which it will do all in its power to strengthen. As regards the Palestine case, there is not one Arab country that can alone find a solution for this without first coming to an understanding with the other Arab countries.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be noticed that the primary statement of Government policy concerns the maintenance of the State's independence, that there was no hedging about union with some other State, indeed the internal problem to be concerned about was the economic situation. This Government saw the internal problem as one of economic subsistence and not of Constitutional existence. While this statement of policy does not specifically outline its stand in relation

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

to Great Britain, the implication given in its aims for inter-Arab relations suggests an anti-British position. While it is beyond the scope of this presentation to follow the foreign policy of Jordan as it regards Great Britain, it is an interesting study in itself to follow the developments as Jordan rids itself of much of the British influence over Jordan, but has managed to maintain a certain rapport that permits mutual action and Jordan's continuing use of British financial aid.

At any event, much of the recently acquired rapport with Great Britain was lost in the summer of 1953 as a result of violent Israeli attacks on Jordanian villages. As these events are also beyond the scope of this paper, it will only be noted here that anti-British, anti-colonialism elements in Jordan convinced portions of the Jordanian public that the success of the Zionist raids was dependent on British collusion and there were riots and demonstrations throughout Jordan, directed, not against the Government of Jordan, but, against the diplomatic quarters of the western countries.<sup>1</sup>

The prevailing public feeling of antagonism towards Britain and the west did not present the difficulties it had in the past, even less tension was felt than during the reign of Abdullah. The Ministry and its program had received a 32 to 4

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<sup>1</sup>These riots and demonstrations are discussed by Glubb, who received unwanted attentions as an "agent of the British imperialists," in A Soldier with the Arabs, pp. 308-343; see the Times, especially October 1953.



vote of confidence (there were 4 abstentions),<sup>1</sup> and the budget for 1953-1954 was approved readily even though Great Britain had furnished £ 15,148,466 of which £ 8,250,000 was designated for defence.<sup>2</sup>

King Hussein's message to the new session of the Parliament on 1 November 1953 was largely a reiteration of the program of the Government as presented in May. He again promised laws giving more individual freedoms, stressed plans for economic improvement of the country, and again stressed, as he has continued to do from the time of his inauguration to the present, that "the Arabs in their various countries are one nation, and Jordan is a part of that nation."<sup>3</sup>

With the Throne once again occupied by an intelligent, personable King who could claim the loyalty of an able and ambitious Government and of a strong, modern army, the question of the continued existence of Jordan became less of a concern; although, this is not to say that the problem became any less real.

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 27 May 1953, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>"Chronology," Middle East Journal, Vol. VI, 1952, p. 308.

<sup>3</sup>See King Hussein's Uneasy Lies the Head, pp. 81-82; Times, 26 May 1953, p. 4.

## CONCLUSION

As we look back on the situation in Jordan as it existed during the period from the death of King Abdullah to the inauguration of King Hussein one cannot help but be impressed by the amount of constitutional development. At first glance it may seem that these developments and reforms were accomplished because of the vacancy of the Throne of Jordan; however, we must remember that many of the reforms had been promised by the King and all reforms had royal approval.

Throughout Jordan's formative years we have seen the State progressing slowly but smoothly to increasingly liberal forms of government, and then, with the annexation of Arab Palestine, the very nature of the people of Jordan was altered. This, of course, does not imply that the people of the East Bank suddenly experienced any change of character, but that the addition of the Arab Palestinian population to the Jordanian State caused the overall change in perspective.

These new Jordanians had a greater desire for self-expression and a lesser loyalty to the Hashimite dynasty than their countrymen from the East Bank. These new Jordanians, the Palestinians, I have referred to as impatient young men, and we have seen how they were largely responsible for the increase in the tempo of constitutional development. Abdullah resisted the efforts of these impatient young men to make the Cabinet responsible to the Parliament, thereby weakening the power of the Throne.

