IRAQ: A Study in Political Consciousness 1908-1921

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Summary

This work is a political study of Iraq from 1908, the date of the promulgation of the Ottoman Constitution, to 1921, the date of the accession of the Amir Faysal to the throne of the new state of Iraq.

The main theme is the development of political consciousness in Iraq seen against the background of economic and social developments in Iraq and external political pressures, notably those arising from the British invasion and subsequent British plans for the future of Iraq.

Chapter one sets the social and economic background of the people of Iraq in 1908 and shows that they consisted of a series of very different social groups. Particular attention is given to the tribes, the urban centres and the Shi'i holy towns.

Chapter two deals with the political significance of the promulgation of the Ottoman Constitution and the rise of the C. U. P., which created a new form of political life in Iraq and resulted in the introduction of political parties and a sudden growth of the newspaper press.

Chapters three and five deal with British plans for and policy towards Iraq before, during and after the war. They amount to a detailed study of the evolution of British plans as influenced by, on the one hand the various British and Indian policy-making departments, and on the other hand by inter-allied and Anglo-Arab relations.

Chapters four and six examine the attitude of the various social groups to the British invasion of Iraq, the course of the Shi'i rebellion against the Turks, the tribesmen's role in the war, the situation in the urban

centres, and the position of the various social groups during the British occupation.

This brings us to the rise of the independence movement, which is discussed in Chapter seven in terms of its composition, motivation and development. Attention is also given to the reaction of the British authorities to Arab claims. The climax of the nationalist movement was the 1920 rising, discussed in Chapter eight.

Lastly, Chapter nine, "The creation of an Arab State", is concerned with the adoption by the British government of a policy of indirect rule through an Arab government which was finally formulated at the Cairo Conference of March 1921. An Arab government with Faysal as king was formed as a result of this policy, though subject to close British control. The opposition of the people of Iraq to the new "British-made" government marked the beginning of a new era in the history of modern Iraq.

To my

Parents

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Introduction

The period between 1908 and 1921 is of particular significance for the history of modern Iraq. Before 1908 the three Wilayas of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, which later constituted the state of Iraq, were part of the Ottoman Empire. For nearly four centuries the three Wilayas had lived a static life, with politics the concern of only a few persons in the centres of the Wilayas, most of them Turkish officials. The tribes were cut off from participation in political life because force was the only language used between them and the authorities. The Shi'i community, under the leadership of their 'Ulama and Mujtahids, was ostracized. The Shi'i avoided contact with the state, which in turn kept clear of them. The religious minorities, the Christians and Jews, ranked as second-class citizens and had no share in political life.

By 1921 the picture had greatly changed. There now for the first time existed a state called Iraq under the kingship of an Arab, the Amir Faysal, a son of the Sharif of Mecca, with an Arab government which included Arab notables, Shi'is, tribal Shaykhs, Christians, Jews and members of the military class. Political consciousness in the western sense of an awareness of belonging to a state, in which a dialogue about rights and duties takes place between the government and the governed, had by now developed alike among the urban population, the Shi'i, the tribal shaykhs and the religious minorities. This work is an attempt to study the political and social factors which in thirteen years had created a political consciousness which four centuries had failed to achieve.

The fact that throughout the period down to 1921 there was not a

single homogeneous society, which could be called Iraqi society, but rather a series of fragmented social groups, each developing within its own boundaries, made it imperative to examine separately the attitude of the various social groups during the whole period under study so as to see what forces were at work. For this purpose the people of Iraq have been roughly divided into four categories, the urban population, the tribal communities, the Shi'i holy towns, and the military class. The urban population has been further subdivided to draw attention to the existence of different strata of society within the towns, notably the official and Affindi class, the 'Ulama and other religious leaders, the landed and merchant notables, the religious minorities, and the masses. A western-style middle class simply did not exist.

The major events which led to changes in Iraq during the period were the following:

1. The promulgation of the Ottoman Constitution in 1908, which was followed by a chain of reactions; the introduction for the first time of political parties, the development of the newspaper press, and the rise of a challenge to the policy of Turkification pursued by the C. U. P.

2. The outbreak of war between Britain and the Ottoman Empire in 1914, and the British invasion of Iraq, which became a test of the political loyalties of the various social groups within the Ottoman Empire. For the most part support for the Ottoman cause was equivocal, because parochial interests and loyalties came first. Some of the army officers, who had already joined the pan-Arab movement, placed loyalty to the Arab cause before loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. But few Arabs in Iraq consistently supported the Ottoman Empire, or the British invaders, or Arab nationalism.

3. The emergence of the British as the new masters of Iraq, with plans of

their own, on the one hand encouraged Arab nationalism, because of British promises and declarations in favour of Arab independence, and on the other hand provoked an anti-imperialist opposition.

This brings us to the rise of the independence movement. Who constituted it? What did "independence" mean to each of the constituent social groups in Iraq? And what did they expect to happen after independence? These are some of the questions which I have tried to answer. Suffice to say here, that although the four main social groups were involved in the movement in differing degrees and for different reasons, the movement itself had a special significance since it was the first one which had involved the main sections of the population of Iraq in common action.

The climax of the independence movement was the widely-discussed 1920 rising. Many British commentators have brushed aside the rising as simply an insurrection of a self-destructive outburst. The nationalists, by contrast, have seen in it a sort of war of liberation. The rising was certainly not an isolated incident and it can be satisfactorily assessed only by relating it to the pattern of events since 1908. The attitude of the tribes, who put teeth into the rising, has been the subject of most controversy. Those who have argued that they were simply motivated by desire for loot and by habitual opposition to government authority were clearly guilty of an over simplification. The reasons for tribal participation in the rising must be sought in the nature of tribal society, the shaykhs' position vis-a-vis the tribesmen, the land system, and the relations between the tribes and the government. Only a close examination of all these factors can show why for instance the Tigris tribes remained passive while the Middle Euphrates tribes took the lead in the rising.

Though militarily the rising was a failure it nonetheless greatly contributed to the development of political consciousness among the people. The people of the three Wilayas identified themselves for the first time with a potential political entity, Iraq. The nationalist ideology of the intelligentzia and the religious ideology of the Shi'i 'Ulama were reconciled, at least in a negative sense, by the slogans of no British control, no mandate, no treaty, and no form of British or foreign intervention in the affairs of Iraq.

Political leadership, which was in 1908 almost exclusively vested in the Turkish officials and local notables, was gradually widened to include besides the elderly notables, the Shi'i leaders and the members of the military class. The role of the army officers in the political development of Iraq was a particularly important one. Educated in Constantinople, they had become acquainted with the currents of western thought, and particularly with nationalism. The policy of Turkification pursued by the C. U. P. intensified their sense of national awareness. The army officers passed on their ideas to the people of Iraq by way of political organisations, which were at first secret and later open, of which the most important by far was the 'Ahd society. The attitudes of the Iraqi army officers during and after the war thus helped to shape the independence movement in Iraq. In the Arab administration finally formed under British auspices, first in Syria and then in Iraq, the army officers acquired the lion's share of the jobs. It should, however, be noticed that apart from the army officers, the younger generation, either civilian or military, played little part in political organizations in Iraq itself until after the emergence of the Arab government.

Although between 1908 and 1921 political consciousness gradually

increased, it was still limited in range and the people of Iraq were still far from an homogeneous society in 1921. Divisions and animosities persisted. The tribesmen and the masses felt little enthusiasm for government, the Shi'i were dissatisfied with their share in the new administration and the notables of Basra advocated the secession of Basra from fear of Baghdadi dominance in the new Iraqi state. However the emergence of an Arab state and the strength of popular feeling which brought it into office provided a common denominator for the various social groups, which enabled them to co-operate, overriding traditional jealousies and parochial interests. But the process of nation-building was found to be a slow one, dependent on the existence of a government that could inspire popular confidence. And a further thesis could easily be written on the way in which, under Faysal's regime, the process of nation-building was hampered by the limited degree of popular participation in government.

Inevitably this thesis is almost as much concerned with the development of British policy as with the course of events in Iraq, because the political future of Iraq depended almost entirely on the British government. Before the war the British and India governments sought actively to preserve and enhance British interests in Iraq, but once Iraq fell to the British army British policy became one of drift and equivocation. Responsibility was dispersed among several departments, and this fact plus the entry of the United States of America into the war, the complications of allied diplomacy, and the emergence of the League of Nations, led to a great deal of uncertainty about the future of British policy. The British floundered particularly badly in two areas: they gave the misleading impression that they supported self-determination and independence for the Arabs, and they failed to

recognise and come to terms with the rising independence movement at a time when there was plenty of Arab goodwill toward the British.

In the pages that follow little attention is given to southern Kurdistan, which during the Ottoman period formed part of the Mosul Wilaya. The Kurds at the end of the war, like most of the Arab tribes, were practically free of effective government control but were then placed under a separate British administration. The distinctiveness of the Kurds was, indeed, formally recognised by the Allies in the Sevres treaty of August 1920 which (in section three, articles 62, 63 and 64) provided that the Kurdish people should within one year of the treaty coming into force be allowed to decide their own future, whether it were to be independence from Turkey or not. Although the treaty was not ratified, the Kurdish districts were nevertheless treated by the British administration as a separate entity and the policy of separation was endorsed by the Cairo Conference. A settlement was not secured until 1925 when the League of Nations allocated southern Kurdistan to the Arab government of Iraq.

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Although a large number of books and articles have been written by Arabs and non-Arabs about the emergence of the state of Iraq and the rising of 1920, there has been none entirely devoted to a detailed study of the period between 1908 and 1921, which has made use of both the Iraqi and the British official records. The Iraqi records are still not generally available, while the British ones have only recently been opened to the public. The book nearest in scope to this thesis is Ireland's 'Iraq, a Study in Political Development, published in 1937, which covered the period from the beginning of

the war to the 1930s. In two respects the present work differs from that of Ireland. First, Ireland's sources were more limited, since although he had access to the British records he apparently did not use all those now in the Public Record Office or the A. T. Wilson papers. Secondly, Ireland places his main emphasis on the development of British policy in Iraq, and particularly on A. T. Wilson's work. By contrast this thesis is primarily concerned with the development of the political consciousness of the people of Iraq, not only in relation to British and international developments, but also in a domestic setting.

Unfortunately, I was not able to examine such Turkish records and publications as exist because I do not know Turkish. However, judging from other sources, I do not feel that the Turkish records would radically change the conclusions I have reached, especially for the period after the declaration of war. The French archives, which would no doubt shed much light on the Iraqi officers in Syria, are still closed. The archives of the government of India in Delhi were too far away to be consulted, but most of the relevant documents were copied at the time when they were drawn up and the copies were sent to London, where they are now in the Public Record Office.

Many of the passages cited from the British records include grammatical and other errors. These arose in most cases from the fact that they are taken from messages transmitted in cypher which have been imperfectly decyphered.

In the transliteration of Arabic names and words I have relied mainly on the Edinburgh University system with certain variations, such as the omission of the "hamza" except where medial, and making no distinction

between ص and س, ذ and ظ, ط and ت. However, when an Arabic name or word has an accepted transliteration in English I have used it. When a reference is made to an Arabic source in a footnote I give, with few exceptions, a translated title of the source and in the bibliography I give both the translation and the transliteration.

Chapter 1

The Social and Economic Structure of Iraq during the Early Twentieth Century

'Iraq' is an ancient Arabic word, used in place of the Greek 'Mesopotamia', to refer to an area consisting of the three towns of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul and their hinterland, excluding the mountains and the Kurdish areas of the modern state of Iraq. The area constituting modern Iraq has from ancient times passed from the hands of one ruler to another, with the result that it has either been regarded as forming part of a larger entity or it has been divided; in either case to suit the convenience of a wider Arab or alien administration. Iraq in its modern boundaries, was never a separate political unit before the twentieth century. In 1534 the Ottoman Sultan, Sulayman, incorporated Iraq into his Empire by conquering Baghdad. From then until the British occupation of Iraq during the first world war, Iraq was part of the Ottoman Empire, though its status varied from time to time. For a long time the three regions of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul formed a single Eyalla of Baghdad, which was divided into seventeen Sanjaqs. In the early eighteenth century Mosul and Shahrizur (with Karkuk as its centre) were severed from the Ayalla of Baghdad. During the governorship of Midhat Pasha between 1869 and 1871, a new "Tanzimat" (Organization) was introduced. The Empire was now divided into Wilayas, which were in turn sub-divided into Mutasarrifiya (Sanjaq), Qadha and Nahiya. The Wilaya was administered by a Wali, assisted by a daftardar (general accountant), a Maktubji (general secretary), and a number of representatives of the various ministries in Constantinople. The Sanjaq

was administered by a Mutasrif responsible to the Wali, who was assisted by a Muhasib ji (accountant official), a Tahrirat Mudiri (secretariat manager), and junior representatives of the various ministries. A Qaymmaqam headed the Qadha, and was responsible to the Mutasrif; below him a Mudir administered the Nahiya and was responsible to the Qaymmaqam. In each administrative unit there was an administrative council (Majlis Idara), presided over by the head of the administrative unit, its members consisting partly of appointed officials and partly of elected representatives of the local communities. Furthermore, at the centre of each Wilaya, Sanjaq and Qadha an elected municipal council was established. In 1879, Mosul became a separate Wilaya, and in 1884 Basra achieved the same status.

The three Iraqi Wilayas of Baghdad, Mosul and Basra were administered by a largely Turkish bureaucracy appointed from Constantinople. But the remoteness of Iraq from the Capital of the Empire, its backwardness, and its severe climate made Iraq very unattractive to Turkish officials. As a result the quality of the officials was low and they were neglected by Constantinople. Feebleness, corruption and inefficiency were the basic characteristics of the Turkish administration in Iraq according to competent observers:

> In the original form of Ottoman rule, which was pure Oriental despotism, all power was the Sultan's. He stood at the head of an elaborate hierarchy of stratified functionaries, and was represented by governors locally as autocratic as himself. Rule was for his sole benefit and grandeur; no law existed save the Shara', capriciously enforced; no limit or appeal restricted the local powers of Wali or Mutasallim. All posts were for sale, including those of the highest functionaries.
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> Changes in this régime had been forced upon the Ottoman dynasty early in the nineteenth century by its military defeats, ... For seventy years before 1900 'Iraq had enjoyed

> the blessings of 'reformed' Government, had seen its Administration modified first on paper and then in fact, with every new meticulous Ordinance in Madhat Pasha's revised wilaya system..... Turkish Government of 'Iraq ... had irreproachable nominal objectives - order, progress, and public advantage. Its regulations were comprehensive and repeatedly revised; its administrators contained men of education, experience, and knowledge of local conditions. It was, nevertheless, severely criticized by its own servants and not less by outside observers. Excessively centralized, ... it was ill-served, ill-housed, ill-equipped, and incapable of maintaining forces adequate to its clearest needs. It lacked a breed of loyal and vigorous men able to grasp the essentials of ruling a backward tribal territory, and trusted by their superiors..... Above all, ... 'Iraq was but part of an Empire whose central government in 1900 was an inept and seedy despotism distracted by constant alarms and suspicions, lectured by the Powers, preyed on by adventurers, working by spies and tale-bearers, and rotten with corruption and nepotism..... From this central government the 'Iraq wilayas depended, from its ranks came the senior officials to every sanjaq and department, and to it the intriguers and malcontents of 'Iraq could bear their tales.[1]

The feebleness of the bureaucracy, which placed its own comfort and self-interest above efficiency, meant that the government in effect relied on the traditional local leadership to maintain the basic fabric of government. This suited the local landed and religious notables, who naturally preferred a weak bureaucracy which needed them to a strong one that did not. But the weakness of the administration was also a source of concern, because it meant that their basic need for law and order was but ill-met. The local leadership was for the most part an hereditary one, and consisted of a number of families which had maintained their position for

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1 S. H. Longrigg, 'Iraq, 1900 to 1950. A Political, Social, and Economic History, London, Second Impression, 1956, pp. 35-39.

many generations. The notables were very conservative and opposed all changes, lest they might disturb their own position. Many of the notables enjoyed a religious status as well as the standing that comes from the possession of wealth, and this added to their power and influence. The mutual dependence of the Turkish bureaucracy and the traditional local leadership thus became an alliance for stagnation, and so long as the balance of power was maintained, there was hardly any chance of radical change or progress.

The two sources of imbalance in the situation were the Ottoman government and the masses, but little movement could be expected from either. The Turkish government had long been immersed in its own shortcomings, and a remote region such as Iraq was in normal times simply regarded as a source of revenue. As long as the taxes came in there was no need for action. The masses were equally unwilling to move, either because of their ignorance or because of the strong tradition of acquiescence, which had religious sanction. Any radical change could be condemned as Bud'a (illegal change) and that was heresy. The middle class and the intelligentzia were still in their infancy, and Iraq, unlike Egypt and the Levant, had not yet been much exposed to Western cultural influences.

The main sources of disquiet among the populace were traditional rivalries over styles of life, land, religion, and race, and the age-old clash between town and country. Geographically, the three Wilayas were divided into the north and north east mountainous area, the fertile plains along the banks of the two rivers, and the western and south western desert. In the mountains dwelled the Kurds; in the fertile plains towns had developed, and in the cultivable plains tribes had settled. In the western

desert the Beduin continued to live as nomads. Because of the lack of good communications the three areas were almost cut off from one another. Although the majority of the people of the three wilayas were Arabs, there was a strong Kurdish minority in the north. There were also Persian and Turkoman communities, with their own languages and customs. Religion was another element of disunity. There were Jewish and Christian minorities in all of the three wilayas, and, because the Shari'a was the law, these two minorities had to reconcile themselves to second-class status. Though the Jewish community was commercially prosperous the Jews were far from enjoying equality with the ruling Muslims. More important was the schism between the Shi'i majority of the population and the Sunnis, who enjoyed political advantages because they had the backing of the Sunni Ottoman government. There was a tendency among urban Shi'is to look to Persia, the traditional upholder of their faith, for protection and inspiration. The traditional animosity between the urban and the rural tribal areas, was another of the basic facts of life. The tribes looked upon the administration and the urban populations as exploiters and tax gatherers, while the administration and the townsmen feared them as unruly warriors with no respect for law and order, life and property.

The nineteenth-century division of the area into three wilayas served to emphasise the different pattern of life in the main districts of the country. Mosul looked towards Turkey, Baghdad towards Persia, and Basra southwards towards the Persian Gulf and India. Indeed, it was customary to identify individuals as Baghdadi, Basrawi or Moslawi rather than as Iraqi, because the word Iraqi had no precise meaning. The term Iraqi came into use early in the twentieth century, but even then there was not in

any sense a natural, coherent society which could be identified as Iraqi, and individuals long continued to be spoken of, either as Ottoman subjects, or as members of the Shi'i, or tribal communities, or even as Shi'i townsmen or Shi'i tribesmen, because religion was not sufficient to unite them.

Socially and economically the population of Iraq could be divided into three sections; the nomadic tribes, the settled tribes, and the urban communities. Political development in Iraq was dependent on the place of social and economic development in each of these groups.

The Beduin

The Arab nomads, commonly called Beduins, inhabited the desert in west and south-west of Iraq which covered 60% of the total area of the country (270,000 Sq. Km.). The nomad population amounted to 17 per cent of the whole population of Iraq in 1905.[1] All the nomad tribes were relative newcomers to Iraq. The immigration of Arab tribes into Iraq had began early in the first century A.D.: the desert was their first home, but gradually they moved to the east of the Euphrates, substituting a settled life for their nomadic one. From time to time there were new nomadic invasions, and all the nomadic tribes of 20th Century Iraq belonged to the most recent immigrant waves. The chief tribes were the Shammar tribe in the north and Jazzira, the 'Aniza tribe in the Shammiya steppe, and the Dhafir in the south-west of Iraq. The Beduins live in a constant state of

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1 M. S. Hasan, Economic Development of Irak, Foreign Trade and Economic Development, 1864-1958. Beirut, 1965, pp. 52-53.

movement, seeking pastures and water for themselves and for their camels, which served as a reliable form of transport and as a commodity to barter with in return for such basic needs as coffee, grain and cloth. The Beduins disdained manual work and regarded cultivators and craftsmen as inferior to themselves, whom they classed as warriors. War rather than peace was their natural condition. Each Beduin tribe had its own rules and norms which regulated a life based on the principle of the equality of kinsfolk and of the supremacy of the communal interest. It was the duty of the tribe to protect each individual and, consequently, each tribesman was expected to stand by his tribe in all circumstances. Traditionally the Beduin tribes had defied all kinds of central authority and had constituted a permanent menace to the settled tribes and fringe towns, since they could easily avoid punitive forces simply by retreating into the desert. Sporadic warfare was not confined to the Beduin's relations with the settled population: it also existed among the various Beduin tribes. The Shammar were intermittently at war with the Dulaym, a semi-nomad tribe, and with the 'Aniza. Likewise the Dhafir raided the Mutayr and the 'Aniza.

The introduction of effective Ottoman control over Iraq in 1831, strengthened the central authorities, who embarked on a policy of forceful subjection of the tribes, which was facilitated by the modernisation of the army and some improvements in communications. The cessation of raiding and the payment of taxes were the main objectives of the administration, but this inevitably meant, in practice, the destruction of the fundamental feature of the life of the Beduin, namely their status as warriors. By the turn of the 20th century the Turkish authorities had achieved only partial

success. But the total number of nomadic tribesmen was constantly falling: in 1867 it had been 450,000, or nearly 35% of the whole population; by 1890 it had fallen to 433,000, or nearly 25%; and by 1905 the nomadic population was down to 393,000, or 17% of the population of Iraq.[1] This fall in the nomadic population reflected not only the forceful policy of the Government, but also the influence of a number of economic factors, which will be discussed later, which made cultivation and stock breeding economically profitable occupations. By 1900, the nomadic tribe of Dulaym had been largely settled and had taken to animal breeding and cultivation as their principal occupations.[2]

In addition to force the Turkish authorities adopted other methods to subdue the tribes. They tried to secure the Beduin chiefs' co-operation by offering them financial inducements in the form of subsidies and grants in return for a pledge to cease raiding and to protect the lines of communication across the desert. Further, they tried to bring the leading chiefs, such as Fahad al-Hadhal, chief of the 'Aniza tribe, into the Government administration (al-Hadhal was appointed Qaymmaqam of the Razzaza district). But the most effective measure was an attempt to transform the chiefs into private owners of cultivable land, and so to induce them to adopt a settled way of life. The chief of the Shammar tribe, Farhan, was installed as a landowner near Sharqat in Mosul Wilaya; al-Hadhal owned land near Karbala, where the tribal inhabitants, known as the

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1 Hasan, Economic Development of Iraq, p. 53.
2 S. H. Longrigg, 'Iraq, 1900 to 1950, p. 24.

Zaqarit, were converted into peasants.[1] Last but not least the Turkish Government tried to weaken tribal unity by favouring one chief against another: the chief of the 'Aniza tribe, for instance, was denounced in 1890, and 'Ajil bin Rakan was proclaimed by the Turkish Government as the new chief, with the result that there was a split in the tribe.[2]

The partial disintegration of the nomadic tribes, which the Turkish authorities aimed at, marked the beginning of a new political and economic stratification within the nomadic tribes. The chiefs and their families acquired a new political and economic status vis-a-vis the tribesmen. The chiefs, with Government support, could afford to abandon their role as warriors and to turn their tribesmen into peasants and themselves into landlords. However, until the British occupation the majority of the remaining Beduin tribes maintained the traditional tribal solidarity and their independence of the central authorities.