In the refusal of the Parliament to ratify the budget in May 1951 and Abdullah's subsequent action of dismissing the Parliament, we have the makings of a constitutional crisis, but I cannot see that that particular crisis ever developed. The important point here is that Abdullah realized that he was defeated and, not wishing to bring the particular matter up as an election issue, conceded to the demands of the people, promising an amendment to the constitution would be presented to the new Parliament.

We have seen that, even after the death of King Abdullah, the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan progressed smoothly through the period of constitutional amendments to a more liberal form of government under the Constitution of 1952. How then can this be called a period of Constitutional Crisis? To my mind the answer lies in the assassination of King Abdullah. His death, in one swift stroke, deprived Jordan of its leadership, its bulwark against intrugue, and its most compatible link with Great Britain who furnished the economic assistance by which Jordan hoped to achieve economic stability.

With Abdullah's death there was no certainty about the succession to the Throne of Jordan. Within Jordan there was no certainty that political opponents would not trade their national birthright to a neighboring state.

We have seen that one group within Jordan feared the country might be absorbed by Hashimite Iraq. In spite of a subsequent attempt of the youthful Kings Hussein and Feisal II to affect a union of these two countries, there is no real indication that any such union, in which Jordan would have lost its

identity, was ever seriously contemplated; however, the fear of such a move led those who were not so strongly attached to the Hashimite dynasty to speak of union with Syria, with which some felt there was a stronger geographical and nationalistic attachment. As we have also seen, there was no great probability of union in this direction either.

The crisis then, appears to be in regard to the continued constitutional existence of Jordan as a sovereign and independent state. There was no ruler on the Throne of Jordan, and because of Talal's illness, there were no immediate prospects of that Throne being occupied. Other states, and dissident and fearful elements within Jordan began to consider the disintegration of the State of Jordan as an indisputable fact. We have seen that a group of Deputies, in 1951, contended that "If British aid ceased the Government (of Jordan) must lead the country to bankruptcy to keep up the Arab Legion or else disband the Legion and leave 450 miles of Jordanian border undefended and exposed to Israel."<sup>1</sup> This was an "if" clause with only unsuitable alternatives resulting. These groups illogically reasoned that the only way to preserve Jordan's existence was to have the country absorbed by another state.

It would appear that the crisis was alleviated with the inauguration of Hussein as King. The mere fact that the Throne of Jordan was once again occupied by a sound, intelligent person reduced the fear of each group that their opponents would be able to effect the absorption of Jordan. The political stability of Jordan began to evidence itself again and the Government began to

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<sup>1</sup>The Times, 20 December 1951, p. 3; above p.

be more concerned with remedying the economic situation than bemoaning their fate IF British aid ceased. British aid had not stopped, and I can find no indication that Great Britain even considered the cessation or even a major reduction in their program of economic assistance to Jordan.

It should also be remembered that Jordan was receiving some economic assistance from UNRWA (for the refugees) and the United States had shown an increasing willingness to give aid. Apparently these factors were realized and considered once the Throne was again occupied. Steps were taken to make Jordan less vulnerable if the event of a major reduction of British aid should ever occur, and it is significant that these steps were attempts to rectify the economic situation of the country, not steps to alter the Constitutional entity of the State.

It is my firm opinion that had Abdullah continued to live, or had there been a strong healthy successor to take the Throne immediately, there would have been no crisis. It appears from all available evidence that nothing had really changed within Jordan, except that a feeling of confidence which had been lost with Abdullah's death and replaced by a fear of the loss of Jordanian entity (not by a hope for Iraqi or Syrian nationality) was dispelled, and with it the crisis, by the return of confidence which appears to be coincident with Hussein's inauguration as King of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan.

In his autobiography King Hussein has written:

Jordan wishes to play only one role, that of a model state . . . . We propose to devote . . . . our full time and energy to the creation of a way of life that we hope in time all Arabs will achieve. We are supposed to be an underdeveloped country, but . . . in a short time we have more than doubled our national output and quintupled our agricultural output. We are in the process of further development in five major areas: . . . mineral resources, our water resources, light industry, internal highway communications and tourism.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the improvements Jordan has made, she remains economically unstable, but the steps taken are evidence that the problem has been recognized and that measures are being taken to prevent a true Constitutional crisis, threatening the continued existence of the entity of Jordan.

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<sup>1</sup>King Hussein, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

ANNEX A

MEMORANDUM BY THE BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE  
RELATING TO THE APPLICATION OF THE MANDATE  
FOR PALESTINE TO TRANSJORDAN

Approved by the Council of the League of Nations on  
September 16, 1922

Article 25 of the Mandate for Palestine provides as follows:

"In the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine as ultimately determined, the Mandatory shall be entitled, with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations, to postpone or withhold application of such provisions of this Mandate as he may consider inapplicable to the existing local conditions, and to make such provision for the administration of the territories as he may consider suitable to those conditions, provided no action shall be taken which is inconsistent with the provisions of Articles 15, 16 and 18."

2. In pursuance of the provisions of this article, His Majesty's Government invite the Council to pass the following resolution:

"The following provisions of the Mandate for Palestine are not applicable to the territory known as Transjordan, which comprises all territory lying to the east of a line drawn from

a point two miles west of the town of Akaba on the Gulf of that name up the centre of the Wady Araba, Dead Sea and River Jordan to its junction with the River Yarmuk; thence up the centre of that river to the Syrian frontier."

Preamble - Recitals 2 and 3.

Art. 2. The words "placing the country under such political administration and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home, as laid down in the Preamble, and."

Art. 4.

Art. 6.

Art. 7. The sentence "there shall be included in this law provisions framed so as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine."

Art. 11. The second sentence of the first paragraph and the second paragraph.

Art. 13.

Art. 14.

Art. 22.

Art. 23

In the application of the Mandate to Transjordan, the action which, in Palestine, is taken by the Administration of the latter country will be taken by the Administration of Transjordan under the general supervision of the Mandatory.

3. His Majesty's Government accept full responsibility as Mandatory for Transjordan, and undertake that such provision as may be made for the administration of that territory in accordance



with Article 25 of the Mandate shall be in no way inconsistent with those provisions of the Mandate which are not by this resolution declared inapplicable.

ANNEX B

POLITICAL MEMORANDUM CONCERNING THE SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB QUESTION IN GENERAL AND THE SYRIAN QUESTION IN PARTICULAR, SUBMITTED TO AMIR'ABDULLAH BY A NUMBER OF TRANSJORDANIAN DIGNITARIES

Amman, March 6, 1943

SUBJECT: SYRIAN UNITY AND THE ARAB FEDERATION

In accordance with Great Britain's previous and subsequent promises to the Arabs,

And in view of the inability of the lawful French Government to carry out its temporary mandate on behalf of the League of Nations in Syria, and the ipso facto termination of this mandate by the loss of its legal character,

And considering Syria's possession of a legally-acquired independence and a legitimate constitution,

And with reference to the recent declaration of the British Foreign Minister, Mr. Anthony Eden, regarding Arab unity,

We believe that the above, and even the facilitation of the task of the Democracies in the Near East, along with the reinforcement of the traditional Anglo-Arab friendship, and the maintenance of confidence and real stability in the Arab countries which have been liberated since the last war, necessitate the immediate implementation of one of the following two projects: - -

THE FIRST PROJECT

A. The Syrian Unity Project "The United Syrian State", and the Arab Federation:

1. The Allies should declare their support of the independence of Syria in its natural boundaries, and consider its national and geographic unity as the basis of its system of government;

2. This declaration will, in fact, uphold the interests of the country and the wishes of the Syrian people, which they have expressed at the end of the last World War and on all occasions, as recorded by the American Plebiscite Commission, namely, Mr. Crane's Commission. Moreover, the Syrian Congress which was held in Damascus, representing all the regions of liberated Syria, namely Northern Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Palestine, and also declared the above in (its) resolution of March 8, 1920, which was duly communicated to the (various) States and to the League of Nations. The (Syrian Congress) thus expressed in this historic resolution the real wishes of the Syrian people. It was that resolution which has since then become the National covenant of all Syrians. The present Syrian Government still considers the day on which it was proclaimed an official national day, and the flag which was designed (by that resolution) for Syrians the same flag which (now) shelters the Government of Transjordan.