The settled tribes

During the early part of the 20th century the settled and semi-nomadic tribes constituted more than half the population of Iraq. They lived along the river valleys, mainly in central and southern Iraq, where their basic occupations were cultivation and cattle breeding. Along the river Shatt al Arab minor tribal groups were settled in villages, and were rather villagers than tribesmen; one of these tribal groups, the Muhaysin, owed allegiance to the Shaykh of Muhammara; further up the river,

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1 Arab Bureau, Baghdad, Arab Tribes of the Bahadad Wilayat, July, 1918, published in Calcutta, 1919, p. 251.
2 A. al-'Azzawi, History of Iraq Between Two Occupations, Baghdad, 1956, vol. VIII, p. 111.

in the Qurna district, the Bani Mansur, Nuhayrat, Ahl Mazayra'a, and Nahr 'Antar tribal groups were loosely connected and adhered to the leadership of the Shaykh of Qurna, Kabashi al-Sa'ad. Along the Euphrates, from the Qurna district to Samawa and along the Gharaf river, lived the Muntafik confederation, whose leading units were the al-Ajwad, Bani Malik, and Bani Sa'id, and whose minor offshoots included the Bani Hacham in Samawa, the Bani Khayqan, and the Bani Asad. The leadership of the confederation was vested in the Sa'dun family, who were of Najdi origin. Along the Middle Euphrates from Samawa to Musayb lived a series of confederations and tribes:

1. The Zubayd confederation, settled between the Tigris and Euphrates, consisting of the Albu Sultan, Mu'amara, and Juhaysh tribes.

2. The Bani Hasan tribe, settled west of Hindiya between Karbala and Kufa. Its main components were the Tharawin, Jamil, Jarrah, and Chabbas.

3. The Fatla tribe, settled on the Mushkhab and Shamdiya rivers apart from a section of the tribe settled along the Hindiya.

4. The Khaza'il confederation, its sections scattered between Kifl, Diwaniya and Samawa.

5. The Aqra' and 'Afij, two tribes on the Shatt al-Daghara and 'Afij.

Along the Euphrates, from Musayb to Ramadi, lived the Zuba', Bani Tamim, and Janabiyn tribes. To the north of these tribes lived the Dulaym tribe, of which the Albu 'Alwan, Albu Rudayni, Albu Nimr, 'Isa, and Muhamda were the chief component sections. Along the Tigris, from Qurna to Baghdad, lived the Ka'ab, under the Shaykh of Muhammara, the Albu Muhammad, the Bani Lam, the Rabi'a and lastly the Shammar Tuqa and part of the Zubayd confederation. In

the Diyala river area the Bani Tamim and al-'Izza were the major tribes. Between the city of Baghdad and Mosul and along the Tigris, was the land of the 'Ubayd, and Shammar Jarba, with other minor tribes clustered around the towns of Samura and Tikrit, such as the Albu Badri, the 'Aziz Balad, the Darraj, and the Juwari.

The tribal social structure of the settled tribes during the early nineteenth century was similar to that of the nomadic tribes, with certain modifications, which followed from the change of occupation to cultivation and cattle breeding. It remained basically a communal society, adhering to a system of mutual rights and obligations between the shaykhs and the tribesmen, and equality of kinship among the tribesmen. The tribes were roughly divided into confederations or large tribes called "Qabila", which in turn were divided into groups called "'Ashira" which consisted of an aggregate of clusters of families, each called a "Ḥumula". The 'Ashira was headed by a shaykh, and each Ḥumula by a Rays. The paramount head of the confederation was referred to as Shaykh al Mashaykh, or shaykh of the shaykhs. The authority of the shaykhs varied from one place to another, depending on the degree of tribal solidarity, and was essentially paternal in character, since shaykhs were usually linked by kinship with their tribesmen. The tribal shaykh was usually succeeded by a member of his family, but not necessarily by his son; any member of the family might succeed if he secured general recognition from the tribe.

The shaykhs exercised their authority in conjunction with a tribal council, which consisted of the elders and the leading members of the tribe and the shaykh's family. There was also a kind of judicial council

consisting of tribesmen with special knowledge and experience of tribal customs and rules. The settled tribes occupied an area which they designated tribal land, or "Dira", on which they grazed their flocks and herds, and part of which they cultivated. The land was owned and defended by the tribe collectively, and its produce was shared within the tribe roughly according to the number of men in each family and their services to the tribe. The largest portion was allotted to the shaykh's family, so as to cover his extensive obligations, such as the maintenance of the "Mudhif" or guest house. The allotment of the land to the different tribal families was on a temporary basis, although in some cases the same land would be allocated to one family for a number of years. The result was that there was no permanent attachment of the tribesman to a particular plot of land, except in a few cases, and even then the shaykh or the tribal council retained the right to move a family that had held a piece of land for some time to another plot. Even the shaykh's share of the land was not allocated to him permanently, and such land as he held was regarded as being held in trust for the benefit of the whole tribe. The members of the tribe usually cultivated their own land, but where the land holding was too big to be cultivated by the manpower of its holders, such as was the case with the shaykh's allotment, other members of the tribe might participate in its cultivation, or tribesmen from other tribes might be brought in. These "agriculture workers" were considered to be tenants at will, and were free to leave the land once the season ended. Many of them, however, remained on the land and became in time attached to the tribe as a whole rather than to the land on which they worked. As such they gradually acquired equal rights with

the other members of the tribe, but the very existence of this class of "agriculture workers", marked the first stage in the substitution of a landlord-peasant relationship for communal ownership. Economically the tribe was almost self-supporting. Stock breeding and cultivation could satisfy most of the tribe's needs, and the tribe could barter its produce in the nearby towns for necessities such as sugar, coffee, tea, cloth and simple tools.

The settlement of the tribes did not mean a regime of peace and order. The settled tribes continued to be shadowed by the possibility of war with neighbouring tribes or with the central authorities. Thus the tribesmen, although they were settled, continued to think of themselves as warriors as well as cultivators, and some of the shaykhs continued to maintain a substantial bodyguard or army known as a "Sibyan" in certain areas of the Middle Euphrates, and as a "Hushiya" in the Tigris area.

At the beginning of the 19th century the nomadic as well as the settled tribes were separated from the urban areas by a strong sense of mutual hostility and were to all intents and purposes independent of the authority of the Ottoman Empire. In 1831, however, the Ottoman government re-established its authority in Iraq by ousting the Mamluk rulers and soon began to extend its control over the tribal areas. First the Ottoman administration set about the forceful subjugation of the tribal areas. Secondly, Madhat Pasha, the Wali of Baghdad, introduced the Tapu system of land tenure, which mainly affected tribal land ownership. Thirdly, there was a big improvement in communications, mainly in the form of river transport. Fourthly, there was a sharp increase in foreign trade, coupled

with a greater demand for agricultural products, which encouraged the transformation of the tribal economy, from a subsistence economy into a market economy.

The Turkish policy towards the tribes, from 1831 until the Turkish defeat at the hands of the British, was a policy of destruction. Tribal institutions were a major obstacle to the extension of Turkish authority and to successful revenue collection, which was vital for the Ottoman Empire. The tribesmen owed allegiance solely to their shaykhs and tribes; and were used to fighting in order to defend their stock and land. They saw no reason why they should relinquish part of their wealth to an alien administration. It is not therefore surprising that the Turkish authorities sought to destroy the authority of the tribal shaykhs and to transfer the tribal lands to those who were willing to co-operate with the Ottoman regime. The use of force was frequently resorted to by the Turks and nearly all the Turkish walis were at one time or another involved in military campaigns against the tribes.[1] The stronger and more independent tribal confederations were subjected to constant pressure, and in 1867 the leading shaykhs of the Khaza'il confederation were captured and exiled.[2]

The weakening of tribal institutions could be achieved by means other than the direct use of force. The manipulation of dissensions and splits among the tribes and the shaykhs' families could be just as effective.

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1 A. Wardi, A Study in the Society of Iraq, Baghdad, 1965, p. 171. See also Wadai al-'Atiyya, History of the Diwaniya, Najaf, 1954, pp. 41, 45. Two military campaigns were sent to Diwaniya in 1857 and 1844.

2 Al-'Atiyya, History of the Diwaniya, p. 50.

About 1870, the Fatla tribe was encouraged by the authorities to settle in the Mishkhab district of the Middle Euphrates, where the Shibil and Ibrahim groups of the Khaza'il confederation already lived. As a result the history of these tribes became one of continuous strife against each other.[1] The split between Falih and Sa'dun, two heads of the shaykhly family of the Muntifik confederation, was perpetuated by the Turks, who intermittently shifted their support from one side to the other. The help of the Sunni and Shi'i ulama was sought by the Turkish authorities to preach against raiding and rebellion,[2] and peaceful Sayids, highly respected by the Shi'i tribesmen, were encouraged to settle among the Shi'i tribes.

Before the introduction of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 in Iraq between 1869 and 1871, the tribal land was considered by the government as state land leased by the tribal shaykhs according to a contract called "Shartnama" or "Sanad Tiqam", which granted the lessor the right of "Lazma", or occupation and cultivation, in return for the payment of a fixed sum of money or a share of his crops. The tribal shaykh usually acted as "Lazma" holder, but the shaykh might instead enter into a partnership with his tribesmen, sharing with them not only the crops, but also the "Lazma".[3] How far the contractual character of the "Lazma" was emphasised by the government

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1 Arab Bureau, Baghdad, Arab Tribes of the Baghdad Wilayat, July, 1918, Calcutta, 1919, p. 83; see also Abdul Jabar Faris, Two Years in the Middle Euphrates, Najaf, 1353 (H), p. 75.

2 Al-Raqib Newspaper, No. 177, dated 13 Jamadi Awal, 1328.

3 Sir E. Dowson, An Inquiry into Land Tenure and Related Questions, Letchworth, 1931, p. 26.
"There was no personal lazma right; allotments to individual tribesmen could be and frequently were resumed by the sheikh."

depended entirely on the government's power to enforce its ultimate authority. When the government was strong, it could make land grants which discriminated against one tribe or one part of a tribe, or against one shaykh in favour of another. The consequence was a weakening of tribal solidarity, and where tribal solidarity was weakened there was a tendency for the "Lazma" holder to be the lessor and the "fellah" the lessee of the land, and thereby the conception of partnership other than in the crop weakened.[1]

The new Ottoman Land Code became another means of weakening tribal institutions. Midhat Pasha, Wali of Baghdad Wilaya between 1869 and 1871, introduced into Iraq the Land Code, which was already in operation in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. The new code introduced a system of land titles or "Tapu" and provided that land was to be divided into the following categories:

1. Mulk land, held in absolute freehold the possessor enjoying the right of "raqaba", or absolute ownership, as well as the right of "tasruf" or usufruct.

2. Miri land, or state land, in which the right of usufruct and absolute ownership was vested in the state.

3. Waqf land, which was set aside to support private and religious endowments.

4. Matruka land, which was public land reserved by the state for

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1 C. Issawi, The Economic History of the Middle East 1800-1914, Chicago, 1966, p. 165, quoting from Saleh Haider, Land Problems of Iraq (unpublished thesis), London University, 1942.

future public use.

5. Mawat land ("dead land"), which was waste land not in use or unreclaimed.

Many able writers have dealt with the theory and application of the Land Code, such as Dr. S. Haider, A. Jwaidah, Doreen Warriner, and Sir E. Dowson. In this work I refer to it simply in so far as it contributed to changes in tribal institutions. "The principles" wrote S. Haider

> "underlying the Land Code and other land legislation during this period can be summarized as the universal alienation of the tasarraf of cultivated state land to small cultivators, by either confirming prescriptive rights to the land and regulating them where they exist or, as in the case of sale of land by auction and revival of dead land, by creating them where they do not exist."[1]

It was commonly assumed that the aim of Midhat Pasha in introducing the land code was the destruction of tribal institutions by transforming the tribesmen into cultivators with private and legally defined ownership of their land; the ending of disputes over land among the tribes; replacement of the tribal shaykhs as land-granting authorities by the state, thus making the tribesmen directly responsible to the state and by-passing the shaykhs; and finally an increase in the public revenue and in the area of cultivated land.[2]

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1 S. Haider, Land Problems of Iraq (unpublished thesis), p. 508.
2 A. Jwaidah, "The Land System of Lower Iraq", article in Middle Eastern Affairs, No. 3, edited by A. Hourani, 1963, pp. 125, 134. See also Doreen Warriner, Land and Poverty in the Middle East, London, 1948, p. 17, and S Haider, Land Problems of Iraq, quoted by C. Issawi, The Economic History of the Middle East 1800-1914, p. 166.

In practice the Land Code did much to accelerate the disintegration of tribal institutions, not by turning the tribesman into the independent and private owner of his land, but rather by alienating the tribesman from his land altogether and rendering him a mere tenant or agricultural worker, cultivating the land of a shaykh who had become a landlord - often an absentee landlord living in one of the big towns. The reasons for this were first, that the authorities were prepared to recognise a prescriptive right to the ownership of land only in the case of those who could prove occupation and cultivation for a minimum period of ten years, a condition which could rarely be met by the tribesmen, who were extremely mobile within and, indeed, beyond the tribal "dira", especially where soil conditions were bad, where there were frequent floods, or shifting river courses or silted-up canals. Secondly, although it was possible to obtain a "tapu" by the payment of a "bedal mithel" or purchase price, and also to buy land at auctions, the tribesman could not as an individual provide the cash needed, and the tribe as a collective body could not bid for the purchase of land because the code forbade communal ownership.[1] Moreover, in most places the tribesmen and shaykhs saw no reason why they should buy land which was in practice already under their control. A tribal shaykh, when asked why he did not obtain a Tapu for his land answered "My sword is my boundary, and I don't want a better one, yes, that's it a sword is the thing and no nonsense about writings...."[2] Thirdly, the tribesmen feared hidden

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1 D. Warriner, Land and Poverty, p. 17, article eight of the Land Code.
2 J. S. Mann, An Administrator in the Making, London, 1921, pp. 202-203, the shaykh referred to was Salman al-'Abtan of the Khaza'il.

dangers behind the new Land Code, such as military service and the extraction of more taxes.

The beneficiaries of the new system were rich townsmen and the few shaykhs who applied for titles. These shaykhs, who included Ibn Hadhal of 'Aniza, Farhan of Shammar Jarba, the Shaykh of Chaab on the Shatt al-Arab, and most important of all, the Sa'dun Family in the Muntafik, were granted titles for land cultivated by their tribesmen, as a means of securing their support and loyalty. Rich townsmen, because of their financial strength and their influence with the corrupt Turkish administration, secured extensive holdings near the major towns. In Mosul Wilaya where Tapu holding became very extensive it was reported that

> There are indications that the bulk of the land in the Division was originally in the hands of peasant proprietors, each man tilling his own land; but at present most of the land has passed into the hands of large proprietors, who are generally inhabitants of Mosul. They hold by right of Tapu sanads, complaints as to how this process was effected are frequent. It is said, for instance, that a peasant would be offered for his land 25 per cent of its value, and on his refusal to sell, he would be cast into prison on a trumped up charge of murder, to remain there for years unless he changed his mind.[1]

Similarly, townsmen became tapu holders in the vicinity of Baghdad, Diyala, Kut, Samara, Hilla and Basra, usually in those areas where the government authority was strong. The town landowners in these areas became absentee landlords and the position of the cultivators of the land sank to the level of semi-serfs. The land was transferred from a system of rent-free communal ownership to a system of rent paying and private ownership, the

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1 Cmd. 1061, Review of the Civil Administration 1914-20, by G. L. Bell, p. 54.

share of the owner in the profit of the soil varying from 2/3 to 3/5. The Tapu system did not provide any legal protection for the tenants, because the landlord obtained the right to evict the cultivators at will.

Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid was the greatest beneficiary from the Tapu system, because he acquired nearly 30% of the cultivated land in Baghdad and extensive estates in Mosul and Basra Wilayas.[1] The Sultan's Tapu holding in Iraq was called "Saniya land" and was administered and maintained by a special department independent of the local officials. On the Saniya lands tribal institutions and, notably, the position of the shaykhs, were greatly weakened, as the Saniya officials took over the responsibilities of the shaykhs. The tribesmen, although they had lost their partnership in the control of the land, at first gained something from the Sultan's ownership, in that the Saniya administration was relatively efficient and productive. After 1909, however, the Saniya land, which reverted to the state on the dethronement of 'Abd al-Hamid, became just like any other state or miri land, and was administered with much negligence and inefficiency.[2]

The alienation of land under the Tapu system was suspended in the irrigation zone, which included central and southern Iraq, by two "Irada" decrees in 1880 and 1892, but in the northern region tapu granting continued.

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1 Vital Cuinet, Turquie en Asie, III, Paris, 1896, p. 44; quoted by S. Haider, Land Problems of Iraq, pp. 567-570.

2 Al-Raqib Newspaper, No. 57, dated 6 Shawal, 1327, complained that a Dam called "Um Sughul" on the Euphrates used to be maintained efficiently by the Saniya and between 600-1000£T was spent annually on it, but in 1909 it was neglected altogether.

This partly explains why proportionately the Tapu holding in the northern region was more extensive than elsewhere.[1] The reaction of the tribes to the alienation of their land varied, and depended basically on two factors; the degree of tribal solidarity, and the strength of government power. Where the tribes were strong and the government was weak the imposition of the Tapu system was resisted by force, as in the case in the Muntafik confederation: in areas near the major towns where the government was strong, and tribal solidarity was already disintegrating, Tapu holders were able to establish themselves.

Two other factors, the improvement of river transport and the expansion of foreign trade, also contributed to the process of tribal disintegration. The major developments in transportation in Iraq were the introduction of steam navigation by Lynch Brothers in 1841, and its extension, first in 1861 with the creation of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company by the Lynch Brothers, and secondly in 1869 with the establishment by the Ottoman authorities of the Oman-Ottoman Administration, which was for a time put under the Saniya administration, but after the fall of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid was restored to government control. The two big establishments supplemented by minor private concerns, controlled the Tigris river transportation. By 1910 the number of steamers had risen to thirteen, eight belonging to the Ottoman Administration and the rest to the British-controlled Euphrates and Tigris Navigation Company.[2] The steamers were used

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1 Sir E. Dowson, An Inquiry into Land Tenure, Table No. 1.
2 Lanzoni Andriano, "La Misopotamia Economica", Bolletino della Societa Geografica Italiana (Rome), XLVII, 1910, pp. 23-37, quoted in C. Issawi, The Economic History of the Middle East 1800-1914, p. 181.

Table No. 1. Land Tenure, 1930.

Liwa (Division)	Total cultivated and cultivable land.	Territory containing Tapu holdings.
Mosul	15.040	7.870
Arbil	7.160	2.420
Sulaymanya	2.550	2.280
Karkuk	15.260	6.280
Diyala	3.820	3.410
Baghdad	4.870	1.500
Dulaym	1.570	.920
Karbala	.680	.620
Hilla	6.530	2.380
Kut	10.710	2.580
Diwaniya	11.470	2.270
Muntafik	5.080	6.260
'Amara	6.680	.110
Basra	.780	1.190
Total	92.200	40.090

Expressed in Sq. Kilometres.

This land classification was dated 1930, but it did not differ much from 1914, because Tapu granting was not practised, except for a very limited extent.

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1 Sir E. Dowson, An Inquiry into Land Tenure. Table I.

only on the Tigris and between Baghdad and Basra, but as they towed a barge carrying up to 150 tons, they were able to move a considerable amount of freight as well as passengers in a reasonably short time at relatively low cost. The introduction of regular steamer services led to the rise of new river towns, such as Kut and 'Amara, and also opened up the tribes on the Tigris banks to external influences, and notably to that of the Ottoman authorities. By contrast, on the Euphrates and other rivers, the traditional sailing boats and smaller craft continued in use, and, inland, pack animals and caravans continued in use until the end of the Ottoman rule in Iraq.

The expansion of foreign trade was marked by a great increase in demand for agricultural and animal goods, a trend which on the one hand encouraged the Beduin tribes to settle, and on the other speeded the transformation of the tribal economy from a subsistance to a market economy, and gave the shaykhs and rich townsmen every incentive to obtain Tapu holdings, since as landlords they would be able to control up to 60% of the produce of the land.

The Towns

At the beginning of the 20th century the urban population constituted nearly 24% of the whole population of Iraq which was estimated to be nearly 2,250,000.[1] There were three categories of urban centres: the large cities of Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and, on a smaller scale, Karkuk; the

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1 Hasan, Economic Development of Irak, p. 53.

religious centres of Karbala, Najaf, Kadhimayn and Samara; and the large number of small towns scattered about the tribal areas.

The social hierarchy in the large cities was as follows. At the top there were the Wali and the senior administrative officials, who were mainly Turks or of Turkish origin, and owed their influence to their official position, which carried with it certain financial opportunities. The rest of society could be roughly divided between the rich notables, who were landlords and merchants, and the poor masses, with a very weak middle class in between. Religion and kinship were the dominant factors in urban social life. Religion permeated all social activities, and often involved an element of fanatical attachment. Family institutions were very strong and provided members of the family with a measure of security which the state could not supply. The families clustered into quarters, and the relationship between these quarters was often hostile, giving rise to occasional quarrels and fights. The local notables and religious 'Ulama were the traditional leaders of the masses. "As regards the lower classes of the Moslem population, ignorant and brutal though they are," reported the British Vice Consul in Mosul in 1909, "I believe it would be found that there are none more submissive in the whole of Turkey. Their Ulema and notables rule them like a flock of sheep."[1]

Political power in the cities was shared between the senior Turkish officials and the rich local notables and 'Ulama. The former could hardly impress their authority on the masses without the assistance of the

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1 F.O. 371/763/8888, dated March, 1909.

latter. Similarly the notables turned to the authorities for aid and for the protection of their financial interests, whether in helping to control the tribesmen cultivating their Milk and Tapu land, or in facilitating their commercial enterprises.

Religious minorities, mainly Christian and Jewish, existed in the urban centres, particularly the large cities of Baghdad, Mosul and Basra. According to the census compiled by the British authorities in 1920, the size of the Jewish and Christian minorities was then nearly 90,000 and 80,000 respectively.[1] The majority of the Christians lived in the Mosul area, while the Jews were concentrated in Baghdad. Socially and politically the Muslim population regarded them as second-class citizens. The Christians were divided into several denominations: Chaldean Catholics, Syrian Catholics, Jacobites, and smaller groups of Armenians, Protestants and Greeks. The Christian populace was strongly attached to its churches, which, besides their religious functions, acted as protectors of the social and political rights of their members. The churches, in turn, relied on the protection of foreign powers: France, for instance, protected the Catholics. Commerce and handicrafts were the main occupation of the Christians, but (unlike the Jews) some Christians were also engaged in agriculture on the outskirts of towns in Northern Iraq. The Jewish community was wealthier than the Christian, and was chiefly engaged in trade and, to a lesser extent,

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1 R. Coke, The Heart of the Middle East, London, 1925, p. 196. Census taken from the "Baghdad Year Book", compiled by the British authorities in 1920. Total number of Muslim Sunni 1,146,685; Muslim Shi'i 1,494,015; Jews 87,488; Christians 78,792; and grand total 2,849,282.

in handicrafts. A few rich Jewish families owned agricultural land on the outskirts of Baghdad, Basra and Hilla,[1] but the Jews were apparently reluctant to become landowners from fear of the tribes.