3. The project of the Unified Syrian State consists of: - -

- a) The recognition of an independent and sovereign Syrian State whose system of government shall be a constitutional monarchy.
- b) The Unified Syrian State shall comprise Northern Syria, Transjordan, Palestine and Lebanon.
- c) Both Palestine, in some of its districts, and ancient Lebanon shall each have, in accordance with the constitution, a special

administration. In the case of the former, the rights of the Jewish minority and the special status of the Holy Places shall be duly safeguarded, while in the case of the latter due regard shall be paid to the national aspirations of the Lebanese.

d) The Balfour Declaration shall be revoked for its inacceptance by the Arabs, who are the legitimate owners of the country. Otherwise, it shall be given a definitive interpretation which will dissipate the fears in the Arab and Muslim worlds. Thus, the status quo, namely, a proportion of one third (Jews) to two thirds (Arabs), will be considered as adequate, and Jewish immigration will be absolutely prohibited.

#### 4. The Head of the Syrian State:

His Highness Prince Abdullah bin al-Husayn shall be invited to become the head of the Syrian State, on the basis of the following legitimate considerations: - -

- a) His established legitimate rights to the Jordanian Imara, which is an important part of Greater Syria.
- b) His former and subsequent contribution of effective help to the Allies which help has covered the Syrian front in the present war.
- c) His being the first heir to the rights of his father, His Majesty the late King Husayn, in looking after the rights of the Arabs in general and those of Syrians in particular.
- d) The promise made to him by the British Government, as far back as 1921, through its present Prime Minister, Mr. (Winston) Churchill, that he would head the Syrian State; also (in view) the disappearance of all obstacles to the fulfilment of that promise after the

collapse of France, which rendered (France's) legal mandate on behalf of the League of Nations inoperative, with Great Britain acquiring freedom of action in the various regions of Syria.

e) The Syrian's wish to be ruled by a constitutional monarchy in the event of the achievement of a general unity or of a central Federation (in the country).

#### 5. The Arab Federation:

Immediately after the proclamation of the establishment of the Unified Syrian State an Arab Federation shall be established. It shall consist of the States of Syria and Iraq (the Fertile Crescent) and shall have a co-ordinated (foreign) policy, defence, education, and national economy. Nothing shall prevent the other Arab States from joining this Federation, provided that the presidency of the Council of the Arab Federation by rotation or, if necessary, entrusted to the Arab State which is largest (in terms of) wealth, influence and population.

### THE SECOND PROJECT

B. A Concrete Project for the establishment of a Syrian Federal State and an Arab Confederation:

Should the Unified Syrian State not be established immediately, it would not be impossible to proceed with the establishment of a Central Syrian Federation, namely, a Syrian Federal State, on the basis of the following principles. (These principles) have been laid down in the light of the real interests of the Syrian regions and with due regard to their present conditions, as well as to the real interests of the Allies in so far as concerns the gaining of public confidence and the facilitation

of the task of the defence of the Near East:

1. A Central Syrian Federal State, comprising the Governments of Transjordan, Northern Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, shall be established in Syria, in its natural boundaries, Damascus shall be its capital.
2. The Central Syrian Federation shall have competence over matters of defence, communications, national economy, foreign policy, education, and federal justice. Each of the four regional governments shall retain its autonomy, except in such matters as may have become within the competence of the General Syrian Federal Government.
3. The Syrian Federation shall have an "elected General Legislative Assembly", representing the federated regions; the Prime Minister of the Federation, as well as the members of the Federal Executive, shall be elected from (this Assembly), in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.
4. The Syrian Federation shall be established by negotiation and agreement between the four regional Governments; the first step towards its realization shall be negotiation and an agreement between the Governments of Transjordan and Northern Syria.
5. The rules and the bases of the Federation shall be laid down in a draft federal constitution which shall be drawn up by a special committee representing the regions participating (in the Federation). The number of the members of (the Committee) and its powers shall be agreed upon (later).