The continuous expansion of foreign trade after the middle of the nineteenth century stimulated the growth of a mercantile class, which was increasingly dominated by foreign, and particularly British firms.[2] The export trade was almost entirely in the hands of the foreign firms, but the import trade was shared by local merchants. As time went on, the growth of foreign trade meant the emergence of large numbers of local traders, whose interests were interwoven with those of foreign firms (which were mainly British or Indian), because in the export trade the large firms did not buy animal or agricultural produce direct from the producer, but through middle men, who were local merchants and landlords. Similarly, in the import trade the European manufacturers, probably because of their unfamiliarity with local conditions and the smallness of the local market, left the sale of their goods to local merchants, who in most cases acted for them as commission agents.[3] The Jewish community with its traditional expertise in

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1 F.O. 371/1007/11232. Year 1910. Report by the British General Consul in Baghdad about the Jewish community at Baghdad. "The only real landowners are Mr. M. Daniel and other members of his family. Their holdings are said to be worth about £T 400.000. Shaoul Shaahoua, Ezra, Daood, Asher Salem .... own certain lands also in the suburbs of Baghdad."

2 Adrian Lanzoni, "La Mesopotamia Economica", Bolletino della Societa Geografica Italiana, Rome, XLVII, 1910, pp. 23-37, quoted in G. Issawi, Economic History of the Middle East, pp. 184-185.

3 Hasan, Economic Development of Irak, pp. 262-264.

trade and its higher standard of education, enjoyed an ascendancy over the other traders. "They have literally monopolised the local trade, and neither Mohammedans nor Christians can compete with them," wrote the British Consul in Baghdad in 1910.[1]

The large cities were the centre of local industries which were basically handicrafts carried on by means of small unmechanized operations. The proprietor managed and participated in production and maintained a master-man relationship with his employees, who were sometimes members of his family, who, after a period of apprenticeship, would set up their own businesses. The main industries were handwoven — textile workshops, tanneries, shoemaking, silver working, copper smithing, crude brick making, and boat-building. The factory system was confined to five modern factories, consisting of a state-owned textile factory, two steam mills and two ice plants.[2] The opening of the local market to European goods inevitably damaged the position of the local handcraftsmen, particularly in textiles. But this was to some extent counteracted by the effects of the sharp increase in exports, which led large foreign firms to establish modern export-processing factories, such as the date-packing works in Basra, four wool-processing concerns, which were established by the British firms of Lynch and Company and Darby Andrews, and a factory for pressing licorice, established by Mac Andrew Forbes & Company.[3]

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1 F.O. 371/1007/11232.
2 Adrian Lanzoni, "La Mesopotamia Economica", quoted by C. Issawi, Economic History of the Middle East, p. 181.
3 K. M. Langley, The Industrialization of Iraq, Massachusetts, 1961, p. 28.

The smaller towns in Iraq gradually grew in importance as conditions changed. The strengthening of the central administration, the improvement of river communications, the expansion of foreign trade, which created increased demands for agricultural and animal produce, all helped. Most of the towns in central and southern Iraq (including 'Amara, Qal'at Salih, 'Ali Gharbi, Shaykh Sa'ad, Kut, Nu'maniya, Qal'at Sukar, Shamiya, Abu Sukhayr, Musayb, Mahmudiya) were, indeed, established during the latter part of the nineteenth century.[1] The fundamental characteristic of these towns was that they were commercial and to a lesser extent administrative centres. Socially the towns were divided into an upper class of landlords and merchants, with below them traders and petty traders, craftsmen, and, lastly, the poor, who came from the surrounding tribes. Family and tribal traditions were still strong, since the majority of the population was of tribal origin. The relationship between the townsmen and the surrounding tribes was one of mutual mistrust. The tribesmen hated the administrative officials in the towns, whose main job was to extract more revenue from the tribes, while the officials looked upon the tribesmen as barbarians who needed to be tamed. Increasing commercial contact between the townsmen and the tribesmen often made matters worse, because some of the town merchants acted as moneylenders, lending chiefly to the tribal cultivators, who needed cash to buy seed and tools for cultivation. Loans granted at a high rate of

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1 A. Wardi, A Study in the Society of Iraq, 1965, p. 162. Only few towns (Suq Shuyukh, Zubayr and Diwaniya) were established during the 18th century, otherwise most of the rest belong to the 19th century; see also M. B. al-Jalali, Short History of 'Amara Tribes, Baghdad, 1947, pp. 53-54.

interest (5-10% a month) were frequently unpaid, with the result that the borrower soon sank deeply into debt.[1] There was, also, disquiet arising from the practice of purchasing crops while still green upon the field at a very cheap rate, because the cultivator needed money. Inevitably the tribesmen were embittered against both the traders and the authorities who protected them. This factor among others contributed to the state of insecurity which prevailed outside the towns, and the commercial population was very keen to see the establishment of effective governmental authority in the country towns.[2]

Tribal Conditions before the Declaration of War, 1908-1914

The advent of the Young Turks to power in Constantinople did not lead to any radical changes in economic and social conditions in Iraq. The administrative machinery remained the same, though there were changes among the senior officials. The administration continued to pursue a policy of detribalization, and because they were not fully aware of the causes of unrest and rebellion among the tribes, the Turks continued to rely on force as the most effective means of establishing law and order. Ismail Haqqi, Turkish deputy for Baghdad and an influential leader in the C.U.P., wrote on 28th December, 1910, in the Tanin newspaper, an article entitled

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1 A. J. Faris, Two Years in the Middle Euphrates, pp. 59-61. A fallah (peasant) borrowed the price of three chickens, his debt accumulated until he had to sell his two oxen so as to defray his debt.

2 The Sada Babil newspaper, Baghdad, No. 65, dated 27 Shawal 1328 (Oct. 1910). A telegram was sent by eight merchants in Diwaniya to the Wali thanking him for subduing the surrounding tribes.

"Causes of Unrest in Irak":

> The first thing to do is to strengthen the army - a step which is now being taken. Not only must the VIth Army Corps be kept there permanently, but we ought also to send there a well organised punitive force.

Haqqi Bey went on to describe the manner in which force should be used:

> In order that the punishments may have proper effect, the measures taken must be fixed and adapted to individuals. With regard to the sheikhs, who are as influential as princes or as an Indian rajah, when the worst have been punished on the spot, the minor offenders, when their past crimes have been brought to light by court-martial, might perhaps be sent with honour to one of the islands in the Mediterranean.... As to small sheikhs, they will naturally sink to the level of a small Government official, to that of a moukhtar. The tribes are accustomed to rally round great names, and every sheikh of note is a centre of attraction. Now this attraction must be broken for the sake of the Empire. There used to be tribes and sheikhs in Egypt, now there are only fellaheen. In Iraq, too, we must put an end to the present system and leave only fellaheen.[1]

The tribal cultivated area, particularly in the irrigation zone, depended on an elaborate system of perennial irrigation, but as a result of official negligence it rapidly deteriorated: canals silted up, rivers changed their courses, drainage and dams were lacking, and, with the exception of the Hindiya barrage, no serious attempt was made to put a stop to the deterioration of the irrigation system. The sequestration of the Saniya land made things much worse by substituting an inefficient administration for one which had provided the cultivators with security and an efficient system of irrigation. There were also endless disputes arising from the land code.

The major source of complaint was corruption and nepotism in the administration. Although the state had not done anything of substance for

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1 F.O. 371/1236/849.

the tribes, it nonetheless turned to them for revenue. Between 14th March 1911 and 13th March 1912, the total revenue actually collected in Baghdad Wilaya, excluding receipts from the Baghdad Customs House, Posts and Telegraphs and the Public Debt Department (which were accounted for directly to Constantinople) was as follows:

	£S
Tent-Tax	6.509
Forests	1.250
Rents of State properties	.501
Baghdad Municipal revenue	15.200
Educational receipts	12.513
Court Fees	2.360
Sheep-Tax	36.523
Land Registration	10.706
Agricultural "Tithes"	169.951
Total	255.513

The total with other minor resources amounted to about 270.000 to cover a total expenditure, including military expenditure, of 300.000.[1] The tithe was a particularly onerous tax, amounting to one-fifth or more of the gross produce of the land, and was the major source of finance for the administration.[2] It was collected in a very awkward way, partly by the government and partly by local traders and landlords who farmed concessions from the government. But it was a tax which could be regularly extorted

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1 F.O. 371/1490/39144, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish 'Iraq during July 1912", by J. G. Lorimer, British Consul-General, at Baghdad.

2 S. Haider, Land Problems of Iraq, pp. 615-616. "It can be said that perhaps nowhere in any part of the world was agricultural production taxed so heavily as it was in the Irrigation Zone of Iraq, during this period" (1890-1937).

if only the government were strong enough. Hence, when the Wali needed additional revenue he would normally be directed to secure it by stepping up the rate and by getting in the unpaid taxes due from the more unruly tribes.[1] Since payment of taxes was a particularly loathesome burden in the view of the tribes, the tribes normally at first refused payment or deferred it to the following season, whenever they could, until their debts accumulated from one year to another to such a large sum that there was no real chance of payment. The weaker the government's authority the more the amount of the unpaid revenue.[2]

The failure of the new Turkish regime to understand the economic and social needs of the tribes was coupled with a new determination by the Turks to enforce their authority. This widened the gulf between the administration and the tribes, and from 1906 until the beginning of the war in 1914, the tribes were in a state of turmoil. On the Tigris two strong tribes, the Bani Lam and Albu Muhammad, revolted, interrupting river communications and cutting the telegraph lines. The direct cause of the risings was a grievance arising from government manipulation of the tribal lands. Ghadhban, paramount shaykh of the Bani Lam, was deprived of his

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1 F.O. 371/1243/3660, Year 1911, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish 'Iraq during the month of November, 1910."

2 Al-Raqib Newspaper, Baghdad, No. 13, dated 24 Rabi Awwal, 1327. Between years 1320-1324, the amount of revenue collected and arrears were:

	£T revenue collected	Arrears
Baghdad district	580827	41679
Diwaniyah district	275302	148321
Karbala district	182914	24186

In Diwaniya where tribes were more enormous the arrears were greater.

Muqata'a at Kumayt when his lease expired in 1908, and his holding was granted to a rival shaykh.[1] The sons of the leading shaykh of the Albu Muhammad, shaykh Sayhud, inherited on the death of their father in 1908 a debt to the state of £T 25.000. The administration pressed them for the arrears, which they could not possibly pay, and then deprived them of their lease and granted it to other members of the shaykhly family.[2] Sayhud's sons thereupon became a source of disturbance and a menace to the river traffic. In 1911 a military expedition was sent to subdue them but, failing in its purpose, the commander of the expedition opened negotiations with Karim al-Sayhud and offered to redress his grievances provided that he refrained from menacing the river traffic.[3]

The Muntafik tribes, which had been alienated from their land by the granting of Tapu holdings to the Sa'dun family, rose in revolt in 1911 against their landlords. During the tenure of office of Nazim Pasha, Wali of Baghdad in 1910-1911, Sa'dun Pasha, a leading member of the Sa'dun family, was nominated as head of the Muntafik, although before that the government had been hostile towards him. During Sa'dun's honeymoon period of relations with the government, he made it his purpose to crush all the local opponents of the Muntafik shaykhs, and in a treacherous manner killed several shaykhs of the Bidur tribe. Thereafter, a number of the Muntafik tribes,

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1 F.O. 371/1002/4234, Confidential, "Turkey, Annual Report, 1909."
2 F.O. 371/769/14718. "Extract from letter from Busrah agent, dated 19th March, 1909."
3 F.O. 371/1261/35592, Confidential, "Enclosure in No. 1, Acting Consul Matthews to Sir G. Lowther, Busorah, August 10, 1911."

al-Bidur, al-Sa'ad, Beni Zayd, al-Ghazi, al-'Abuda, al-Azayrij, and al-Gharaghul, rose against Sa'dun Pasha and secured some initial successes, but in May 1911, Turkish forces were dispatched to help Sa'dun. After a series of clashes the revolting tribes began to realize the difficulty of fighting both Sa'dun Pasha and the Government, especially after some of the tribes had been won over by Sa'dun. They therefore attempted to secure the backing of the government against Sa'dun, who a few years before had been an enemy of the government. The leaders of the tribes in revolt in May 1911 sent a petition to the Turkish Wali which said:

> We are the chiefs of the tribes between Ad-Darraji and Al-Husainat for a distance of about twenty hours on each side of the Euphrates. We are Arabs and farmers, and represent at least 12.000 houses. We are Ottoman subjects, but owing to the extortions of the Turkish Government officials at Nasirieh during the last twenty-five years we have become slaves. Our necks, souls, property, families, and cattle were possessed by Saadun without any crime or fault on our part..... Saadun and his Ajaimi, supported by the Government, have received from us all that is due to the Government yearly, viz., tithes, alms, &c.: but yet they were not satisfied, but plundered and cruelly ill-treated us. We endured all tyranny, fearing the power of the Government, because when any leader appeared among us Saadun slew him.

The petitioners cited examples of Sa'dun's misdemeanours and went on to say:

> ... we beg you to save us from this cruel tyrant. We undertake to pay all taxes due to the Treasury, and to protect all the roads, and not to interfere with the property of merchants.... It is for you to decide; we wish to remain loyal servants of the Government. If you approve of Saadun remaining at Maish you will be the cause of bloodshed, and we shall be obliged to remain in revolt on account of Saadun and his son Ajaimi. This is left to your justice.[1]

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1 F.O. 371/1249/30040, Confidential, No. 1. Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey, Constantinople, dated July 26, 1911, Enclosure 1 in No. 1, and Enclosure 2 in No. 1 (Translation of Petition, dated May 26, 1911).

Fortunately for the tribes in revolt "justice", or rather the self-interest of the Turkish authorities, suggested a sudden change in official policy, and the Turks denounced their man, Sa'dun Pasha, and his son 'Ajimi, and even imprisoned Sa'dun.

As Turkish strength built up the Shaykhs of Kuwait and Muhammara began to feel that their position was endangered and to incite their followers to cause trouble. In 1909 both shaykhs instigated disturbances in Basra, when the Wali refused to allow land transfers in their names, and order was not restored until the Wali had been removed.[1] The Upper and Middle Euphrates likewise had their share of revolts. In Mosul, the Shammar tribe was reported in 1911 to be withholding taxes and extorting money from traders crossing their land. Similarly, the Dulaym tribe near Ramadi was restless during early 1911 and refused tax payments and raided caravans.[2] The Middle Euphrates was the scene of continuous strife against the government or among rival tribes, and, as usual, land holding and revenue collection were the major reasons for the disturbances. The most remarkable example of a local dispute of major dimensions took place between the two tribes, the al-Shibil and al-Ghazalat, which were constantly at one another's throats after 1908. In 1911 the government sent a military expedition under the command of 'Askari Bey to bring order to the Middle Euphrates. Al-'Askari defeated the al-Shibil tribe and, because the

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1 F.O. 371/1002/4234, Confidential, "Turkey, Annual Report, 1909." From Sir G. Lowther to Sir E. Grey, dated Constantinople, January 31, 1910.

2 F.O. 371/1243/10502, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish 'Iraq for the month of January, 1911."

tribe had withheld taxes, deprived the tribe of its land and granted it to Hasan Agha, Shaykh of the Bani Zirayj, an outsider. Such a move could hardly bring peace to the area, and soon the al-Shibil began to attack the Bani Zirayj. However the latter remained in possession of the land until the beginning of the war in 1914 - that is, so long as the Turkish troops were in a position to protect them.[1] The Humidat and the Fatla in the Shamiya area became engaged in 1912 in severe fighting because of an irrigation dispute. The Turkish forces came to the help of the Humidat and defeated the Fatla, whose shaykhs, Mizhir and Mibdir al-Far'un, Kadhum and Hasan Sukar, were taken prisoners to Baghdad, and their land divided among the Fatla tribesmen. However a few months later 'Abd al-Wahid Sukar, a leading Fatla shaykh, had his land restored to him.[2] When war was declared the Turkish authorities freed the Fatla leaders in return for their help in the "Jihad" campaign against the British.

These risings of the Arab tribes were local in character and by no means motivated by those nationalistic feelings which had already permeated the urban centres. On the contrary, the Arab shaykhs, particularly in southern Iraq, when they were in trouble with the government, tried to play off the British against the Turks for their own purposes. The Arab shaykhs realised that Britain had considerable interests in the area, and considered

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1 F.O. 371/1490/26070, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish 'Iraq for the months of March and April, 1912"; see also A. S. al-Yasiri, Heroism in the Revolution of 1920, Najaf, 1967, pp. 39-43.
2 Al-Yasiri, Heroism in the Revolution of 1920, p. 46.

that as Britain was able to uphold the shaykhs of Kuwait and Muḥammara, the British might well support them too in their differences with the Turkish authorities. Furthermore, the fears of Turkish officials of the consequences of British penetration of the tribal areas served the shaykhs as a means of blackmailing the Turks. Sa'dun, paramount shaykh of the Muntafik, approached the British Consul in Basra for support for his plan to rise against the Turks in 1909, but the British Consul discouraged him and "recommended the Sheikh to come to terms with the new constitutional Government."[1] In 1910 the Turks made friends with Sa'dun, who became for a time their favourite shaykh in the Muntafik, but by mid 1911 Sa'dun and his son had again lost Turkish support. But this again was a temporary phase as, when Turkey was on the brink of war with Britain, the Turks gave Sa'dun's son 'Ajimi both titles and money in an effort to gain his support against the British. The shaykh of the strong Bani Lam tribe on the lower Tigris, Shaykh Ghadhban and his brother Falih al-Binaya, turned to the British in March 1913 for help against the Turkish authorities. They had occupied by force certain "muqata'as" on the Tigris which had formerly been leased to them but had lately been taken away from them. "They were determined not to pay taxes either for these lands or their cattle. They owed the Government at present" reported the British Consul at Basra;

> Arrears of taxes valued at 162.000 liras and had already collected that amount from the sheikhs and lease-holders but would not hand over any of it unless the Government agreed to their terms. They had, however,

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1 F.O. 371/769/18453. Despatch from Sir G. Lowther to Sir E. Grey, dated Constantinople, May 11, 1909.

> informed the Mutessarif of Amara that if the Government leased them the "muqata'as" for a period of fifteen years, they would pay up 100,000 liras of the amount due, otherwise a revolt would ensue.[1]

Shaykh Falih, who visited the British consul in secret, enquired whether the British would intercede on their behalf with the Turkish Government. He argued "that we had helped Sheikh Mubarek of Koweit to emancipate himself from Turkey and he thought we might possibly find a way of helping the Beni Lam on the Tigris." reported the British Consul after the visit.[2] The position was now different from that of 1909, and the British were inclined to help. The British Consul commented:

> It would not do to alienate them at the present juncture, and I feel that a rebuff or a cold reception might cost us dearly later if their plans materialise, and it is quite possible they may in view of the weakness of the Turkish authorities.[3]

Accordingly, Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign secretary saw to it that the question of the Muqata'as was discussed with a high Turkish official Haqqi Pasha.[4]

British relations with Arab shaykhs were not limited to the Wilaya of Basra, but in Basra the tribes and the British officials had much better means of access to each other than elsewhere. For this there were three main reasons: first, the proximity of the city Basra to the cultivated

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1 F.O. 371/1799/16928, Confidential, Enclosure No. 1, from Consul Crow to Sir G. Lowther. Despatch No. 16, Confidential, dated Basra, March 15, 1913.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 F.O. 371/1799/11950, Enclosure No. 1 (No. 89). Sir E. Grey to Sir G. Lowther, Foreign Office, March 26, 1913.

tribal land; secondly, the British enjoyed in Basra greater influence than in any other city in Iraq, and through men like the Shaykhs of Muḥammara and Kuwait possessed a means of communication with tribes such as the Bani Lam, the Albu Muḥammad and the Muntafik; thirdly, British commercial activities, particularly in connection with river navigation on the Tigris, brought the British into direct contact with the local tribes. The position of the hinterland tribes, particularly those of the Middle Euphrates, was, by contrast, entirely different. Their shaykhs visited Najaf and Ḥilla rather than Baghdad, and their commercial activities were conducted by local merchants drawn mainly from the Jewish minority. Very likely their physical remoteness also prevented them from expecting material help from the British. When Turkish-British relations were bad the Arab shaykhs in the Euphrates were even reluctant to be seen visiting or talking to British officials.[1]

The Urban Centres 1908-1914

Foreign trade was still expanding and no doubt European competition, particularly between Britain and Germany, contributed to the expansion.[2]

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1 F.O. 371/2135/29829, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish 'Iraq during April, 1914". Shaykh of bani-Hasan tribe told the vice-consul who was touring the Middle Euphrates in April-May, 1914, "that if he was seen talking to me for any length of time he would get in trouble."

2 Hasan, Economic Development of Iraq. Annex 4 and 2 gave the figures of the export and import trade, which were obtained from the British Consular Reports for the same period. Figures of export by land were not included. Furthermore, the author had estimated the figures whenever the Consular Reports failed to give figures. Thus the following figures should be considered as estimates rather than precise figures.

Year	Total of Export in £	Total of Import in £
1891-1895	6280	7067
1901-1905	7624	6987
1909-1913	12590	15159

In years 1912-1913, large amount of imported goods were for the new railway project, sponsored by the Germans.

The export trade remained largely in foreign, particularly British, hands, while local merchants, who were mainly Jews, dominated the import trade. Local trade was also still mainly a Jewish concern, and when in 1910 a chamber of commerce was established in Baghdad nearly half its executive committee were Jews.[1] The Jewish community also benefited from the rise of the Young Turks, who professed the principle of religious equality, and the increase in the wealth and power of the Jews even encouraged some of them openly to advocate Zionist principles,[2] although the Muslim population already regarded them with suspicion and envy. The British Ambassador remarked in his annual report for 1909 that

> The growing wealth and influence of the Jews in Mesopotamia has contributed also to the discontent; they have got all the trade in their hands, and by invading the better quarters of the town and forcing up all prices they have succeeded in bringing on themselves the hatred of the Moslem population - a sentiment which they heartily reciprocate.[3]

Banking was virtually a foreign monopoly. Apart from Jewish money lenders and money changers or "Sarraf", the Ottoman Bank was the sole bank operating in Iraq until 1908. By an agreement between the Ottoman Bank and the Imperial Bank of Persia, which had established a branch at Baghdad in 1890, the Imperial Bank had withdrawn from Iraq in return for a

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1 Sada Babil Newspaper, No. 31, dated Baghdad, 7 Rabi Awal, 1328 (18 March, 1910).

2 F.O. 371/992/32231. Despatch from Sir G. Lowther to Sir E. Grey, Therapia, August 31, 1910. Referred to increased Zionist activities in Turkey and plans to enhance Jewish immigration to certain parts of the Ottoman Empire. Mesopotamia was one area for Jewish settlement.

3 F.O. 371/1002/4234, Confidential, dated Constant., January 31, 1910.

promise that the Ottoman Bank would not establish a branch in Persia.[1] In 1908, the Germans established the German Orient Bank at Baghdad.

The apparently monopolistic position of Jewish and foreign firms was resented by the Arabs and in August 1908 the Wali, under local pressure, prohibited the export of grain because of shortages and high prices. However, the British Consul interceded on behalf of the British merchants, who dominated the grain export trade. He wrote, "The prohibition so seriously injures British trade at the present time and in the near future that I think that I should no longer be justified in not urging the local authorities to remove it even if there is some slight danger of opposition on the part of the populace."[2] The Turkish authorities refused to lift the ban on the ground that the populace would resent such an action and that there might be disturbances. No doubt, the Turkish authorities were influenced by the fact that it was not merely a shortage of supplies which had caused an increase in prices but also the monopolistic position of wholesale grain traders who could force up prices to suit themselves.[3] Prices had risen between 1904 and 1914 by 50% in Baghdad and 75% in Basra, whereas they had remained constant in Mosul.[4]

Another incident which occurred during December 1909 - January 1910,

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1 Y. Rizq Alla Ghanima, Past and Present Trade of Iraq, Baghdad, 1922, pp. 110-111.
2 F.O. 371/764/3577. Enclosure 1 in No. 1. Lieutenant-Colonel Ramsay to Sir G. Lowther, Baghdad, November 14, 1908.
3 Hasan, Economic Development of Irak, pp. 144-145.
4 Dalil Al-Iraq Al-Rasmi (The Official Iraqi Directory), Year 1936. Baghdad, 1936, p. 981.

revealed local opposition to the dominance of foreign capital. During that time talks were initiated for the merger of the state-owned shipping company the "Idara al-Nahriya" with the British-owned Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, which would have put the former under the control of the latter. This move was regarded by the local traders and the populace as a surrender of their interests to a foreign company which would monopolise the river traffic. Mass demonstrations took place, giving rise to anti-foreign feelings. Initially, Christian and Jewish merchants, supported the move against the merger, but, as the British Consul at Baghdad put it, "... as the language of the agitators grew more and more extreme, they separated themselves from it."[1]

Discontent against foreign influences was particularly strong among those working men whose standard of living was threatened by the importation of foreign goods, which supplanted local handcrafts, thus putting many craftsmen out of work, and the introduction of the factory system on a minor scale, mainly in export processing. The traditional craftsmen worked within a guild system and the master-man relationship was essentially a personal one, but the new factories marked the beginning of a new labouring class, whose position was determined by economic relationships. From the scant information available about the working class before the war

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1 F.O. 371/996/7778. Enclosure 2 in No. 1. Memorandum by Consul General Lorimer respecting the "Affaire Lynch" in Iraq. Also that at "At Kadhimain ... there was a great stir on this date (Dec. 22, 1909) inflammatory harangues were delivered urging the people not to let the sacred land of Ali and Husain be "sold" to unbelievers, and matters reached such a pass that the shopkeepers in the Bazaar closed their shops."

it can be surmised that there was a complete lack alike of trade unions and government protection. The local newspaper, Sada Babil, reported in July 1910 that the American firm engaged in the pressing of licorice was oppressing its workers.[1] And the British Consul-General reported in 1913:

> Towards the end of January a strike of all the deck hands occurred on one of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company's steamers. The object was an increase of pay which had been expected, if not promised for some time, but which there was delay in granting. Mr. Tod (the company agent in Baghdad) acted with his usual decision in dismissing 22 men, after which he increased the pay but refused to reinstate the strikers. This put an end to the trouble, which extended to all the Company's ships, and to stokers as well as deck hands.[2]

The irrigation projects of Sir W. Willcocks in Hindiya and Habaniya for a time employed thousands of workers (at the Hindiya Barrage there were around 3,000 Arab workers),[3] but by 1913 these had been rendered redundant when the projects they were working on had been completed.

The Shi'i Sacred Towns

The Shi'is are a Muslim religious sect, composed of the followers of the fourth Muslim Caliph 'Ali and his descendants. The assassination of 'Ali in 661 A.D. was the prelude to further disputes. Those who maintained that only the descendants of 'Ali had the right to the Caliphate became known as the Shi'i. Consequently the Shi'is

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1 Sada Babil Newspaper, No. 49, dated 15 Ragab, 1328 (July 1910).
2 F.O. 371/1490/12865, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish 'Iraq for the month of January 1912". The brackets used are mine.
3 F.O. 371/1008/17336, Confidential, Enclosure 1 in No. 1, "Summary of events in Turkish 'Iraq during March 1910".

considered those who were proclaimed as Caliphs after 'Ali as usurpers. In Iraq the Ja'ffariya is the prominent Shi'i sect: for them the true heads of Islam, after Muhammad, were twelve Imams, all descendents of 'Ali, of whom the twelfth has disappeared, whose reappearance they await; hence they are the Ithna 'Ashariya, or followers of the twelve.

Iraq contained the sacred shrines of the Shi'is, namely the tombs of the Imam 'Ali and of certain other Imams. These shrines are situated in Najaf, Karbala, Samura, and Kadhimayn. The first two are far more important than the others. The number of pilgrims to the Shi'i shrines from outside Iraq fluctuated during the early twentieth century from 150,000 to 200,000 a year; a similar number of Iraqi also visited the shrines.[1]

The highest strata in the Shi'i religious hierarchy are the Mujtahids, religious divines who are headed by chief Mujtahids, who usually achieve their position by securing from other Mujtahids recognition as possessing a higher religious authority. After a period of studying in religious colleges aspirants for holy office are granted a sort of religious diploma, called "Ijaza Fi Al-Ijtihad". The number of holders of this diploma is large, but only a few of them achieve recognition and become Mujtahids with large followings. The importance of each Mujtahid depends greatly on his popularity. The followers of each Mujtahid are called "Muqalidin", or imitators of a Mujtahid. The Mujtahids have great influence among the Shi'i. They have greater power than their Sunni counterparts,

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1 Britain, The Historical Section of the Foreign Office, Peace Handbook, No. 63, Mesopotamia, H.M.S.O., 1920, Vol. XI, p. 8; also see A. R. al-Hassani, Short History of the Iraqi Country, Najaf, 1930. The average number of the Shi'is visitors to the shrines on the religious occasions exceeded 400,000.

because the former have the power to interpret the Qur'an and the Shari'a (sacred law), while the Sunni 'Ulama have to adopt one of the four interpretations made by the Hanbali, Shafi'i, Hanafi or Maliki. It is the duty of good Shi'i to obey the rulings of their Mujtahid on cases referred to him and in all ecclesiastical cases, which means most of the cases relevant to the Shi'i populace. The "Mulla" and "Mu'mins" are religious men, who have received a limited religious instruction from senior 'Ulama and Mujtahids. The Mu'mins usually live in the smaller towns and villages where they are preachers and ecclesiastical judges, especially in matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance. Some of them represent the Mujtahids, and are called the "Mu'tamid" or "Wakil" (representative or agent). Besides their normal duties they function as collectors of the contributions due to the Mujtahids from the people. The Sayids, another strata in the Shi'i religious hierarchy, are the descendants of the Imam 'Ali or of his sons. Usually they dress in a special way. The Sayids are not necessarily men of religion: nevertheless, they are highly respected by the Shi'is. In the tribal areas there are rich landowning Sayids, whose religious appeal provides them with great influence, and they tend to stay outside the internal feuds of the tribes and act as peace-makers. The poor Sayids demand part of the tribe revenue as their hereditary right which they call "Haq Jiddi", that is the right of my grandfather, referring to the Prophet and the Imam 'Ali. Not all Sayids are held in the same regard; those whose authority is disputed are less respected, and many have assumed the style of Sayid, in order to make it easier to earn a living.

The large number of religious students in Najaf and Karbala

constitute the base of the Shi'i religious hierarchy. These students come from different parts of the Muslim world, particularly Persia and India. There were before the outbreak of the war in 1914, around seventeen religious schools in Najaf and a lesser number of schools in Karbala, with varying numbers of students totalling in all some thousands.[1] The students enjoyed free education and accommodation, along with a small allowance, which for most of them was the sole means of subsistence. The period of study was not limited. The Mu'mins and Mujtahids were recruited from these students. Under the Ottoman rule the Sunni 'Ulama and preachers were in the pay of the government, which furthermore financed the maintenance of their shrines, whereas the Shi'is got little government support. Nonetheless the financial resources of the Shi'i institutions were considerable:

1. All true Shi'i were to pay in the form of duties:
   A. The Khums or fifth of their revenue. Usually it was paid to the Sayids.
   B. The Zakat, usually a tithe. It was given to the poor, and sometimes the 'Ulama took charge of its distribution.
   C. Radd Mazalim. The receivers of government salaries or similar incomes from the state were expected to pay part of their income to a religious authority, so as to make the spending of the rest of their money "Halal" (righteous). This attitude was due to their belief that the government

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1 Ja'ffar Shaykh Baqir Mahbuba, Past and Present of Najaf, Najaf, 1958, Second Edition, pp. 125-146.

acquires its money by illegal means such as taxes.

D. One-third of any inheritance was to be paid to the Mujtahids or their representatives.

2. Contributions from the Persian people and government to the Mujtahids of Najaf and Karbala. India was another source of donations, notably through the 'Audh Bequest.

3. Religious endowments (Waqf), in the shape of land, houses and other forms of property, the revenue to be spent on religious purposes.

4. Certain Mujtahids had private incomes. Sayid Kadhum Yazdi, a chief Mujtahid in Najaf owned a number of shops and "Khans" in Kufa.[1] But the majority of the Mujtahids were poor and lived a very humble life.

The management and the maintenance of the Shi'i shrines were the responsibility of a custodian, called the "Killidar", who was helped by a number of attendants named "Khadim". The Killidar was appointed and paid by the government. This partly explains the appointment of a Sunni Killidar for the Shi'i shrine of Samura. The Killidarship was a secular job and tended to remain in the same family, and was considered as a gift from the government. Thus it provided the authorities with a lever upon which to exert their influence, and sometimes Ottoman Officials simply offered the position to the highest bidder among their supporters.[2] The Killidar

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1 A. Bazirkan, The True Events in the Iraqi Revolution, Baghdad, 1954, p. 76.
2 F.O. 371/2135/61426, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq for the months June and July, 1914" by the British Consul-General, Baghdad.

received enormous sums of money as donations towards the maintenance of the Shrines,[1] certainly far more than the government contributed.

Najaf is the most important Shi'i centre, and the tomb of the Imam 'Ali is the main attraction. Famous Shi'i Mujtahids and large numbers of ulama and students lived in it. The Arab population, which was the great majority, was divided into two hostile factions, the Zugurt and the Shummrt, which are not tribes in the proper sense but rather groups of families tied to each other by relationship and common interests. The causes of the division are not certain. The city was also divided into four quarters, each with a leader responsible for the security of his quarter against any threat. The members of each quarter had their own rules and laws based on the principle of communal interest and unity.[2] Najaf town was constructed on the edge of the desert, surrounded by an ancient wall. It grows practically nothing and so depends on imports from other parts of Iraq, especially from the Euphrates valley. Lack of water is another characteristic of the town. But the location of the city on the trading route to Ḥijaz and Damascus, and also on the pilgrim route to Mecca, have greatly compensated for the unproductivity of the land and the scarcity of water in the town. Najaf was among the trading centres for the Beduin tribes of the desert, where they exchange Syrian goods for the grain and dates of the Euphrates. The Najafi merchants, Arabs and Persians, were the middlemen in these transactions. Another asset for Najaf was the thousands

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1 T. Lyell, Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia, London, 1923, pp. 50-51. The Killidar of Najaf received annually £10,000 for the lighting of the shrines alone.

2 Appendix, 1.

of pilgrims and visitors from other parts of Iraq, Persia, India and the Muslim world who greatly contributed to the wealth of the city. However the city was always susceptible to outbreaks of violence since the relations between the different elements of the society were built on suspicion. The Arab population was divided and each group was afraid of the others. The large community of pilgrims was suspicious of the Arabs, whom they regarded as extortioners. The 'Ulama and Mujtahids were suspicious of the leaders of the quarters, who were their rivals. The relationship between the city and the outside world was also one of fear and suspicion, whether the outside was the surrounding tribes or the central authority in Baghdad, which was dominated by the Sunni, during the period of Ottoman rule, or the Christians, notably from the war until the establishment of the Arab Government in 1921. These factors made the Najafi society a sort of mosaic which sustained its harmony as long as an outside threat existed; otherwise its internal suspicions were transformed into open hostility. The town of Karbala is second only to Najaf in religious importance, and there was a great resemblance between the two in social composition. During the period of Ottoman rule Karbala was a Mutasrifiya and Najaf was a Qaymmaqamiya controlled by the former. The power of the authorities was weak, so that the leaders of the quarters and the 'Ulama wielded greater influence.

The relation between the Shi'is in Iraq and the Ottoman authorities was one of mutual mistrust. The traditional struggle between Persia, which is a Shi'i country, and the Ottoman Empire over Iraq rendered the position of the Shi'is in Iraq highly critical and they were considered

by the Ottoman Government something of a liability. The alienation of the Shi'is from the Ottoman authorities led them to look towards Persia for aid, and the urban Shi'is developed quite strong links with Persia. The fact that the history of the Shi'is in Iraq was one of suppression revived among them the concept called "Taqiya", by which is meant that from fear of alien authorities one professes to support what in fact one is opposed to. This attitude was a measure of self protection against powerful opponents.[1] However the Taqiya was not considered relevant to situations in which the Shi'is had the upper hand; on the contrary, their duty in that case was to fight. Probably this mental attitude partly explains the sporadic outbreaks in the holy cities against the Turks and then the British.

Political consciousness among the Shi'i Mujtahid can be traced back to March 1890, when Nasir al-Din, Shah of Persia, granted an English company a monopoly in Persian tobacco. This aroused strong resentment among the Persians. The Mujtahids allied themselves with the opposition against the Shah and his Government, and their "Fatwa" or religious ruling, especially that of Mirza Hasan Shirazi of Samara, was a crucial factor in causing the withdrawal of the concession in 1892. The Mujtahids' Fatwas prohibited the Shi'is from smoking as long as the concession was valid.[2] Because of the increasing influence of the Mujtahids, the British and the Russians became anxious to secure their support, and the Russian consul was

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1 A. R. al-Hassani, Definition of the Shi'i, Saida, 1933, pp. 53-54.
2 E. G. Broune, The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909, Cambridge, 1910, p. 22.

reported in 1910, to have distributed money to certain Shi'i 'Ulama in Najaf hoping to gain their support.[1]

In Iraq the Shi'is assumed an attitude of aloofness towards all official institutions such as the army, government schools and the Wilaya administration. The Shi'i religious schools were the only schools attended by the Shi'is. The financial independence of the Shi'is in Najaf and Karbala encouraged them to pursue a policy of self dependence and the feeble Ottoman administration was in no position to change this situation. A number of attempts were made by the Turkish authorities to bring the Shi'is into line, the first in 1910, when the authorities considered the closure of the Shi'i ecclesiastical courts and the transfer of all cases to the official courts.[2] Later in the same year Turkish officials tried to close the Shi'i religious schools in Karbala and Najaf.[3] But both attempts failed, even though the Shi'is holy cities did not participate in political activities in Baghdad.

A sudden change in the attitude of the Shi'is occurred after the Persian and the Turkish constitutional revolutions. The Persian revolution had the greater impact on the Shi'i Mujtahids. In August 1906 a constitution was proclaimed in Persia, which led to a period of struggle between the pro- and anti-constitutional parties. This struggle was

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1 F.O. 371/1008/41658, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during the month of September, 1910."
2 F.O. 371/1008/35086, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during the month of July, 1910."
3 F.O. 371/1243/3660, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during the month of November, 1910."

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reflected among the Shi'i Mujtahids in Iraq who took sides and became involved politically. The majority of the Mujtahids were in favour of the constitution. The leaders of this constitutional party were Mula Kadhum al-Khurasani, Mula 'Abdulla Mazandarani and Shaykh al-Shari'a, of whom the first two also played a crucial role in the constitutional movement in Persia. Sir Percy Sykes wrote "Probably the support of the Mujtahid of Karbala helped more than any other single factor to keep the flames of constitutionalism alive..." [1] Among the leading supporters of the royalist party in Persia was the Mujtahid Sayid Kadhum Yazdi. The Persians settled at Najaf and Karbala and particularly the religious students formed the core of the Persian constitutional movement. They organized themselves into societies or "'Anjuman"; such as the 'Anjuman Musawat, or Society of Equality in Karbala, the 'Anjuman-i-Ilmi, or Society of Science in Najaf, and the 'Anjuman-i-Akhuwat, or Society of Brotherhood in Kadhimayn. [2] Since the Persians living in the holy Shi'is cities were mixed with the Arab populace, the Persian language was spoken by the majority of the Arabs, many Arab families were related with Persian by marriages, and the community of faith helped to bring the two communities together, the Persian political struggle soon influenced the Arabs too. The 1908 constitutional revolution in Turkey was welcomed in Najaf and Karbala as a progressive move which might improve the position of the Shi'is in Iraq and strengthen the Persian

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1 Sir Percy Sykes, History of Persia, London, 1958, 3rd Edition, Vol. II, p. 417.

2 F.O. 371/1003/8739, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during December, 1909, and January, 1910."

constitutional movement. But for some of the Mujtahids, like Sayid Kadhum Yazdi, the revolution seemed to mean the abandonment of Islam, so that opposition to changes in Turkey was added to his opposition to the Persian constitutionalists.

The attitude of the Shi'i Mujtahids towards foreign powers was greatly influenced by events in Persia. The Khurasani-Mazindarani group was in opposition to the British and Russians, especially after 1907 when the two powers signed an agreement dividing Persia into British and Russian spheres of influence. Hostility to Britain and Russia paved the way for the development of cordial relations between the progressive Mujtahids and the Turks. In December 1910, a meeting was held in Najaf attended by Turkish officials and the constitutionalist Shi'is, who agreed on a manifesto in which they advocated Muslim unity against any encroachment of the foreign powers against Persia and the Ottoman Empire.[1] In October, 1911, in accordance with the principle of unity of Islam, the Khurasani-Mazindarani group signed a proclamation calling for a "Jihad", or holy war, against the Italians who had invaded Tripoli in North Africa.[2] The sudden death of Mula Kadhum Khurasani in December, 1911 was a great blow to the progressive Mujtahids, especially because it made possible the ascendancy of Sayid Kadhum Yazdi. The division among the Shi'i Mujtahids continued till the outbreak of the war in 1914.

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1 F.O. 371/1243/6498, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during the month of December, 1910."
2 F.O. 371/1243/51886, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during the month of October, 1911, Annexure A."

Chapter 2

The Introduction of Political Parties, 1908 - 1914.

The C.U.P. and events in Turkey[1]

On 24 July, 1908, the Ottoman Sultan, 'Abd al-Hamid, declared the restoration of the Constitution as a result of the successful revolt of the Young Turk officers. This marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Ottoman Empire, and opened the door wide for the Young Turks to rule the Empire for the next ten years. Although the Young Turks agreed about their ultimate aims, namely the protection and consolidation of the Ottoman Empire, they differed about the means to this end. On the one hand there were liberals who advocated a policy of decentralization and the granting of autonomy to religious and ethnic groups; on the other hand there were the Turkish nationalists who stood for the centralization of the administration, and the Turkification of the other nationalities. The latter were represented by the Committee of Union and Progress.

In February, 1909, the C.U.P. overthrew Kamil Pasha, the Grand Vizier, who was inclined towards the liberals and replaced him by a man of their choice. This brought the C.U.P. into the open as the ruling party, and on 12 April, 1909, the C.U.P. declared its transformation into a public party. On the same day a rising against the C.U.P. occurred in

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1/ This section is based on Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, London, 1961, pp. 206-233.

Constantinople demanding the rule of the Shari'a. The C. U. P. ruthlessly crushed the rising and replaced Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamid by Muḥammad Rashad, who was under the control of the C. U. P. Until 1911, the C. U. P. gave strong leadership to the Empire, pursuing a policy of centralization and Turkification. In 1911, however, the C. U. P. began to weaken under the pressure of internal dissensions and local dissatisfaction.

In November 1911, the Liberty and Accord party was founded. It was an aggregate of the different parties and groups opposed to the C. U. P. In July, 1912, the C. U. P. gave way and permitted the formation of a new cabinet under the threat of a military rising against them. But the C. U. P. soon won over the army to their side, and forced the Liberty and Accord government to resign and formed a new government, headed by Muḥammad Shawkat Pasha, who was murdered on 11 June, 1913. From then until the end of the war the C. U. P. ruled the Empire by military dictatorship.

The Constitution of 1908 in Iraq

The restoration of the constitution was not met with enthusiasm in Iraq. On the contrary, the general attitude was one of suspicion of the change. But different groups reacted in different ways.

1. The inarticulate masses were bewildered by the sudden change, and could hardly understand the massive propaganda and slogans of the new order. By equality, some understood equality between the Muslims and the non-Muslims, which they greatly feared as a measure to deprive

them of their long-standing rights.[1] For others freedom meant a license to vice.[2]

2. Arab notables, heads of wealthy and influential families, 'Ulama, merchants and landowners, did not think there was sufficient justification for the Revolution, and were afraid of the revolutionaries and their supporters. The newly-established C. U. P. branches in Baghdad wilaya ousted members of leading families from their official positions. 'Abd al-Rahman Pasha al-Naqib was turned out of the presidency of the Baghdad Municipality. 'Isa Jamil Zada, head of a well known Arab family, found the C. U. P. opposing his nomination for the presidency of the municipality of Baghdad. And Najm al-Din, Kazi of Baghdad, tendered his resignation, when he found that he was to be dismissed.[3] In Basra the situation was different. The Revolution brought Sayid Talib back to Basra, with the result that he supported the C. U. P. However, it was not long before his interests clashed with those of the C. U. P.

The Young Turks mistrusted the Arab notables, whom they considered reactionaries. In their propaganda they emphasised ability, not social rank as the right criterion for political power.[4]

3. The Arab and Turkish intelligentzia welcomed the Revolution as a

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1 F. O. 371/546/35261. From the British Vice Consul in Mosul, Young to Sir G. Lowther. Dated Mosul, August 23, 1908.
2 Al-'Azzawi, History of Iraq, Vol. VIII, pp. 160-163.
3 F. O. 371/546/35261. From the British Consul-General, Baghdad, Major J. Ramsay to Government of India. Dated Baghdad, August 31, 1908.
4 Ibid.

step towards progress and freedom.

4. In Najaf and Karbala the Revolution was welcomed by the Arabs and the Persians;[1] partly because it might lead to Turkish help for the constitutional movement in Persia, and partly in the hope that it might bring the Shi'is equality with the ruling Sunnis. On the other hand the holy towns rejected equality with the other religions.

5. The Christians and Jews heartily welcomed the Revolution, and gave their backing to the C.U.P., mainly because of its support for religious equality. Some of the Jews at once began to behave as if they possessed equality with Muslims.[2]

6. In the tribal areas the change of government did not stimulate any particular response.

Political Parties in Iraq

Before 1908, there were no political organizations in Iraq. The first to be established was a branch of the C.U.P. opened in Baghdad in 1908. This was followed by C.U.P. branches in all the other major cities and towns. The literate middle class and the religious minorities, Christians and Jews, welcomed the C.U.P., but it was chiefly influential in official circles, specially while it held power in Constantinople. In Baghdad the party went through a difficult time during the rule of Nazim Pasha, wali of Baghdad wilaya between April 1910-July 1911, because he was

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1 A. R. al-Hassani, Iraq During Occupation and Mandate, Sayda, Lebanon, 1935, Vol. 1, p. 47.
2 F.O. 371/560/42965.

hostile to the C.U.P. branch in Baghdad.[1] Similarly the influence of the C.U.P. branch in Basra was practically nil during 1911-1914 when Sayid Talib, who was in effect the independent ruler of Basra, withdrew his support from the C.U.P.

According to a report by the British Consul-General in Baghdad, the members of the C.U.P. branch in Baghdad, during early 1910, numbered about 750, controlled by a secret council, which reported directly to the Central Council of the C.U.P. The total income from the subscriptions of the party members in Baghdad was £T 300 to 350 per annum.[2] The C.U.P. drew its members in the urban centres mainly from Sunni non-Arab officials, army officers and members of religious minorities, namely Christians and Jews. The secret council of the C.U.P. branch at Baghdad, in 1910 was composed of three officials:[3]

Murad Bey Sulayman - Turkish origin, and an official (Maktubji). Muslim, Sunni.

Surayya Bey - Turkish origin, official. He was Sanitary Inspector of the Baghdad wilaya. Muslim, Sunni.

Hamdi Bey Babanzada - Kurdish origin, landowner, Muslim, Sunni.

and of four military officers.