6. His Highness Prince Abdullah bin al-Husayn shall be designated head of the Syrian Federal State for the same reasons and considerations set out in clause 4 of the preceding project. The internal administration of Transjordan shall be entrusted to a deputy (acting on behalf) of His Highness.
7. The draft constitution of the Syrian Federation shall be debated and approved by the Representative Councils of the regional Governments sitting in (the form of a) Congress, or by a General National Assembly representing the regions of the Federations and elected for this purpose.
8. The Federal Constitution shall be officially proclaimed and shall come into effect on the appointed date in accordance with the decrees concerned.
9. In case of accession, later, by the Governments of Lebanon or Palestine to the Syrian Federation, or (their Accession) on a confederate basis only, the conditions and the extent of such accession shall be separately approved by the Federal Legislative Assembly and by the regional Chamber of Deputies of the acceding State, and the coming into effect (of this accession) shall then be announced.
10. Should the Government of Lebanon, for reasons of its own, fail to join the Central Syrian Federation, the Syrian territories which were incorporated into Lebanon against the wishes of (their) inhabitants shall be returned to Syria on the basis of a plebiscite.
11. Palestine's accession to the Syrian Federation and, consequently to the General Arab Confederation shall be conditional on the realization of the following:

- a) A national constitutional government should be set up in Palestine in its present boundaries.
- b) The White Paper shall continue to be provisionally effective, provided that it should be replaced by a definitive official interpretation of the Balfour Declaration by the British Government within a given period. This interpretation should (be of such a nature as to) dissipate the fears of the Arab and Muslim worlds, by affirming the Palestine Arabs' national and political rights to their own country, which they have inherited from their fathers and forefathers. The national status of (the Arabs) in Palestine should thus remain safeguarded and should not be undermined through any (further) Jewish immigration or any other measures. Moreover, foreign Jewish immigration should be stopped forthwith, and the status quo, that is, the present proportion of one-third Jews to two-thirds Arabs - - a proportion brought about by a continuous foreign immigration ever since the end of the last War, and the legitimacy of which has never been recognized by the Arabs - - should be maintained.

This Jewish proportion, which is accidental in Palestine and against the wishes of its Arab inhabitants, should be considered by the British Government an adequate justification for the claim that it has fulfilled its promise to the Jews. This is particularly so since (the British Government) is, at the same time, committed to the Arabs by obligations which conflict with the Balfour Declaration. And this, in addition to the established legitimate national rights of the Arabs to their inherited country.



- c) In the national administration of Palestine due regard shall be given to the special status of the Holy Places.
  - d) The areas with a Jewish majority shall be granted a decentralized administration as an affirmation of the safeguarding of the rights of the Jewish minority.
  - e) There shall be reciprocal beneficial economic co-operation between the General Arab Federation and the Jewish citizens of Palestine.
  - f) The Arabs' recognition of these privileges to the Jewish minority in Palestine shall be conditional on the declaration of the responsible Jewish (Agency) of the Jewish final acceptance of this solution by notifying the British Government accordingly.
12. In case the Palestine problem is not solved by the British on this basis, Palestine shall remain outside the Syrian Federation, and the Arabs, as a nation having a national covenant and legitimate national rights, shall continue their non-recognition of the status quo in Palestine, and shall persist in demanding the revocation of the Balfour Declaration. (This is based on) the consideration that the Palestine problem is the main source of the poisoning of the relations between Britain and the Arab and Muslim worlds, and that Palestine is not a place large enough to solve the problem of world Jewry. It is, indeed, in the opinion of Great Britain's friends, in the interest of all that the Palestine problem should be solved in the manner explained above. This is the most the Arabs can accept; suffice that it be in the interest of peace, stability and international justice in the present and in the future; in the same way it will put an end to

dissension, suspicion, and the propaganda adverse to the Democracies in the Near East.

13. Immediately upon the setting up of the Syrian Federal State, in accordance with the principles outlined in the previous clauses, the establishment of the Arab Confederation shall be proceeded with in accordance with the provisions of clause 5 of the first project.

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