The administrative committee of the C.U.P.'s first club in Baghdad was composed as follows:[4]

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1 F.O. 371/1000/33738. British Consul-General Lorimer to Sir G. Lowther (No. 736/37), Baghdad, August 22, 1910.
2 F.O. 371/1008/27430, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during the months of April and May, 1910."
3 Ibid.
4 Sada Babil Newspaper, No. 48, dated 8th Ragab, 1328 (July, 1910).

First Manager - Khudhairi Zada 'Abd al-Qadir. An Arab, wealthy merchant in Baghdad. Muslim, Sunni.

Second Manager - Joseph Pasha 'Isa'i. Christian.

Clerk - Da'awi Wakili Joseph Effendi. Christian.

Hafidh al-Kutub - Iskandar Effendi 'Aziz. Christian.

Wazna Darr - Arnest Effendi Akibiyn. Armenian.

Members - Mikha'il Effendi Yaghagi. Christian.

Haj Juddi Chalabi. Muslim, Sunni, Arab.

The committee of the Baghdad branch of the C.U.P. (table 2) was largely composed of similar people - army and civilian officers, and a few merchants and landowners.

'Mushawara' Committee

Soon after the emergence of the C.U.P. branch in Baghdad, the leading notables, drawn from influential Arab families and the Sunni 'Ulama gathered into a sort of committee, which was locally known by the name 'Mashwar'.[1] (Probably the name was Mushawara which means in Arabic consultation.) Naqib 'Abd al-Rahman, Yusuf Effendi 'Atta, and Shaykh Sa'id were among leading members of the Committee, which was an ad hoc opposition group centred around the Naqib family rather than an organized party. Ostensibly, they adhered to the Constitution, but in fact the Committee members were old style Muslims of a conservative turn of mind, who instigated their supporters to demonstrate against the C.U.P. demanding the rule of the Shari'a.[2] This Committee failed to last for more than months, though, individually, its members remained active.

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1 F.O. 371/560/42965.
2 Al-'Azzawi, History of Iraq, Vol. VIII, p. 164.

Table No. 2

List of Members of Committee of Union and Progress

In August 1908[1]

Military Personnel:	
Artillery:	Bimbashi Amin Feizi.
	Ahmed Effendi, Secretary in the office of the artillery.
Cavalry:	Bimbashi Hassan Beg, President of the Executive Committee.
	Meer Alai Zahid Beg.
	Nouri Effendi, Secretary in the office of cavalry.
Infantry:	Yuzbashi Showket Effendi.
Staff Corps:	Muhammad Effendi, Mumeyis.
	Yuzbashi Rashid Effendi, Treasurer to the Executive Committee.
Army Surgeons:	Saami Beg.
	Zehni Effendi.
Commissariat Department:	Abdul Razak Effendi.
Military School:	Kolaghasi Fuad Effendi.
	Mukhtar Beg, Director of the School.
Civil Officers:	
	Muktoobchi.
	Derwish Effendi, Secretary to the Muktoobchi.

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1 F.O. 371/546/35261. Enclosure 4 in No. 1. Year 1908.
The names are spelled as in the source.

Saleh Effendi, of the Sharah Court.

Abdul Karim Effendi, of the Public Instruction Department.

Kolaghasi Hilmi Effendi, Director of the Saniya Department.

Zabut Ibrahim Edham Effendi, of the Saniya Department.

Belikjian Effendi, of the Public Debt Department.

Sevian Bey, of the Regie Department.

Ahmed Effendi, of the Customs Department.

Shaikh Nuri Effendi, Director of Civil Hospital.

Jemil Effendi, Mufti Zada.

Miscellaneous:

Ferid Effendi, Lawyer, Turkish Secretary to the Committee.

Nahim Effendi, Lawyer (a Jew).

Ma'roof Effendi, Teacher, Turkish Secretary to the Committee.

Mehran Effendi, Teacher, French Secretary to the Committee.

Jergus Kayyat, merchant.

Iskender Saoud Messeyah, merchant.

Mutad Beg, Landed proprietor.

Muhammad Sa'id Do'llah, Landed proprietor.

Hisb al-Hurr al-Mu'tadil (Moderate Liberal Party)

This party was established in opposition to the C. U. P. in Constantinople.[1] The party programme was as follows:

1. Proportional representation of the different nationalities in the Government, Parliament and public offices.
2. Settlement of the nomadic tribes.
3. Tribes that pay taxes were to be granted political rights similar to those which existed in the towns.
4. The use of the local languages of the various nationalities in the schools of the different parts of the Empire.

Branches of the party were established in Basra and Baghdad, in August and September, 1911, respectively.[2] The Baghdad branch was loosely constructed, and centred around the Naqib family. Mahmud, the son of 'Abd al-Rahman Pasha al-Naqib, headed the party. This prevented members of rival families from joining the party, although they shared the party's feeling towards the C. U. P.[3]

Leaders of the party were mainly Sunnis, and Arab religious men and landowners, most of whom had lost their political influence to the C. U. P. They demanded reforms, particularly the use of the Arabic language in schools, the appointment of more Arab officials in Arab areas,

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1 Al-Naqib Newspaper, Baghdad, No. 79, dated 27 Dhul Hija 1327 (January 1910).
2 Philip W. Ireland, Iraq: A Study in Political Development, London, 1937, p. 230.
3 Interview by author with Tawfik al-Swaidi, son of Yusuf al-Swaidi, a leading Baghdadi notable who refused to join the Naqib's party.

which were designed to secure the support of all Arabs. However, the party failed to make any impact on the tribal areas, or the Shi'i towns, headed by Najaf and Karbala. Even in Baghdad and Mosul it failed to create a strong movement. In 1911 the British Consul-General at Baghdad reported confidentially the failure of the Hurr al-Mu'tadil party in Iraq, with the exception of Basra,[1] where Sayid Talib, semi-independent ruler of Basra, had withdrawn his support from the C.U.P.

The Liberty and Accord Party

The dying Hurr al-Mu'tadil party was reincarnated in a new party called Hisb al-Huria wa al-Itilaf, the Liberty and Accord party, which was established in November 1911, in Constantinople in opposition to the C.U.P.

In January 1912, permission was granted for the establishment of the Liberty and Accord party in Baghdad.[2] Shukri Fadhli Affindi, its first president, had formerly been a prominent member of the C.U.P. Among its leading members were Mahmud Nadim al-Tabakjali, owner of the Bina al-Nahrayn newspaper, and Hamdi al-Bachachi, an Arab from the merchant class. Both of them were Sunni Arabs from Baghdad. The Liberty and Accord party recruited both ex-members of the Hurr al-Mu'tadil and seceders from the C.U.P.[3] The establishment of the Liberty and Accord party in Baghdad coincided with the declining popularity of the C.U.P.

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1 F.O. 371/1243/45029, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during the month of September, 1911."
2 Sada Babil Newspaper, No. 119, dated Baghdad, 28 January 1912.
3 F.O. 371/1490/12865, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq for the month of January, 1912."

among the Arabs; hence the Liberty and Accord party was able to mobilize strong opposition against the C.U.P. The British Consul-General, L. C. Lorimer, said in a confidential report about Baghdad during March and April, 1912.[1]

> I have been much struck of late by the increasing freedom with which anti-Committee of Union and Progress and anti-Turkish sentiments are expressed here..

The growing political confidence of the non-Turkish Muslims was noticeable even among officials, and the British Consul-General went on to prophesy that:

> If political development here follows a normal course, and if the people of the country have any real convictions and courage, - two conditions of which the fulfilment is doubtful, - the support of the Baghdad province will by and by be lost to any party which does not concede to the Arab political equality with the Turks.

Financially, the Liberty and Accord party in Baghdad depended partly on its wealthy members, and partly, on the Liberty and Accord party in Basra.[2]

In Basra the rise and fall of political movements was greatly influenced by the attitude of Sayid Talib. Until 1909 Sayid Talib supported the C.U.P., with the result that it did very well. But in August 1911 Sayid Talib sponsored the establishment of the Hurr al-Mu'tadil party in Basra in opposition to the C.U.P. The new party had only the name in common with the Hurr al-Mu'tadil party in Constantinople: it was completely independent in its policies, and most of the members of the new

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1 F.O. 371/1490/26070, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq for the months of March and April, 1912."
2 Sulayman Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat al-Nidhal, Baghdad, 1952, pp. 96-101.

party were ex-C. U. P. members. Sayid Talib adopted the Liberty and Accord party, when the latter replaced the Moderate Liberal party in November 1911.

The first Administrative Council of the Liberty and Accord party in Basra consisted of the following:[1]

First President:	Sayid Talib.
Second President:	Haj Mahmud Pasha 'Abd al-Wahid. An Arab merchant, Muslim, Sunni.
Vice President:	'Abdulla Pasha-'Ayan. Arab, Landowner, Muslim, Sunni.
Secretary:	Sayid 'Abd al-Wahab Tabtaba'i. Owner of the party newspaper Al-Dastour. Arab, Muslim, Shi'i.
Treasurer:	Haj Mahmud Ma'tuq al-Ni'ma. Arab, Landowner, Muslim, Sunni.
Mu'tamad:	Sulayman Faydhi. Arab from Mosul, Lawyer, Muslim, Sunni.
Members:	Ahmed Pasha Sani'. Arab, merchant, Muslim, Sunni.
	'Abd al-Latif al-Mandil. Arab, Landowner, Muslim, Sunni.

All of these members were under Sayid Talib's personal control.

The declared policy of the party was the promotion of Arab political and economic interests. Sayid Talib sought the support of Arab notables, merchants, landowners, and tribal Shaykhs from all over Iraq by corresponding with them. The Liberty and Accord party in Basra was the first political organization in Iraq to enlist the support of the Arab officers in Iraq. The success of the party was no doubt due to Sayid Talib's influence. He was head and shoulders above all the other members

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1 Ibid.

of the party.

Basra Society of Reform

When the Ottoman Decentralization Party was established in Egypt in 1912, Sayid Talib spontaneously declared his adherence to it. Soon after this he dissolved his Liberty and Accord party and formed a new party called the Basra Society of Reform.[1] In composition and organization the new party was no different from the old, but the new party adopted a stronger Pan-Arab policy. Although the Basra Society of Reform was associated with the Ottoman Decentralization party in Egypt, the new party was so much under the control of Sayid Talib, that when the Turkish authorities reached an agreement with him in January, 1914, by recognising his authority in Basra, the Basra Society of Reform at once changed its policy and ceased to oppose the Turks.[2]

The National Club Society

This society was established in Baghdad during early 1912. It was meant to be a literary society, but its members turned it into a political centre. Members of the society were drawn from the young educated Arabs, graduates of Turkish colleges and Arab army officers.

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1 M. Mahdi al-Bassir, History of the Iraqi Question, Baghdad, 1924, p. 40. Sayid Talib established a new party and not a branch of the Ottoman Decentralization Party, probably because he considered himself equal to the leaders of the latter party.

2 Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, p. 132. On 3rd February, 1914, the Basra papers published a proclamation by Sayid Talib declaring his adherence to the Turkish Government.

This emerges clearly from an analysis of the members:[1]

Muzahim al-Bachachi	- College student, son of a poor civil official, Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
Hamdi al-Bachachi	- Graduate from a college in Constantinople, lecturer in the College of Law in Baghdad. Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
Ibrahim Naji	- College student, son of a craftsman. Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
Thabit al-Swaydi	- Graduate from the Administration College in Constantinople, from a rich family. Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
Bahjat Zaynal	- Student in the College of Law in Baghdad, son of a civil official. Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
'Abd al-Latif al-Falahi	- Police officer, Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
Yusuf 'Izz al-Din	- Military officer, Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
Tahsin al-'Askari	- " " " " "
Sabih Najib	- " " " " "
'Abd al-Hamid Shalji	- " " " " "
'Abd al-Majid Kana	- Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
Ibrahim Hilmi al-'Umar	- Arab, Muslim, Sunni, a journalist.
Razuk Ghanam	- Arab, Christian, owner of a newspaper in Baghdad.

Members of the wealthy Arab upper class of merchants and landowners supported and financed the National Club, which in turn followed the lead of men like Yusuf Swaydi, a Baghdadi notable, and Sayid

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1 These names were obtained from the following:
Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, p. 116; An interview with Tawfiq al-Swaydi; and Tahsin al-'Askari, My Memoirs about the Revolution, Baghdad, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 31.

Talib, who contributed generously to the funds of the Club.[1]

The Club's policy was that of the Party of Decentralization in Egypt, and it became increasingly popular among the young educated Arabs. However, such a situation could hardly be tolerated for long by the Turkish authorities, and just before the outbreak of the World War, they suppressed the Club's newspaper Al-Nahda and persecuted its leading members.

The Al-'Ahd Party in Iraq

The al-'Ahd party, or Covenant party was established in Constantinople during late 1913. Membership was limited to Arab officers, of whom Iraqi officers formed the majority. Between late 1913 and 1914 branches of the 'Ahd were established in Baghdad and Mosul. The following are the names of the leading members of the Mosul branch:-[2]

Maulud Mukhlis	-	Arab, Muslim, Sunni, Military officer.
'Ali Jawdat	-	" " " " "
'Abd al-Rahman Sharif	-	" " " " "
Sharif Faruqi	-	" " " " "
'Abdulla Dulaymi	-	" " " " "

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1 Sada Babil Newspaper, Baghdad, No. 123, dated 25th February 1912. Names of those who financially contributed to help the establishment of the Club:- 'Abd al-Rahman al-Naqib, 'Isa Effendi al-Jamil, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Bachachi, Musa Kadhum al-Bachachi, Yusuf 'Atta Effendi. With the exception of the last name, the rest belong to the Arab rich upper class.

2 Al-'Askari, My Memoirs, Vol. 1, p. 40, the date of the establishment of the branch was late in 1913. Also see M. T. al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Baghdad, 1925, Vol. 3, p. 45, the establishment of the party was not finally concluded, but it was limited to few meetings.

Names of the leading members of the Baghdad branch:-[1]

Tahsin 'Ali	-	Arab, Muslim, Sunni, Military officer.
'Abd al-Ghafur Shalji	-	" " " " "
Taha al-Hashimi	-	" " " " "
'Abd al-Hamid Shalji	-	" " " " "
Hamdi al-Bachachi	-	" " " Lecturer in the College of Law in Baghdad.
Ibrahim Hilmi al-'Umar	-	Arab, Muslim, Sunni, Journalist.

Both branches were secret but although it was for army officers only it accepted a few civilians as members.

The policy of the 'Ahd party was the promotion of Arab interests and the achievement of autonomy for the Arab nation within the Ottoman Empire. The outbreak of war prevented the Iraqi 'Ahd branch from developing into an active movement.

Other Political Societies

Other less known parties were established in Iraq, but they failed to develop.[2] Iraqis, particularly students and army officers, took part in the activities of the Arab political parties in Constantinople and in Arab cities outside Iraq. Among them Iraqi army officers were the most active. But Iraqis played a minor role in such

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1 Al-'Askari, My Memoirs, Vol. 1, pp. 41-42.

2 Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 122-124. Sulayman Faydhi, a prominent member in the Liberty and Accord party in Basra, was sent by his party to Mosul to establish a pan-Arab party, but he failed in his mission. Also see Ireland, Iraq, p. 299. 'Assibat-al-Hamra', "the Iraqi counterpart of the Committee of Decentralization". But I did not find in any other English or Arabic source any mention of this society.

societies as the al-Ikha' al-'Arabi al-Othmani, al-Muntada al-'Arabi. The former was established in 1908, and the latter in 1909.

Among the secret societies Iraqi officers were prominent. The following secret societies had especially active Iraqi members:

1. The Green Flag Society: established in Constantinople in 1912.[1] The following were the leading members in the society:

Daud Affendi Dubuni	-	Medical Doctor, Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
'Abd al-Ghafur al-Badri	-	Army officer, " " "
Isma'il Saffar	-	Medical Doctor, " " "
'Ali Ridha al-Ghazali	-	Army officer, " " "

2. The al-'Ahd Society: established in 1913, in Constantinople. The following were the leading members in the 'Ahd society:

Yasin al-Hashimi	-	Army officer, Arab, Muslim, Sunni.
Nuri Sa'id	-	" " " " "
Jamil Madfa'i	-	" " " " "
Maulud Mukhlis	-	" " " " "

3. The Black Hand Society:[2] Most of the Black Hand society members were students, who advocated a policy of violence against Arab members of the C.U.P. The society survived less than a year, and its leading member was Daud Affendi Dubuni.

4. The al-Qahtaniya Society:[3] established in Constantinople, in 1909. Iraqi members were not as active or numerous as in the other secret

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1 A. 'Izzat al-'Adhami, The Arabic Question, Baghdad, 1932, Vol. 3, pp. 35-38.
2 Ibid., p. 39.
3 Amin Sa'id, Secrets of the Arab Revolt, Beirut, 1965, p. 29. Also see Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 85-86.

societies. Isma'il Saffar and Dr. Daud Dubuni, were among the Iraqi members of the society.

The Politics of the Press in Iraq, 1908-1914

Before 1908 there were only three newspapers, all published and sponsored by the Turkish authorities. After the 1908 Revolution in Constantinople freedom of the press was granted. This marked the beginning of a sudden change in the Iraqi press. Between 1908 and 1914 the number of newspapers published in Iraq rose from three to sixty-nine, and the number of magazines rose from three to seventeen.[1] But these papers and magazines were short-lived; some survived for only a few weeks, others for a few months, and very few lasted till the outbreak of the war. Out of the sixty-nine papers, forty-nine were published in Baghdad, thirteen in Basra, five in Mosul, and one each in Karbala and Najaf. Out of the seventeen magazines, twelve appeared in Baghdad, two in Karkuk, two in Najaf, and one in Mosul. The circulation of these papers in no case amounted to more than one thousand copies,[2] distributed mainly in the major cities. Most of the papers appeared once or twice a week only. Out of the sixty-nine papers, thirty-four used the Arabic language only, thirty-one used both Arabic and Turkish and one each used Turkish, Persian, Turkish-Persian, Arabic-Persian. Fifty-four papers were owned or edited by Sunnis, eight by Shi'is, three by Christians, and one by Jews, while the remaining three were official papers.

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1 A. R. al-Hassani, History of the Iraqi Press, Baghdad, 1957, pp. 49-60.
2 Rufa'il Butti, The Press in Iraq, Cairo, 1955, p. 23.

Owners of the papers could be classified into four social groups.

1. Notables and Merchants.

'Abdulla Bey al-Zuhayr	owner of	Al-Dastur newspaper.
'Abd al-Jabar Pasha Khayat	" "	Al-Iraq "
'Abd al-Husayn al-Uzrri	" "	Al-Misbah newspaper.
Ya'kub al-'Anni	first owner of	Bi'na al-Nahrayn newspaper
Mahmud al-Tabakjali	second " "	" " "

2. High Officials.

Murad Bey Sulayman (Maktubji)	Baghdad newspaper.
Ra'uf al-Chadirchi (Head of Municipality)	Inqilab "
'Umar Fauzi al-Muhami (Maktubji)	Al-A'tti "

3. Intelligentzia.

'Abd al-Latif Thunyan	owner of	Al-Raqib.
Sulayman Faydhi	" "	Al-Iqadh.
Sulayman al-Dakhil	" "	Al-Riyadh.
Muzahim al-Bachachi	" "	Al-Nahda.
Daud Sliuh	" "	Sada Babil.

4. Religious Groups.

Sayid Muhammad 'Ali Hibat al-Din al-Shahrastani — owner of Al-'Ilm magazine, published in Karbala.

Anistas Mary al-Karmali, a Carmelite father, who produced Lughat al-Arab, magazine.

The great majority of the newspapers were in opposition to the C. U. P. and the Turkish administration in Iraq. Thus notwithstanding the freedom granted to the press after the 1908 Revolution, the authorities used a variety of means to suppress the opposition papers:

1. By exercising a preferential policy in advertising in the local press.[1]

2. By using the law against journalists. During five years, forty-eight cases were brought to court against the opposition papers,[2] many of these on trumped-up charges.[3]

3. By a law of 1911 which provided that licensed papers which failed or did not appear regularly up to March 1911, were to be suppressed. This led to the disappearance of thirty-six papers which did not appear regularly.[4]

4. By official intimidation, as a result of which Daud Sliu[illegible], the owner of the Sada Babil paper, announced his resignation from the Liberty and Accord party,[5] and Mahmud al-Tabakjali, owner of Bina al-Nahrayn, stopped printing his paper in 1912.[6]

Pan-Arab papers depended on the protection of the Arab notables. When Sadiq al-A'raji, pan-Arab editor of the Risafa paper was imprisoned in 1910, 'Isa al-Jamil, a wealthy notable in Baghdad came to his help and was able to secure his release from prison.[7] Later Muzahim al-Bachachi,

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1 Al-Raqib Newspaper, Baghdad, No. 82, dated 9 Muharim, 1328 (January, 1910).
2 Butti, The Press in Iraq, p. 38.
3 F.O. 371/1243/3660, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during the month of November 1910." The British Consul-General, in Baghdad, wrote the following:
"The Baghdad newspaper "Raqib" has been suppressed .... the reason alleged for its suspension was that a charge of sodomy against the editor was pending in the courts; but, it is stated that this charge was brought at the instance of Nazim Pasha, to whom the paper had given trouble."
4 Al-Hassani, History of the Iraqi Press, p. 51.
5 Sada Babil Newspaper, Baghdad, No. 129, dated 7 April, 1912.
6 Butti, The Press in Iraq, pp. 27-28. In 1912, the owner of Bina al-Nahrayn paper suspended his paper and wrote in the last issue, "that it is better to end his career rather than his life."
7 Ibid., p. 30.

owner of the Nahda paper, and its editor Ibrahim Hilmi al-'Umar, fled to Basra in 1914, seeking refuge with Sayid Talib.

The local press was suspicious of British interests in Iraq. The Rashad of 1st-14th December 1911 urged the fortification of Fao, Iraq's main port, against possible British encroachment.[1] Al-Misbah on March 13th, 1914,[2] warned its readers against increasing British commercial influence and, in particular against the Lynch Navigation Company which, the paper said, "holds the rein of trade in their iron hands and the native merchants are nothing but subordinates and brokers without influence". The paper argued that the spread of British commercial influence was a prelude to political control. The local press was mainly addressed to the literate few in cities and towns, namely notables, officials, and effendis. This was the natural result of the very low literacy rate, and the difficulty of distributing papers outside the towns where they were printed.

The emergence of an Iraqi Political Magnate, Sayid Talib

Sayid Talib, son of the Naqib of Basra, had become by 1914 to all intents and purposes the ruler of Basra. He was very ambitious and for the sake of more power, he was prepared to use every possible means. Being the son of the Naqib and a member of a family which claimed to be descended from a Sunni saint, Sayid Ahmad al-Rifa'i, he possessed the necessary traditional qualifications for leadership. Sayid Talib

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1 F.O. 371/1490/7705, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq for the month of December, 1911."
2 F.O. 371/2135/24783, Confidential, "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq during February and March, 1914."

surrounded himself by an army of guards and servants which acted as a private militia. The Shaykhs of Kuwait and Muḥammara relied on Sayid Talib to protect their interests in Basra against the Turkish authorities, and in return they offered him their financial and moral backing.[1]

Sayid Talib impressed his authority on the other rich families in Basra by means of intimidation and blackmail. In 1902, he was appointed Mutasrif of Hasa, but soon afterwards he resigned when cases of illegal exploitation of his position were brought against him. In 1905, he suffered another setback when the Wali of Basra, Muḥsin Pasha, who was favourably disposed towards him was replaced by Fahkri Pasha, who became hostile to Sayid Talib. These defeats led Sayid Talib to move to Constantinople, where a friend of his family, Abu al-Huda, used his close relations with the Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamid, to secure for Sayid Talib membership of the Sarraj al-Dawla.[2]

When the 1908 Revolution occurred, Sayid Talib hastily returned to Basra professing his belief in the C.U.P. and tried to head its Basra branch. Unfortunately for him the C.U.P. leaders were suspicious of him, and were glad to send him back to Constantinople as a deputy for Basra in the Ottoman Parliament. In Constantinople he was won over by the opposition to the C.U.P. and returned to Basra to organise the opposition

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1 Cab. 17, File 177 (Secret), Arabian Report, N.S., No. 8. September 6, 1916. Appendix (A), by H. Dobbs. Sayid Talib secured the support of Shaykh Khaz'al of Muḥammara by murdering 'Abdulla Rawanduzi, the enemy of Shaykh Khaz'al. See also Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 133-134. Shaykhs of Kuwait and Muḥammara paid Sayid Talib, monthly £T 70 and £T 50, respectively.

2 Al-Bassir, History of the Iraqi Question, pp. 39-40.

there. In 1910 he brought about the resignation of Sulayman Nadhif Pasha, Wali of Basra, an important step in increasing Sayid Talib's influence.[1] Sayid Talib's opposition to the C.U.P. after 1909, took the form of pan-Arabism. Early in 1911, he wrote to the Sharif Husayn of Mecca declaring his opposition to the C.U.P. government and his readiness to serve under the Sharif for the liberation of the Arabs, and to support the proclamation of the Sharif as the Caliph of the Muslims.[2] No doubt Sayid Talib's contact with the Arab movements in Constantinople encouraged him to adopt this new attitude. In August 1911, Sayid Talib sponsored the establishment of a branch of the Hurr al-Mu'tadil party (the Moderate Liberal) in Basra, which in early 1912 became the Liberty and Accord party, rather than a branch of a pan-Arab party, probably because at the time the chances of the former coming to power in Constantinople were good, and his chance of securing more power in Basra would be greater if he joined it.

Sayid Talib increased his power when the Liberty and Accord party in Constantinople came to power in 1912. He helped to found a Liberty and Accord branch in Baghdad, and sent messages and envoys to many Arab notables in different parts of Iraq, requesting their support for his movement.[3] When the Liberty and Accord party government collapsed early in 1913, Sayid Talib gathered most of the Arab notables of Basra at his house, on 26th January, 1913. At this meeting they agreed on a declaration denouncing the political parties, the C.U.P. and Liberty and Accord party,

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1 Al-'Azzawi, History of Iraq, Vol. VIII, p. 204.
2 Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 87-88.
3 Hassani, Iraq during Occupation and Mandate, Vol. 1, pp. 50-52.

as a menace to the country.[1]

In February, 1913, Sayid Talib established a new society, similar to the Beirut Reform Society, called the Basra Reform Society, and adopted the programme of the pan-Arab movement put forward by the Ottoman Decentralization party, which had been founded in 1912, in Egypt.

At the beginning of 1912, Sayid Talib visited Egypt and met Lord Kitchener. He then visited India, where he had discussions with high British officials. Apparently the British officials did not promise him anything. Nevertheless he was under the impression that he could rely on their support.[2] Thus when the C.U.P. returned to power early in 1913, Sayid Talib visited the British Consul at Basra and was reported to have

> referred to the fall of the Cabinet, and stated in strict secrecy that the Arabs of his vilayet had unanimously resolved to resist the restoration of the Committee regime.... He hinted that they aimed at limited autonomy with foreign support like Egypt and begged his views as to representing that united wishes of the Arabs of this province might be laid before His Majesty's Government privately and reply granted.[3]

The British government declined his offer, partly because of their distrust of Sayid Talib's intentions, and partly because Britain, which was already being accused of colonialist designs on Basra, did not want to widen the breach with the Turkish government at that time.

After his abortive relations with the C.U.P. and the failure of

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1 F.O. 371/1798/9830. Enclosure No. 1. Despatch from the British Consul at Basra, F. E. Crow, to Sir G. Lowther, dated Basra, February 1, 1913.
2 Cab. 17, File 177 (Secret), Arabian Report, N.S., No. 8, dated September 6, 1916. Appendix (A).
3 F.O. 371/1788/4342, Confidential. No. 1. Sir F. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, Constantinople, January 28, 1913.

the Liberty and Accord party to continue in power, Sayid Talib adopted a new policy of local autonomy, which was another way of making him the ruler of Basra. Again Sayid Talib's timing was good, because at that time Arab nationalism was gaining ground and the Arabs were becoming more conscious of their national identity. Sayid Talib's first move towards local autonomy, after the establishment of the Basra Reform Society, was to induce a vigorous campaign against the Turkish authorities demanding local concessions and reforms. On 20th February, 1913, at a meeting in Sayid Talib's house a petition was signed by the notables of Basra, condemning the deteriorating social and economic conditions in their wilaya and requesting the establishment of a General Council of the wilaya. For the notables of Basra the General Council of the wilaya would enable them to control the expenditure of the local revenue.[1]

The lawlessness and insecurity which prevailed in Basra during this time served Sayid Talib by demonstrating the feebleness of the Wali and the administration.[2] The Turkish government sanctioned a new law for the formation of a General Council of the wilaya, but this was far from meeting the wishes of Sayid Talib and his Society, because the new law left the Wali with power enough to render the Council ineffective.[3]

Matters came to a head when Sayid Talib heard in 1913 of a plot

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1 F.O. 371/1798/14248, Confidential. Enclosure 1 in No. 1, Consul Crow to Sir G. Lowther, dated February 24, 1913; and enclosure 2 in No. 1.
2 F.O. 371/1822/23816, Confidential. Enclosure in No. 1, Consul Crow to Sir G. Lowther, dated Basra, April 26, 1913.
3 F.O. 371/1799/32133. "Situation at Basra - May 1913" by Commander A. E. Wood.

against his life, and quickly ordered his men to murder the military commandant, Farid Bey, who was behind it. The local Turkish authorities, because of their weakness, failed to retaliate, and the Turkish government now realised that if they could not beat him, it would be better to win him over, until an opportunity offered to eliminate him.[1] On this occasion Sayid Talib was also willing to meet the Turkish authorities half way, because he knew that the British would not come to his rescue, and that he might face in the future a stronger attempt by the Turkish authorities to destroy him. Hence he welcomed the advances made by Enver Bey,[2] to the effect that in future the walis of Baghdad and Basra would have to consult Sayid Talib about the affairs of the Wilayas. In January 1914, Sayid Talib published a statement in the local papers declaring his adherence to the Turkish government, and announcing that he would strive to protect the unity of the Ottoman Empire. This declaration marked the end of the pan-Arab movement in Basra.

The Parties and the Community

All the political parties in Iraq, between 1908 and 1914, were in opposition to the C.U.P., and with the exception of the 'Ahd party, all the parties were public. The political parties functioned only in the urban

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1 Al-Bassir, History of the Iraqi Question, p. 45. The Turkish authorities feared that Sayid Talib might play the British hand in Basra, and induce certain tribes to revolt against the authorities.

2 Cab. 17, File 177 (Secret), Arabian Report, N.S., No. 8, dated September 6, 1916. Appendix (A). See also Al-Bassir, History of the Iraqi Question, p. 47, wrote that Tal'at Bey was the one who made the advance to Sayid Talib.

centres, Baghdad, Basra and Mosul, and a few other large towns.

In Baghdad the rich upper-class notables, men of religion and landlords, were the leading members of the "Mushawara" committee, the Hurr al-Mu'tadil, and the Liberty and Accord parties. In fact these parties were similar to each other in membership and policy. When the Mushawara committee failed to develop, it was succeeded by the Hurr al-Mu'tadil party which in turn was succeeded by the Liberty and Accord party. The Mushawara was rather a reflexive move against the emergence of the C. U. P. in Baghdad in 1908, which had stripped the members of the new opposition of their official power. The Mushawara was a conservative party which rejected the C. U. P. notion of equality as equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, and demanded the strict application of the laws of Islam.

The Hurr al-Mu'tadil went beyond the Mushawara committee in two ways: first, it was affiliated to a wider organization which had its centre in Constantinople; secondly, it appealed to the Arabs as an advocate of the interests of the non-Turkish people in the Ottoman Empire. Proportional representation of the different nationalities in parliament, government departments, and other public offices, and the use of the local language in non-Turkish wilayas, were items in its programme. No doubt, if these policies had been applied, they would have meant that the Arab upper class would have gained more power, since they constituted the majority of the literate and influential Arabs. When the Liberty and Accord party replaced the Hurr al-Mu'tadil in Constantinople, a similar step was taken in Baghdad and Basra. The former party did not differ from the latter in its policy or social construction, but the Liberty and Accord

party was stronger in its adherence to pan-Arabism. The policies of the three successive parties stemmed from their opposition to C.U.P. and accordingly emphasised Islam and rallied non-Turkish elements, partly Arab, by advocating equality of all races under Islamic rule.

Pan-Arabism was behind the establishment of the National Club Society in Baghdad. It was a cultural as well as a political society, and the majority of its members were young graduates from Constantinople colleges, and students in the Baghdad school of law. The Constantinople graduates had acquired their nationalism while studying in Constantinople, in a variety of ways: first, their contact with European liberal ideas; secondly, their relations with other Arab societies, like the al-Ikha and al-Muntada al-Adabi; and thirdly, through contact with the growing Turkish nationalism and the policy of Turkification. All these made them very conscious of their Arab identity.

Unlike the earlier parties, the National Club Society was "progressive" in its social and political outlook. Furthermore it was motivated by pan-Arabism rather than religion. It had relations with the pan-Arab Decentralization party, in Cairo, and while the previous parties had been financially independent, the National Club solicited the funds and the protection of the Arab upper class.

The al-'Ahd branch in Baghdad became to the Iraqi military officers what the National Club was to the Arab intelligentzia, but its secrecy and the shortness of time between its establishment, early in 1914, and the outbreak of war prevented it from developing its potential. Nevertheless the 'Ahd Society succeeded in gaining the support of the

majority of the Iraqi military officers.[1]

In Basra the political parties, except, to a large extent, the C.U.P., were dominated by Sayid Talib. Thus it is necessary to study developments in Basra against the background of Sayid Talib's personality and views, which are discussed in a separate section.

Mosul was the stronghold of the Arab conservatives.[2] Besides the Turkish authorities the city was controlled by notables, landlords, and religious men. They regarded the C.U.P.'s liberal ideas about equality and freedom as a challenge to their supremacy over the Christian and Jewish minorities in Mosul. However, the new Turkish regime did not antagonize the notables and the rich upper class. Although a branch of the Hurr al-Mu'tadil was established in Mosul, it was ineffective and soon faded away. The city of Mosul was divided into sections, each led by an influential family. The relationship between these sections was marked by rivalries and feuds,[3] but implicitly all the heads of the sections agreed that they were against any change in the social pattern, which was not disturbed by the new Turkish regime in Mosul.[4] Attempts to establish a pan-Arab society in Mosul failed,[5] partly because of the absence of an

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1 T. E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, London, 1935, p. 47. Seven out of every ten Iraqi officers belonged to the al-'Ahd Society.

2 F.O. 371/157/41359. From the Political Diary of the Baghdad Residency for the week ending October 29, 1906. The people of Mosul demonstrated against the registration of the female population from the 10th to 15th October, which ended with the demonstrators' victory.

3 F.O. 371/763/8888. "Condition of the city of Mosul" by the British Vice Consul in Mosul. 1909.

4 Ibid.

5 Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 118-122. Referred to an abortive attempt by the author to establish an Arab party. See also al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. 3, p. 45.

intelligentzia in Mosul[1] and partly because of the strong religious feeling which prevented any rebellion against the authority of the Caliph. There was for a time a branch of the secret society, the al-'Ahd, but it was brought to an end when the war started.

In contrast to the situation in Mosul itself was the attitude of Arabs from Mosul who were studying in Constantinople. They were among the leading elements in the pan-Arab organization, specially the secret ones.

The Arab conservative members of Hurr al-Mu'tadil and the Liberty and Accord parties showed no interest in social or economic reforms. The majority of the party leaders derived their wealth from landed property, and any plan for improving the lot of the tenants and peasants would, inevitably, result in decreasing their incomes. They were naturally antagonistic towards the tribes, which in many cases withheld the rents of the rich city Tapu holders. Usually, however, the power of landed proprietors and wealthy merchants enabled them to enhance and protect their economic interests.

The pan-Arab movement which was in its infancy, turned to the Arab notables and merchants for protection, and so failed to achieve a separate identity in Iraq and the latter supported it in as much as it opposed the C.U.P.

The Shi'i 'Ulama, and Shi'is in general remained aloof from the conservative and pan-Arab parties. The struggle of the local traditional

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1 F.O. 371/763/8888. "It is hardly an exaggeration that among the Moslems there is practically no education at all." Year 1909.

leadership with the C. U. P. was for power, and both adopted the same policy towards the Shi'is, namely one of mistrust.

Chapter 3

British Policy in Iraq before 1914

Two factors dominated British attitudes to Iraq. First, there was the political factor arising from the position of Iraq as a land route to South-Western Asia, and its proximity to the Persian Gulf, an area of British political supremacy. Secondly, there was the commercial factor, arising from British and Indian economic interests in Iraq. One of the aims of British policy in the Ottoman Empire was to safeguard these interests by preventing the ascendency of any strong power in Iraq, other than Britain. This was achieved during the nineteenth century by supporting the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire.[1] When Muḥammad 'Ali appeared as a strong substitute for the weak authority of the Sultan in Syria and Iraq, Palmerston wrote on March 21, 1833, to W. Temple that Muḥammad 'Ali's design was

> "to establish an Arabian kingdom, including all the countries in which Arabic is the language. There might be no harm in such a thing in itself; but as it would necessarily imply the dismemberment of Turkey, we could not agree to it. Besides, Turkey is as good an occupier of the road to India as an active Arabian sovereign would be."[2]

During the nineteenth century Britain was able to establish its predominance, politically and commercially, in Iraq. However, the period between 1900 and 1914 in Iraq witnessed a dramatic struggle among the great

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1 E. Kedourie, England and the Middle East, London, 1956, p. 10.
2 Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer, The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston, London, 1870, Vol. II, pp. 144-145.

powers. On the one hand Germany supplanted Russia as a serious threat to British ascendancy. On the other hand, Turkey became more suspicious of British intentions in the Ottoman Empire.

German interest in Iraq can be traced back to the eighteen-eighties and eighteen-nineties, when Germany began to develop an interest in Asiatic Turkey as an area of economic and political expansion. In 1894 an honorary German Consul was appointed at Baghdad, and in 1905 a consulate was established in Mosul.[1] A German archaeological expedition visited Iraq in 1887.[2] But economic penetration was the most important lever for attaining political ascendancy. The Germans began to increase their commercial transactions with Iraq, making use of their political influence in Constantinople, as manifested by the second visit of Kaiser William II to the Ottoman Empire in 1898. This visit paved the way for the famous Baghdad Railway Concession, which turned out to be a major source of friction among the powers, especially between Britain and Germany. The railway concession was granted in principle to the "Anatolian Railway Company" in 1899 to enable it to extend the line, which the same company had already constructed between Hayder Pasha and Konya, to Baghdad and Basra with other branches, the terminus to be somewhere on the Persian Gulf, at a point to be decided later. The Sultan favoured the project because it would increase his power in the

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1 Zaki Saleh, Mesopotamia 1600-1914: A Study in British Foreign Affairs, Baghdad, 1957, p. 237. The German Consulate was established in 1908, in Baghdad.

2 Saleh, Mesopotamia 1600-1914, pp. 213-214.

loosely-held region of Iraq.[1] At first the British Government was favourably disposed towards the scheme, but after long negotiations it decided in April 1903 against the participation in its construction and opposed its construction.[2] The March 5, 1903, Convention which defined the details of the concession to the Anatolian Railway Company, provided the concessionaire with a wide range of privileges. Article VIII, of the Convention, provided for the formation of an "Imperial Ottoman Baghdad Railway Company" which would replace the Anatolian Railway Company in constructing the line from Donia to the Persian Gulf; the right to navigate the waters of Iraq was granted under Article IX for transport of materials and other requirements; Article XXII gave the Company mining and forest rights within 20 kilometres on both sides of the line; Article XXIII allowed for the establishment of ports at Baghdad, Basra, and the Gulf. The Council which was responsible for the administration of the Company had far-reaching powers, and was indirectly controlled by Germans.[3] Thus the concession gave the Germans an opportunity to strengthen and expand their economic, political position in Iraq.

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1 German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914, Vol. III, p. 368. Despatch from Baron Von Marschall to the German Foreign Office, dated October 26th, 1909.
"The Grand Vizir, in particular, now sees that the reason for the British opposition to our Baghdad railway is that a rail connection between the Capital and the vilayet of Baghdad, would strengthen the authority of the Turkish state in the South and disturb the British aim of expansion northwards from the Persian Gulf."
See also G. Antonius, Arab Awakening, London, 1938, p. 78.

2 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, April 23, 1903, vol. 121, cols. 222-3. Mr. Balfour's speech.

3 The Times Newspaper, 22nd April, 1903.
See also F. O. 371/148/10680. Year 1906.

> "It threw open to German influence and German enterprise" wrote Von Bülow, "a field of activity between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, on the rivers Euphrates and Tigris and along their banks, which can hardly be surpassed for fertility and for its great possibilities of development in the future.... If one can speak of boundless prospects anywhere, it is in fields which for the most part lie near the Bagdad railway, but in every respect .... I carried on the Bagdad railway enterprise with full consciousness of the immense prospects it opened out."[1]

German firms strengthened commercial ties with Iraq; in 1901 the firm of Wonckhaus of Hamburg established a branch in Basra and in 1906 The Hamburg-Amerika Steamship Company commenced a regular service between Europe and the Persian Gulf and Basra. This project turned out to be so successful that in 1913, the British shipping lines sought an agreement with the Hamburg-Amerika Steamship Company. The British official handbook on Mesopotamia said of the agreement that it was "practically dictated to the British lines as to beaten enemies."[2] Nevertheless, the tonnages cleared by the two countries favoured British and Indian vessels by not less than 5 to 1. Similarly, German export and import trade with Iraq, remained below that of the British (including Indian) trade with Iraq, until the outbreak of the war.[3]

The Baghdad Railway Concession was the landmark in the German penetration in Iraq, and the British looked at it with great apprehension. I will not recount the details of the long negotiations between the Great

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1 B. Von Bülow, Imperial Germany, 3rd edition, London, 1916, pp. 120-121.
2 Peace Handbook: Mesopotamia, London, 1920, pp. 100-101.
3 Ibid., pp. 107-108, p. 129.

European Powers and Turkey about the Baghdad Railway Concession. Suffice to say that Britain, France and Russia adopted political and economic means to obstruct its implementation, until each of the Powers had secured some sort of compensation from Turkey and Germany. The Russians withdrew their objections in November 1910, after concluding the Potsdam Agreement, whereby Germany recognized Russia's sphere of influence in Persia as defined in 1907 by the Anglo-Russian Agreement. The prize for French consent to the construction of the railway was paid on February 15th, 1914, when a Franco-German convention was signed, according to which Germany recognized the French right to construct a railway in Syria and North Anatolia. The Anglo-German Agreement, initialled on June 15th, 1914, but never ratified because of the outbreak of war, marked the end of Britain's opposition to the Baghdad Railway project. Britain consented to an increase in the Ottoman customs duties in return for a German promise to terminate the railway at Basra rather than at a harbour on the Persian Gulf, and for the nomination of two directors acceptable to the British Government to the Board of Directors of the Baghdad Railway Company, as a safety measure to ensure that British and German citizens and goods using the railway would have equal treatment. In addition, Germany recognized Britain's agreements with Turkey concluded in 1913. The Anglo-German Agreement terminated British opposition, and at the same time Britain succeeded in preventing Germany from having access to the Gulf, and in severing recognition of British influence in Southern Iraq.[1]

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1 E. M. Earle, Turkey, The Great Powers, and The Bagdad Railway: A Study on Imperialism, London, 1923, chapter X.

Among other measures adopted by the British Government to consolidate its influence in Iraq, was strong support for private British commercial interests in Iraq. When Lynch Brothers shipping line asked the Ottoman Government for permission to launch a third steamer on the Tigris, the British Government gave the Company full backing. George Lloyd, supporting the Lynch Company, wrote to Sir Charles Hardinge on December 18th, 1906,

> I venture to submit that any weakening of our present position on the Tigris means not only a weakening of our whole position in Mesopotamia, but a corresponding increase of German trade and activity....
>
> I suggest also that, in view of the river being one of the important lines of communication to Persian Gulf and India, it was wise to be careful that it should in no way fall from our grasp, and our privileged position on the river was now becoming daily more valuable, in view of the approach of the Bagdad Railway, and in view of the fact that navigation may probably be the only communication from the railway head at Bagdad to Bussorah.[1]

Under continuous official British pressure, the Turkish Government granted the Lynch Company the needed permission in 1907.[2] The zeal for extending British influence was not limited to commercial enterprises. It also included missionary activities. When the Mosul Medical Mission, which belonged to the English Church Missionary Society in Mesopotamia, decided to

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1 F.O. 371/157/42561.

2 F.O. 371/344/3219, Confidential. From Mr. Adam Block to Sir C. Hardinge, dated January 23rd, 1907.
"I have seen the Ambassador. He talked to me of the third steamer at Bussorah. I am very glad that you are taking the question up, because if we have political interests in the Gulf we must also consolidate our material interests... I do not care a bit about Lynch's interests. I look to the general question."
See also F.O. 371/344/8205.

close down because of lack of funds, British officials intervened to secure its continuation.

> From a political point of view (wrote G. Lloyd in a Memo. dated September 3rd, 1907), it should be clearly realized that its existence and work is of immense and far-reaching importance.... British interests also are destined to rapidly develop or decline in the course of the next decade, in view of the development which promises to open up this country to foreign enterprise and competition, and it seems most inadvisable that such a powerful lever of civilizing and political influence should be thrown aside...[1]

With aid from the British Consulate in Baghdad, the Mission in Mosul managed to survive. From 1906 the British Consulate in Baghdad provided a Jewish school with funds in return for introducing the teaching of the English language.[2] The Acting British Consul-General at Baghdad also urged British firms to increase their activities in Iraq, so as to check German activities.[3]

Sir William Willcocks' irrigation plans and activities in Iraq had a distinguished place in entrenching the British influence. He visited Southern Iraq in 1904 for the purpose of studying the suitability of the area for irrigation schemes. The result of his visit was published in a book, The Irrigation of Mesopotamia, published in Egypt in 1905. He emphasised the great possibilities of success of irrigation in Iraq. Subsequently, Sir W. Willcocks tried to secure the Turkish Government's approval for carrying out certain irrigation projects in Iraq, which would

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1 F.O. 371/353/30070.
2 F.O. 371/347/9191.
3 F.O. 371/352/20777. Enclosure 1. Despatch from Acting Consul-General Ramsay to Board of Trade. Also, F.O. 371/537/4526, "The Annual Report for 1907".

have had, commented Mark Sykes in a Memo. dated 1906, greater importance than the Baghdad Railway.[1] However, nothing came of this attempt, but in 1908 Sir W. Willcocks entered into a contract with the Turkish Government for a period of five years as adviser in matters of irrigation. When a British firm obtained a contract to construct the Hindiya Barrage, after a competition with German firms, Willcocks supervised its work, which lasted from 1911 to 1913. It is interesting to note that when a Chaldean school gave up teaching French and decided to teach English instead, the British Political Resident wrote in his diary,

> "They have been thinking of improving the English education given, and I understand that the news of Sir William Willcocks' engagement has decided them to act at once."[2]

Competition for oil concession in Iraq provides us with another example of Anglo-German rivalry for predominance in Iraq. The Germans had been interested in the Iraq oil fields since 1871, when German experts visited Mosul and Baghdad wilayas and reported the existence of oil, but difficulties of transportation rendered its exploitation uncommercial. In 1901, another German expert mission visited Iraq. It reported that the area was a "Lake of Petroleum".[3] In July 1904, the Turkish Government granted the Anatolian Railway Company, which was controlled by the Deutsche Bank, an

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1 F.O. 371/145/3467. "Memorandum on Sir W. Willcocks' projects in Southern Mesopotamia", by Mr. Mark Sykes, enclosed in a despatch from Sir N. O'Conor to Edward Grey, dated January 23rd, 1906.
2 F.O. 371/561/44034.
3 Earle, Turkey, The Great Powers, and The Bagdad Railway, pp. 14-15.

option to explore the oil fields in Iraq. Under Article 22 of the Baghdad Railway Convention of March, 1903, the Railway Company had the right to exploit minerals found within twenty kilometres on each side of the railway, but the Company did not utilize this option, which led to its cancellation by the Turkish Government. Meanwhile a British firm, the Anglo-Persian Petroleum Company; the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company; and (until 1911) Admiral Colby Chester, under the sponsorship of the Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade and Transportation of the City of New York, were competing for oil concessions from the Turkish Government. After 1909, the British Navy began to substitute oil for coal, and British petroleum policy was set out by the First Lord of Admiralty in the House of Commons on 17th July, 1913.

> Our ultimate policy is that the Admiralty should become the independent owner and producer of its own supplies of liquid fuel .... or at any rate, the controllers at the source of at least a proportion of the supply of natural oil which we require...[1]

In March, 1914, the competing groups reached an agreement under which a new company was to be established and its capital distributed, 50% to a British firm, the Anglo-Persian Company, and 25% each to the Deutsche Bank and the Anglo-Saxon Oil Company (Royal Dutch Shell), except that 5% was to go to the Armenian C. Gulbenkian to be taken equally from the Anglo-Persian Company and the Anglo-Saxon Oil Company. The participants pledged themselves to seek oil concessions in the Ottoman Empire only through the new Company, the

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1 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 17th July 1913, vol. 55, cols. 1474-1475. Speech by Mr. W. Churchill.

Turkish Petroleum Company. On 19th June, 1914, the German and British Governments requested the Turkish Government to grant the T.P.C. a concession to exploit the oil in Mosul and Baghdad Wilayas.[1] The Turkish Government declared the concession no longer valid.

Britain professed before the war its adherence to the policy of the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire. However, the British Government also envisaged the eventual dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, and was therefore determined to build up the British position within the Empire with a view to becoming, among other things, the successor to Turkey in Iraq. The Curzon Despatch, dated September 21st, 1899, in assessing the conditions in Persia and the Persian Gulf, stated that,

> The fate of Mesopotamia lies beyond our ken; and it may be that in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, some stronger Power may one day exercise dominion at Bagdad, may occupy Basrah, and may demand access for its vessels to the neighbouring waters of the Gulf, such a consummation, it is in our opinion, in the interests of British Policy, as long as may be possible to postpone.[2]

British opposition to the division of the Ottoman Empire did not prevent contention between the European powers for the inheritance of the Ottoman Empire. Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador in Constantinople, in a memorandum of June 19th, 1913, wrote that

> A division of the Asiatic provinces into spheres of interests could not benefit us, but would seriously affect the balance of power on the Mediterranean, our position in Egypt, in the Persian Gulf, to say nothing

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1 H. S. Suleyman, The Story of Oil in Iraq, 2nd Revised edition, Jerusalem, 1957, p. 29. See also S. Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, London, 1954, p. 32.

2 G. Gooch and H. Temperley, British Documents on the Origin of the War 1898-1914, London, 1927, Vol. IV, pp. 356-363.

of India, and might bring about a European war.[1]

However, British officials in Iraq expected to have to take over the administration of the country in case of war or the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. On August 28, 1906, the Acting British Consul-General at Baghdad suggested to the Indian Government a survey of the river Tigris, so as to improve the navigation of the river which was the chief means of communication. Furthermore, the British Consul argued, a survey would provide information about the surrounding tribes and "An accurately surveyed line would assist the rapid completion of military topographical information in case of military operations in Mesopotamia..." In anticipation of Turkish opposition, the British Consul went about his project in secrecy.[2] British anxiety for the future was also shown when the British General Post Office informed the Foreign Office, on May 16, 1913, that it had agreed to a Turkish proposal for the abolition of the British Postal Agencies in Turkey in return for appropriate compensation. Sir G. Lowther, the British Ambassador in Turkey, protested against this agreement in a letter to the Foreign Secretary, Sir E. Grey, dated June 25, 1913.

> May I represent that Bagdad and Basra post offices under Government of India stand on a different footing from these in Turkey under His Majesty's Government. In view of possible ultimate dissolution of Turkey and formation meanwhile of foreign spheres of interests, it seems desirable to maintain and even increase our establishments in Mesopotamia which is region where our stake is most large and our claims greatest.

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1 Ibid. Vol. X, part I, p. 901.
2 F.O. 371/344/2821. Year 1907. Enclosure 1 in No. 1.
See also F.O. 371/344/31316. From Acting British Consul-General to India Government. Reported the success of the project.

> For this reason, I submit that no modification should be made in Bagdad and Basra post offices and that all other institutions which mark our premier position here should be jealously maintained...[1]

What British diplomacy and trade had been trying for nearly three centuries to establish in Iraq was suddenly accomplished during the first world war by British arms.

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1 G. Gooch and H. Temperley, British Documents, Vol. X, part II, pp. 160-161. See also Ireland, Iraq, p. 57.

Chapter 4

The Local Reaction to the British Invasion

The population of the three Wilayas, Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul did not constitute a coherent social or political entity so that it is difficult to write about a general attitude; however, the subject can be approached by studying the reactions of the constituent social groups, which were basically (1) the urban centres, that is the three centres of the Wilayas and the few other minor towns apart from Karbala and Najaf; (2) the Shi'is religious centres of Najaf and Karbala; and (3) the tribal areas including those of the Beduin and the semi-settled tribes. A common characteristic which permeated the three sectors was the absence of political consciousness and the prevalence of attitudes stemming from parochial interests.

The attitude of the Shi'is religious centres

The Ottoman authorities appealed to the Mujtahids to preach the Jihad against the invaders. Most of the Mujtahids responded favourably but others, such as Sayid Kadhum Yazdi, refrained from committing themselves. The argument of the latter was that because of the unpreparedness and military weakness of the people it was inadvisable to fight, while the former, many of them Arabs, insisted that Islam and Christian control were incompatible.[1] Certain Mujtahids interpreted the Fatwa for a

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1 Al-Hassani, Iraq During Occupation and Mandate, Vol. I, p. 66.

Jihad as limited to the defence of the Shi'i holy places only.[1] It is rather difficult to assess the extent to which the fact that Persia was not committed to either side in the war influenced the Mujtahids in Iraq, who were mostly Persians or of a Persian origin. During the war the Mujtahids, for reasons discussed later, drifted into opposition to the Turks.

The war between the Ottoman Empire and the British in Iraq offered the local leaders of Najaf and Karbala a golden opportunity to dictate their own terms to the Turks and placed them in a good position to bargain with the British. The leaders and notables were motivated by the desire to gain as many concessions as possible from both sides in the direction of more autonomy. Military conscription, maltreatment of the Arab populace and volunteers in the Ottoman forces by Turkish officials, and the defeat of the Turks by the British, provided them with a pretext for rising against the Turkish authorities in sporadic outbreaks. The first occurred in Najaf in April, 1915, following the Turkish defeat by the British in the Sh'ayba battle. When a Turkish punitive force was sent to Najaf to pursue army deserters, the latter rose in rebellion against the Turkish force, and with the support of the masses and the local leaders they defeated the Turkish force after a fight lasting for three days.[2] The Turkish authorities which had already suffered defeats by the British, averted a show down with the Najafi by leaving the town in the hands of the

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1 Bazirkan, The True Events in The Iraqi Revolution, p. 55.
2 Mahbuba, Past and Present of Najaf, Vol. I, p. 324.

local leaders. The heads of the four quarters seized control of the city. In June 1915, Karbala followed suit by evicting its Turkish officials, but the conciliatory efforts of the Baghdad authorities made it possible for the Turkish officials to return. A few months later, in May, 1916, the kamuna family led a rebellion against what remained of Turkish authority in the town. A conciliation commission succeeded in bringing peace to Karbala but not without a further loss of prestige by the Turks. These incidents encouraged Hilla town to raise the banner of rebellion in October, 1916, but this time the Turkish army ruthlessly crushed it, and caused the death of nearly 1500 persons, as well as the public hanging of 127 rebels.[1] The Turks wanted to make an example of a group of Arabs, and could safely choose Hilla because it was not a holy town for the Shi'is and because the Turkish army had already emerged victorious after the defeat of the British in Kut al-'Amara.

The historical animosity between the Shi'i holy cities and the Turks provided the background for the outbreaks. However the immediate causes of the outbreaks were the following:

1. The successive Turkish defeats in the war.
2. The Turks mistrusted and maltreated the Arabs, even those who joined them in fighting the British forces. Many of the Arab and Kurd volunteers, who were not used to army discipline, deserted the Turkish army after the Sh'ayba battle.[2]

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1 M. Amin al-'Umari, History of the Iraqi War, Baghdad, 1935, Vol. I, pp. 252-253.

2 F.O. 371/2771/125694, Secret, No. 5 Arab Bureau, Cairo, 18th June, 1916. Rashid al-Hashimi, a refugee from Baghdad, reported that some 26,000 Arab deserters were in the Euphrates area in Najaf, Karbala and Hilla districts.

3. The Turks insisted on the punishment and the return of the Arab deserters for the army. This brought into the open the old fear of military service. Many writers singled out this factor as the cause of the rebellion.

4. The success of the Najaf rebellion was an important factor in the occurrence of the successive outbreaks in Karbala and Hilla.

There are no indications that the Mujtahids instigated the outbreaks, although they came to their support once they had occurred. Muḥammad Mahdi al-Bassir, who lived through these events, wrote that the masses and not the "wisemen" or notables, caused these risings.[1] But the local leaders provided the masses with the leadership they lacked, and Fakhri Kamuna in Karbala, 'Atiyya 'Abu Qulal in Najaf and Hadi Qazwini in Hilla were among the leaders of the rebels. In June 1916, it was reported that a circular letter signed by two hundred leading personalities in Karbala and two 'Ulama had been sent to the Persian Government through the British authorities in Basra, denouncing the Turkish authorities because of their violation of the Shi'i holy towns.[2]

The relation between the Shi'i holy cities and the British before and during the war is an important element in the study of the political development of these cities. The first direct contact between the two was through the 'Audh Bequest which was an annual sum of nearly

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1 Al-Bassir, History of the Iraqi Question, Vol. I, pp. 10-11.
2 F.O. 371/2779/152059, Secret, Arabian Report (No. XXA), 28th June, 1916.

Rs. 1.21.000 bequeathed by Ghazi al-Din Hayder, Rajah of 'Audh,[1] for the benefit of the Shi'is in Najaf and Karbala. From 1849 the India Government acted as the trustee. The rules of the Bequest in 1908 were as follows:

1. The money was divided equally among twenty Mujtahids, half living in Najaf and half in Karbala.
2. The British Resident in Baghdad had the right to give the money to any person he wished, provided that the recipient was an acknowledged Mujtahid living in Karbala or Najaf.
3. The spending of the money was entirely left to the discretion of the recipients and the British Resident could not interfere.
4. Usually a Mujtahid recipient received money from the Bequest for life.

The British Resident was not satisfied with these conditions, partly because they did not enable him to question the recipients about the way they spent their share of the money, and partly because the Indians living in Najaf and Karbala were not satisfied that they received enough. Accordingly, in 1910 the British Resident introduced radical changes in the arrangements for the distribution of the Bequest as a result of which his influence was greatly increased. According to the new arrangement each recipient must allow two fifths of his share to be disbursed through a committee consisting of an equal number of recipient Mujtahids (or their representatives) and of members chosen by the British Resident, who would

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1 Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration 1914-1920. Pp. 28-29.

act as chairman of the committee. Furthermore, the British Resident granted himself the power to give more than one share to one recipient. "This change," wrote the British Resident, "would enormously increase the influence of the Resident and at the same time decrease his difficulties if it were realised that he had the power to give more than one share to one man."[1] This scheme was sanctioned by the Indian Government in January, 1912, with the modification that the sum relinquished by the recipient became half his share rather than two fifths.[2]

The reaction towards the new arrangement of the 'Audh Bequest was strong. The Indian Mujtahids were in favour, but the Persian and Arab Mujtahids as well as the Turkish officials were critical of the changes which practically meant increasing British influence in Najaf and Karbala. In late 1909 the British Resident sounded the recipients about the proposed new arrangement. The Indian recipients, who were three in number, replied favourably in the hope that it would increase the Indian share in the Bequest. The politically minded Mujtahids al-Khurasani and al-Mazindarani opposed the change. Mulla Kadhum Khurasani's answer was:

> ... that it is not the duty of the Government to indicate the particular form of charity on which the money should be spent... If the Recipient thinks fit he can spend the

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1 F.O. 371/1244/34634. "Correspondence respecting application of Oudh Bequest." Despatch No. 1053, dated Baghdad, 20th October 1909. From J. Ramsay, Political Resident, to S. H. Butler, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

2 F.O. 371/1244/12865, Confidential. "Summary of events in Turkish Iraq for the month of January 1912."

> whole sum on one form of charity only. Indians by reason of their being Indians have no better claim on the money than have other Shiahs in need of assistance. The Government should be careful in selecting recipients and its duty is then completed .... they could not possibly submit to any kind of superintendence over their distribution.

Similarly Shaykh 'Abdulla Mazindarani replied:

> ... that the money should be spent on charity, but that the Mujtahid is absolute judge of how he will spend his money .. .. Indians have no better claims than others. Haji Raza Shustari receives and distributes all monies on his account: he is an exceedingly good and trustworthy man, but he will only continue to receive a share of the Oudh Bequest on the clear understanding that no conditions are attached to its acceptance.[1]

Four Mujtahids, Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn Masindarani, Fatḥulla Isfahani, Sayid Ḥusayn Qumi and Sayid Hashim Qazwini were non-committal in their reply. Shaykh Fatḥulla said, "Some persons have obtained "Ijazas" (certificates of fitness) as Mujtahids simply for the purpose of getting a share in the Oudh Bequest, ..." Seven Mujtahids, including three Arabs, accepted the proposals of the British Resident; the remaining four recipients did not reply.[2] But with Turkish official support the opposition gained momentum, and the Baghdadi newspaper Al-Zuhur, on 11 July, 1912[3] published a petition denouncing the new administration of

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1 F.O. 371/1244/34634. "Correspondence respecting application of Oudh Bequest." Despatch No. 1053, dated Baghdad, 20th October 1909. From J. Ramsay, Political Resident in Turkish Arabia and H.B.M.'s Consul-General, Baghdad, to S. H. Butler, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

2 Ibid.

3 F.O. 371/1522/50561, Confidential, despatch No. 764, dated Baghdad, 28th August 1912. From J. G. Lorimer, Political Resident, to Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Simla.

the 'Audh Bequest, signed by all the Mujtahid recipients, apart from the Indians and one Persian. Furthermore the opposition of the Turkish authorities and the local press to the new changes in the administration of the Bequest, soon strengthened the Mujtahids' opposition. But out of the twenty recipients in 1910, only ten remained by late 1913, and the total number of recipients fell to fourteen: the rest had been dismissed or were dead, and none of the recipients in 1913 were of Ottoman nationality.[1]

During the few months of neutrality, before the Ottoman Empire joined Germany against the Allied Powers, the British Government was keen to prevent an alliance between them. On September 25, 1914, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir L. Mallet, wrote to the British Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey, that the British "Vice-Consul (in the Shi'i holy cities) should influence them (the Mujtahids) discreetly in our favour. Apart from more general considerations their interest in the Oudh Bequest should teach them on which side their bread is buttered."[2] Although there is no evidence that the recipients were directly influenced by the British, it remains a fact that most of them did not participate in the Jihad campaign against the British in 1914, and that they were able to exercise little influence because none of them was a leading Mujtahid. Nevertheless the Indian Government decided in March 1915, to continue the payment of the 'Audh Bequest regardless of the recipients' political attitude.[3] Actually, those Mujtahids who declared the Jihad could hardly

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1 F.O. 371/4198/3746.
2 F.O. 371/2140/53073, Confidential, No. 857. The brackets are mine.
3 F.O. 371/4198/3746.

accept money from their enemies through the Audh Bequest, which, even before the war, had been condemned by them. Sayid Husayn Kashani received £T 500 on behalf of his father Sayid Muhammad, a recipient Mujtahid who, wrote A. T. Wilson, "rendered good service in propaganda work." In early 1915 the money was sent to the recipients through Tehran and through agents. Later when Turkish influence had diminished, the recipients appointed agents in Basra to collect their shares. By 1917 all the recipients, excluding two who had died and three who had left the holy cities, had received their shares.[1]

The 'Audh Bequest served British interests, but what was of greater service to them during the war were the local risings in Najaf, Karbala and Hilla. The breach between the Turks and the populace of these cities encouraged the latter to move towards co-operation with the British. The local secular leaders, Sayid Mahdi Sayid Salman, Haji 'Atiyya Abu Qulal and Kadhum Subi of the Zugurt together with Haji Radhi of the Shummrt, became the self-styled rulers of Najaf after the first rebellion against the Turks in April 1915. In August 1915, 'Atiyya Abu Qulal established his first contact with the British offering his co-operation. In a telegram, dated 19th August, 1915, the British G. O. C. of the 12th Division, Nasiriya, wrote to British M. G. G. S. at Basra:

> Following is extract of a letter received here yesterday from Shaikh Attieh and Ghelal of Nejef. Asks what our intentions regarding Nejef and district are and for assurance that no one will interfere between people of district and Amir-al-Muminin and Arab section. He adds that if it is our intention to proceed in their direction immediately and

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1 F. O. 371/4198/3746.

> without any conditions there will be a great disturbance and difficulties will arise for them. He asks that we should tell them confidentially of our intention so that they may inform principle tribesmen and be intermediaries. He also says if we do not agree, things will become difficult and the people of Nejef and all the tribes will be obliged to fight for their religion .... Messenger states that Saiyid Kadham Yazdi is supporting Shaikh Attieh in this matter.[1]

Abu Qulal's overture made two points: on the one hand he asked the British to let existing arrangements in the area continue without interference from the British. On the other hand he offered his services as an intermediary between the British and the populace. These proposals would no doubt have amounted to a guarantee of his position in Najaf, but it is clear that Abu Qulal was not concerned to bring about a British occupation of Iraq but simply wanted to safeguard the Najaf area. The official British reply was as follows:

> ... The Shaikh Attieh is requested to remember. Firstly that Great Britain became at war with Turkey much against our will. The war was brought about simply by the hostile acts of Turkey .... Secondly, on the outbreak of war Great Britain notified to the world that so long as the inhabitants of the holy places refrained from illtreating British Indian pilgrims, the troops of Great Britain would under no circumstances molest the Holy Places. Thirdly, immediately on arrival of British forces in Shatt-al-Arab we proclaimed that British Government had no quarrel with the tribes of Iraq and no design against their religion; that the war was with the Turkish Government and troops, and that British forces would not attack or molest the Arabs so long as they maintained a neutral attitude. Fourthly, the British Government in spite of the war have not stopped the payments from the Oudh Bequest .... Fifthly, Army Commander has consistently shown clemency and consideration to any of the clergy or their

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1 F.O. 371/2489/146291, enclosed in a despatch from Sir P. Cox, Chief Political Officer, Basra to Mr. A. H. Grant, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, Simla. Dated Basra, August 22nd, 1915.

> adherents who have fallen into our hands as prisoners and has had them released forthwith. All the above facts should be sufficient proof that the British authorities possess the most friendly feelings towards the clergy and inhabitants of the Holy Places and have lost no opportunity of demonstrating them. We shall continue to do so and feel sure that Saiyid Muhammad Katham Yazdi and Sheikh Attieh will preserve the same sentiments towards us. They may rest assured that we have no intention of interfering in any way with the religious affairs of the Attabat.[1]

The British reply to Abu Qulal was no doubt an important document which with later British proclamations gave the impression that the least the Holy Places could expect was autonomy and non-interference on the part of the British in their affairs: "The troops of Great Britain would under no circumstances molest the Holy Places" on the condition that the Indian pilgrims would be left in peace; "... that British Government had no quarrel with the tribes of Iraq and no design against their religion". These statements were taken by the leaders of the Holy Places at their face value, and they thought that they meant freedom, in the way they understood freedom - namely the removal of any outside interference in their activities. 'Ali Kamuna of Karbala, soon after the second Karbala rising in May 1916, offered the British his co-operation.[2] However the British forces advanced by way of the Tigris route towards Baghdad, which effectively ruled out the possibility of military co-operation between themselves and the rebels in Najaf, Karbala and Hilla. Nevertheless they provided the latter with funds to keep up the resistance against the Turks.[3]

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1 Ibid. Telegram from the M.G.G.S., Basra, to the G.O.C. 12th Division Nasiriya. Dated Basra, 20th August, 1915.
2 F.O. 371/2771/165592, Secret, Arab Bulletin, No. 13.
3 F.O. 371/3403/72370. "Memorandum: Affairs in Najaf", by the Chief Political Officer, Baghdad, February 24th, 1918.

The attitude of the Mujtahids was far from unanimous. Sayid Kadhum Yazdi supported the rising: others lost interest in pursuing the Jihad against the British after a long and discouraging experience of working with the Turks, especially after the ruthless crushing of the Hilla rebellion, in October 1916.[1] As far as the masses were concerned military service was the prime cause of resentment: they were either motivated by the preaching of their Mujtahids and Mullas or sought spoils. But when events turned against them the Mujtahids became disillusioned and the battle of Sh'ayba shattered all hope of easy loot.

The secular leaders of Najaf and Karbala remained the undisputed authority in their cities until August 1917 when a British agent was sent to Najaf; this marked the beginning of the end of the honeymoon relationship between the two, and a new phase in the struggle for the Shi'i holy cities.

The local reaction of the urban centres

By the term urban centres I mean mainly the centres of the three Wilayas of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul. The urban social strata were the high officials and local administrators who are sometimes referred to as Effendis; the Arab 'Ulama and notables, including the merchants and rich land owners; the poor city dwellers, including artisans, petty traders,

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1 Elizabeth Burgoyne, Gertrude Bell, From Her Personal Papers 1914-1926, London, 1961, p. 40. From a letter dated May 31st, 1916.
"We have had Arab refugees tumbling in from Baghdad, fleeing from Turkish oppression - it's rather fun when Mullahs have to run away from a Mohammadan Government to a Christian in order to save their lives."

domestic servants and others. Professional men and intellectuals were very limited in number. The religious minorities constituted separate communities. As in other parts of Iraq, all social groups lacked a sense of national consciousness, although there was an infant Arab nationalist movement.

The British invasion of Iraq evoked various responses from the different social groups. The professed intentions of the British, the Turkish attitude towards the local population, and changes in economic conditions were the most influential factors in determining local attitudes. The city of Basra was the first to fall under British control on the 23rd November, 1914, a few weeks after the British landing at Fao. The city of Basra had already been evacuated by the Turkish forces before the British entered it, and most of the Ottoman officials had retired with the retreating army. The local notables and the populace for the most part passively accepted the British occupation, although some, particularly the merchants, welcomed the change. The commander of the Indian Expeditionary Force "D" telegraphed "We were cordially welcomed by the inhabitants, who appeared eager to transfer their allegiance to the British Government."[1] No doubt the long-standing British interest and influence in the city contributed towards this attitude. However, appearances were misleading, because the pro-Turkish elements had left

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1 Cd. 8074. Despatches regarding operations in the Persian Gulf and in Mesopotamia, 1915. P. 8.
See also Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq. The populace accepted the great change patiently and calmly.

Basra with the Turkish army, and the pro-Arab leaders and notables who had in recent years been in opposition to the Turkish regime were temporarily appeased by the British official declaration that they were at war with the Turks and not with the Arabs, to whom they offered their co-operation. Furthermore, the major part of the city's trade was in the hand of foreign firms, mainly British, and most of its foreign trade was with the British Empire, India in particular. It was the local merchants who, out of a desire to promote their business, advised the British authorities, soon after the occupation of Basra, to push northwards towards Baghdad.[1]

The reaction of Sayid Talib towards the British invasion is most significant. He was the main exponent of Arab rights in Iraq, had provided the emerging consciousness of Arab nationalism in Iraq with its impetus, and until the war had been declared he was its undisputed leader. Yet there is no evidence that he was in any sense a convinced Arab nationalist. Indeed, when war broke out between the Ottoman Empire and Britain no nationalist movement existed. Such nationalist activities as there were centred around Sayid Talib, whose actions were dominated by his private aims and aspirations rather than by a definite and national policy.

In Iraq Sayid Talib was almost the only person who could have acted as the leader of the slowly-growing political movements among the city dwellers. His position in Basra was safe, and he enjoyed a widespread recognition among Arab nationalists both in Iraq and outside, because of his successful defiance of the Turkish authorities. He also had a source of

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1 Ireland, Iraq, p. 63.

arms and money, because the neighbouring Shaykhs of Muḥammara and Kuwait relied on his influence in Basra to promote their interests in Basra, and provided him in return with funds and arms. Sayid Talib seemed in fact to have cherished the idea of becoming in Basra a quasi-autonomous ruler like Shaykh Khaz'al and al-Sabaḥ had become in Muḥammara and Kuwait. But without outside help he hardly had a chance against a Turkish military campaign, and because of the foreign powers Britain had the greatest interests and influence in the area, he turned to them for aid. The British officials, because they did not trust him and because they did not wish to cause trouble in Constantinople, preferred not to work with Sayid Talib. As a result Sayid Talib patched up a rapprochement with the Turkish authorities and published a declaration late in January, 1914 announcing his loyalty to the Ottoman Government, and volunteering to back the campaign for the collection of money for armaments.

When war between the Ottoman Empire and Britain seemed imminent Sayid Talib was ready to play his card, namely his personal influence in Basra, in the gamble of the war. Both the Turks and the British were alive to his wide power in the area and both were suspicious of his personal ambitions. Just before the declaration of war in August, 1914 Sayid Talib was, however, the strong man in Basra, whose authority was acknowledged by the Turkish officials. The period between the declaration of war and the participation of Turkey in it at the end of October, 1914 was highly critical for Sayid Talib, because he had to decide with whom he should stand, the British or the Turks. Sayid Talib was inclined to the British, with whom he engaged in long negotiations

which revealed the hostility of the India government towards co-operation with any Arab on the basis of independence for the Arab areas after the war. This was partly responsible for the ultimate collapse of Sayid Talib and his subsequent exile to India. Nonetheless, at first, although the British officials mistrusted Sayid Talib, they recognised his value as a possible ally against the Turks in case of war. In early September 1914, the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf telegraphed to the Indian Viceroy requesting that, in the event of war with Turkey, he be authorized to make certain advances to Sayid Talib in return for his co-operation with the British against the Turks. His offers to Sayid Talib would take the following form: exemption of his date gardens from taxation; protection against any Turkish reprisal which might result from his co-operation with the British; Sayid Talib's family would be recognised by the British as entitled to enjoy all their hereditary privileges and possessions.[1] To this proposition the Indian Viceroy concurred, and on the 29th September, 1914 the British Government also gave its approval.[2] A few days later, on 5th October, 1914, Sayid Talib visited the British Acting Consul at Basra and was reported to have said to the Consul "that Turkey seemed resolved on war. This does not suit the Arabs. He would like to enter into negotiations with regard to his attitude in case of hostilities between England and Turkey."[3] The attitude of the British Ambassador in Constantinople, to whom the visit was reported, was one of caution. He

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1 F.O. 371/2143/54139.
2 Ibid.
3 F.O. 371/2140/57074.

didn't want to precipitate a rupture with Turkey, and feared that any open encouragement of an Arab rising might lead to such a rupture. He recommended a friendly but evasive reply, but the Foreign Office modified his draft, making it a little more sympathetic, so that it read:

> His Majesty's Government have every sympathy with the Arab, and they have always hope, to see Arabs forming an integral part of the Turkish Empire under a tolerant and intelligent central government. If, however, the Subline Porte force a war, which for Turkey will be unnecessary, ruinous, and non-national, on His Majesty's Government, it will be evident that they are blind to the interests of the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, including the Arabs, and His Majesty's Government will remember that it is the Turkish Government, and not the Arabs, with whom they are at war.[1]

Behind this colourless official document lay an awareness both of the potential usefulness of Sayid Talib in the event of war with Turkey, and of his unreliability, as the British Ambassador put it "has been too much in both camps to justify any confidence in him."[2] Sayid Talib was by now becoming anxious about his position, and wanted a speedy deal with the British, who seemed to be unaccountably reluctant. Sayid Talib therefore approached them a second time, through Shaykh Khaz'al of Muhammara, offering to facilitate a British occupation of Basra, either by inciting a revolt in Basra before the British launched their attack, or by weakening Turkish resistance by withdrawing his own followers. In return the British were required to recognize him as the ruler of Basra and to grant him their protection, on the basis of an agreement similar to those with the Shaykhs

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1 F.O. 371/2140/57090, Confidential. From Sir L. Mallet to Sir E. Grey, dated Constantinople, 7th October, 1914. See also Sir E. Grey to Sir L. Mallet, dated F.O., 10th October, 1914.
2 Ibid. Sir L. Mallet telegraph to Sir E. Grey, dated 7th October, 1914.

of Kuwait and Muḥammara.[1] On 8th October, 1914 the British Consul at Muḥammara met Sayid Talib, but without any authority to negotiate. Sayid Talib reiterated his previous offer of co-operation and asked that negotiations might be held with an authorized British official about a definite arrangement. The British Consul at Muḥammara commented, however, that "definite arrangements with a man of Sayid Talib's calibre are better avoided."[2]

Some British officials took the view that because of the resentment of the Arabs towards the Turks it would be possible in the event of a war with Turkey, to persuade them to rebel against the Turks. Lord Cromer wrote in a memorandum dated 16th October, 1914 that for a successful Arab rebellion against Turkey "one point is abundantly clear, and that is that, unless the agents who are employed are chosen with the utmost care, nothing but harm can result from the attempt", and he went on to suggest Sayid Talib as a suitable agent. He also quoted from a letter written to him by Gertrude Bell: "There is a notable rogue in Busrah, Sayid Talib, the son of the Naqib. He rules Busrah. Lately he has been in the pay of the Turks; he conducted the negotiations with the Saud. It would be exceedingly easy to buy him, the more so because he is well inclined to us."[3] The three-point offer previously suggested by the British Resident in the Persian Gulf and agreed to by the Indian

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1 F.O. 371/2144/75511. Private telegram, No. 138, dated 9th October, 1914, from the British Consul, Muḥammara, to the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

2 Ibid.

3 Cab. 37/121/124, Very Confidential. "Memorandum by Lord Cromer Respecting the Steps to be taken in the event of war with Turkey." Dated 16th October, 1914.

government as the price fixed for Sayid Talib's services was not, however, communicated to Sayid Talib, because until 21st October, 1914 the British authorities were reluctant to make any commitment to Sayid Talib. Suddenly, however, the Indian Government became anxious to reach an agreement, when, on 22nd October 1914, the British Consul at Muhammara telegraphed to the Government of India that Sayid Talib had received orders to proceed immediately to Constantinople. Talib had thereupon made it known that unless an agreement was reached with the British at once he would have no choice but to go to Constantinople.[1] The Indian Government was apprehensive about the proposed visit to Constantinople, probably from fear that the Turkish Government might outbid them. On 24th October, 1914, the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, Simla, telegraphed to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf:

> ... It is most desirable that Saiyid Talib should be dissuaded, if possible, from going to Constantinople. In order to secure this end you should negotiate with him at once in the sense ... that we wish him to remain at Basrah, and, in the event of war breaking out between Great Britain and Turkey, to co-operate with Bin Saud and the Shaikhs of Mohammerah and Kuwait in our interests and safeguard Europeans, &c. in Basrah. In return for this, we would guarantee him (1) that his date gardens should be immune from taxation, (2) that we would protect him against reprisals by the Turks, (3) that we would maintain all hereditary privileges of himself and Nakib. It may be added by you that in the event of war being averted, he could rely on our continued support and liberal treatment.[2]

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1 F.O. 371/2140/63560. Enclosure in No. 1. Telegram from Government of India to the Marquess of Crewe, dated Oct. 25, 1914.
2 F.O. 371/2144/75511.

This telegram avoided making any political concessions of the type asked for by Sayid Talib, and both the Indian Government and the British Ambassador at Constantinople remained uncertain of Sayid Talib's reliability. They feared that he might even show the British offer to the Turks as an indication of his loyalty if it were made in writing. The India Government therefore ordered its representative not to give Sayid Talib any written guarantee.[1] For Sayid Talib the British offer was far from satisfactory, because he already enjoyed pretty well undisputed supremacy in Basra. He was, therefore, in a very awkward situation when, late in October, 1914, he became aware that the Turkish Government was suspicious of him and intended to eliminate him once they were strong enough in Basra.[2] At this juncture Talib was very short of time, since he had no agreement with the British and there was a very real threat to his life. Sayid Talib, therefore, once again made use of his friendship with Shaykh Khaz'al to obtain his help in persuading the British to act, but even Khaz'al seemed to think Talib's demands "preposterous" and the British remained adamant about Talib's demand for the rulership of Basra.[3] Under these circumstances Talib forged an official request signed by Enver

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1 F.O. 371/2140/64636, Confidential. Telegram from Sir L. Mallet to Sir Edward Grey, dated Constantinople, Oct. 28, 1914. Advise against giving Talib a written guarantee, whom he described as "unreliable and elusive" might give it to Constantinople.
See also F.O. 371/2140/64904. Telegram from Viceroy to Foreign Office, London, dated 28th Oct. 1914. Enclose content of his instruction to the British Consul at Muhammara: "For the present pending actual outbreak of war you should avoid giving Sayyid Talib written guarantee which he might take or send to Constantinople where it could be used as evidence of our tampering with subject of neutral power."

2 Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 190-191.

3 F.O. 371/2140/66303. Telegram from the Viceroy to F.O., dated 31st Oct. 1914.

Pasha ordering him to go to Nejed to bring about a reconciliation of Bin Sa'ud and Bin Rashid, who were on the verge of fighting one another, and to support the Ottoman Government.[1] This gave Sayid Talib a breathing space, and during the first few days of November, 1914, he submitted modified proposals to the British Consul at Muhammara. He now abandoned some of his previous demands, and simply asked to be appointed governor of Basra under the British, with a monthly allowance of £2,000 taken from the local revenues, the rest of the revenue to be assigned to the British.[2] In other words, Talib agreed to let Basra pass under complete British control on condition that he should be the man to act on their behalf in Basra. The answer of the Indian Government was blunt:

> The Government of India absolutely refuse to go beyond the assurances they have already authorised you to offer, and which should be verbal unless you have already given them in writing. Saiyyid Talib should be given plainly to understand by His Britannic Majesty's Consul, Mohammerah that we are completely independent of his assistance.[3]

The toughness in the Indian Government's reply arose partly from their mistrust of Sayid Talib, but mainly from their desire to have a free hand in deciding the future of Basra, especially as the initial stages of the British invasion of Iraq had been successful. The refusal to negotiate further led at once to the end of Sayid Talib's rule in Basra. On 5th November, 1914, he left Basra heading towards Kuwait, where he

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1 Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 190-191.
2 F.O. 371/2144/82713. Telegram from the 1st Assistant to the Pol. Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the Government of India, dated 3rd November, 1914.
3 F.O. 371/2144/82713. Telegram dated 4th November, 1914, from the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, to the Pol. Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

resumed his contacts with the British, who were now even tougher than before. Even his friend the Shaykh of Kuwait, like the Shaykh of Muhammara earlier, seems to have felt some reservations about Talib, and it was the Shaykh of Kuwait who advised the British "that full reliance be not placed on Sayyed Talib's professions of submission and fidelity."[1] Because Talib was influential only in Basra his immediate value to the British was now slight, and the India Government now declined to offer him any terms whatever, and required "that he should remain in Kuwait as a token of his submission and as a hostage for the good behaviour of his people at Basra."[2] On the day Talib received the British reply he fled to Nejed to seek Bin Sa'ud's help in interceding with the British. His position was, however, by now quite impossible, because he had simultaneously alienated both the British and the Turks. He tried to save what could be saved by joining the British, and he therefore wrote to the Political Officer with the Indian Expeditionary Force, Sir Percy Cox, on 10th December, 1914 explaining his conduct during the previous months and offering his total submission:

> I had been communicating with your high government before the declaration of war through Shaikh Khazal Khan, the Consul at Muhammerah, and the Consulat Basrah, and the result of the communications then held is not hidden from you. My communications with the British Government were held not only then but before then also, viz., with Lord Kitchener when he was in Egypt. When the war was declared, and the Turkish troops in Basrah increased in number and the fighting was hot, they began to put pressure on me to collect tribes to fight with you, and they pressed me to do things which I could not do against

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1 F.O. 371/2140/77724. Copy of telegram from the Viceroy to the F.O.
2 F.O. 371/2479/4904, Confidential. Telegram dated Kuwait, 20th November, 1914. From Captain W.H.I. Shakespear, Political Officer on special duty, to the Pol. Resident in the Persian Gulf, Bushire.

> your Government .... In the circumstances I found the best course was to go out of Basrah in order to save myself from their demands which did not suit my ways and views which have been in your favour from of old .... I therefore secured an order from the Inspector of the war affairs stating the necessity of calling out Bin Saud to fight with you .... I left Basrah after having secretly warned the President of the Municipal Committee, some of the townpeople and the Shaikh of Madinah, Hamud al Mir Jabir, not to fight with you.

Then Talib went on to explain why he had to leave Kuwait:

> "... let it not be hidden from you that if I had stayed on at Kowait or had come to you then, the Turkish Government with the hatred it had for me, would at once on hearing the news, have killed my children and my family and looted my property .... The very fact that I have never displayed any activity against you, either before or after the war, and the treatment meted out to me by the Turks, these are great arguments proving that I support your views and desires to be with you in soul and body ...."[1]

Besides this total submission, Bin Sa'ud and Shaykh Khaz'al interceded on Talib's behalf with the British, who later, in January, 1915, decided to intern Talib in India, and to grant him an allowance of Rs. 1.200 a month.[2] The British brought about the downfall of Sayid Talib in 1915, and it was to be the British who brought him back to political life, when in 1920 he was resurrected to implement their policies, when they were being resisted in Iraq. Yet once again Sayid Talib's ambitions made it impossible for him to stick to a clear line of policy, such as permanent co-operation with the British.

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1 F.O. 371/2479/21633. Enclosure No. 4. Translation of a letter from Sayid Talib, to Sir P. Cox, Pol. Officer with the Indian Expeditionary Force, dated the 22nd Muharram 1333, corresponding to 10th December, 1914.

2 F.O. 371/2479/11837. Telegram from Viceroy to the F.O., dated 25th January, 1915.

Talib has, however, always had his defenders. Sulayman Faydhi, a lawyer in Basra, whose career until 1914 was largely the result of Talib's protection, published a book in 1952, which gave a fictitious account of Sayid Talib's relations with the British during 1914 and 1915. Sayid Talib was represented as a national hero who stood out against the British invasion of Iraq. According to Faydhi the British Consul at Muhammara offered Talib during their meeting in late October, 1914 at Muhammara the following terms: (1) The appointment of Talib as governor general of Basra Wilaya and of the two districts of Nasiriya and 'Amara; (2) the Arab language to be the official language of the area under Talib's rule; (3) the appointment of Iraqis to official posts; (4) the exemption of Talib and his family property from taxation. Faydhi went on to assume that Talib, after consultation with the Consul, put forward certain proposals, namely that Talib would start a revolution against Turkey without British intervention, apart from providing him with arms and technicians, and that British troops were not to enter Basra, except in case of necessity. After the expulsion of the Turks an independent state was to be formed under the British protection in which the British were to enjoy special economic privileges and only British advisers were to be employed. Moreover, all the expenses incurred by the British during their military operations were to be regarded as forming a charge upon the new state. Finally, these conditions were to be incorporated into an international treaty. When the British rejected these demands, according to Faydhi, Talib said that he would not agree to the British terms and that he would support the Turks regardless of the cost. However, just before Talib's departure to Kuwait,

a representative of Shaykh Khaz'al delivered a private message to Talib which contained a further British concession, namely the offer to Talib, in return for his neutrality during the war, of the post of governor general for life of all the area to be occupied by the British. Whereupon, Faydhi claims, Talib spontaneously replied that he must reject any proposal of the kind and that he intended to travel to Najid, and let the British find some one else to help them in colonizing his country.

This preposterous story seems to have had no factual basis. Talib's meetings with the British were secret and not attended by Faydhi. Furthermore there are no documents to prove any of his points, which is hardly surprising since we know that the British were unwilling to give any written guarantee to Talib. We can only assume that Faydhi's main source was Sayid Talib himself, but, if so, it is clear that his memory was, to say the least, inaccurate. The correspondence cited above shows that Faydhi's account cannot be right.[1]

The quick British victories and the passive attitude of the Arabs in Basra left the Turkish officials with a deep sense of anger towards the Arabs.[2] Later events at Shayba and Kut al-'Amara intensified their suspicion of the Arabs, and the Turkish Commander-in-Chief in Iraq, Khalil Pasha, refused, during the Kut al-'Amara battle in 1916, to accept Arab

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1 Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 189-192.

2 Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. I, p. 102. When the Arab Qadhi of Basra, and the Wali's assistance returned to Baghdad after the British occupation of Basra, a death sentence was passed on him by the Turkish commander, although he was faithful to the Turks.

prisoners in exchange for the British: "He said that most of them were condemned to death, and would only be shot if they returned; and that in any case he did not want them."[1] The persistent presence of this attitude became a prime cause of further Arab dissatisfaction with the Turks.

The British armies occupied Baghdad in March, 1917 and Mosul in November, 1918, a few days after the end of the war between the Ottoman Empire and Britain. Many of the administrative officials, who were mostly Turks or of Turkish origin, and particularly those in the higher ranks of the hierarchy, had left the city before the British occupation,[2] partly motivated by nationalism and partly, by their interest in the survival of the Turkish administration. Even among the officials who left before the British arrived, there was, however, a good deal of dissatisfaction with the Turkish regime and with the German alliance. The mercantile groups were hard hit by the war. The British seizure of Basra, through which most Iraqi import and export trade had passed, brought their business in some cases virtually to a standstill. Turkish policies were also a source of hardship, notably the compulsory use of paper notes instead of gold and silver, which led to great fluctuations in the value of the paper

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1 The Letters of T. E. Lawrence, edited by D. Garnett, pp. 208-209. Also see F.O. 371/2771/122967. Arab Bureau Papers, 14th June, 1916.

2 F.O. 371/3051/84367. From Sir P. Cox, dated 20th April, 1917. Of the executive personnel, who were about 50 in Baghdad Wilaya, half were Turks; all the 50 left. The administrative personnel were about 120, only 48 remained and none of them was Turkish.

notes and government intervention in a vain attempt to stabilise its value by prohibiting the use of gold and silver money altogether. Those who tried to get round the ban were liable to heavy punishment. Inevitably, the merchants began to look to Britain for the solution of their difficulties once the British had taken over Basra, the main market for Iraqi exports and imports. Professor A. Musil, who toured Iraq during the war, was in Baghdad in April 1915 and reported that the business community was already pro-British. A rich Arab merchant said to Musil

> "The Irak of today is, believe me, Musa, already a part of India. Freight rates from Bombay or Calcutta to Bagdad have been and are going to be cheaper than those from Constantinople; thus since India now belongs to the English it were better for us if they held Irak as well. Then there would be neither duties nor frontier inspections, and we could trade without any hindrance whatever."[1]

The Jewish community was hit even worse than the other businessmen by the war. Jewish merchants and "Sarafs" (money exchangers) came under strict scrutiny, because they were suspected of hoarding and price speculation, and many of them were subjected to threats and punishments, especially when they were blamed for the fluctuation in the value of the paper notes.[2] The Jews tried to avoid military service, and some of those who were conscripted into the army tried to escape. Those who were caught were publicly hanged for desertion, and others for spying.[3]

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1 A. Musil, The Middle Euphrates, New York, 1927, p. 132.
2 Ghanima, History of Iraqi Jews, Baghdad, 1924, pp. 181-182.
3 Al-'Azzawi, History of Iraq, Vol. VIII, p. 277. From the Zawra newspaper, No. 2504, dated 10 Rabi Akhar, 1333 (1914), and No. 2512, dated 7 Jamadi Akhir, 1333 (1914).

Not surprisingly, the entry of the British forces was joyfully welcomed by the Jewish community, which became the strongest support of the British administration.

The artisans, whose small businesses relied on the manual work of a few men, usually relatives of the owner, were conscripted for the Turkish army, and sometimes left their families without support. These people felt that the war was not theirs and the call for Jihad fell flat, because their leaders had little enthusiasm for it. The allegiance of the craftsman was primarily to his guild and he took but little interest in the government in Constantinople. Desertion from the army thus became a natural act for many conscripts.

In the city of Baghdad, in addition to the unsettling effects of the war in the form of food shortages and a tremendous increase in prices, there were floods and cholera epidemics to add to the suffering of the populace. An eye witness describing Baghdad in April 1915 paints a depressing future:

> On the way I had good opportunity of observing the damage caused by war and flood. The streets of the inner town, through which it was hard to move in 1912, gaped emptily, the shops were mostly closed, the coffee houses only half filled .... groups of soldiers appeared occasionally here and there .... In the Christian cemetery east of the high road leading to Persia coffins and half mouldering skeletons were floating. On account of the Cholera which was ravaging the town (three hundred people were dying of it every day) the Christian dead were now being buried on the new embankment of the highroad, so that people walking and riding had not only to pass by but even to make their way among and over the graves .... There was no longer any life in the town, formerly one of the busiest in the Orient.[1]

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1 Musil, The Middle Euphrates, pp. 128-129.

Basra, by comparison with Baghdad, did better under its British administration, which was, no doubt, a major reason for the feeling of the populace of Baghdad that conditions would be better under the British. Conditions in the city of Mosul, especially after the fall of Baghdad, were even worse than in Baghdad, partly because of Turkish maladministration and partly because of the ever-increasong food shortage and flow of refugees from the neighbouring areas. By 1918 the city of Mosul was in a state of famine. An Arab official, who was in Mosul at the time, gives an account of absolutely deplorable conditions, with the Municipal officials accompanied by porters touring the city every day to collect dead bodies thrown into the streets. Dogs and cats were used as food,[1] and a speedy British occupation was looked forward to as the only way out of the disaster.[2]

The infant Arab nationalist movement in Baghdad did not react to the British invasion in a coherent way. Only a few of the Arab intelligentzia had contacts with nationalist societies outside Iraq. The rest of the Arab nationalists were members of the "Ashraf", a society of notables, merchants and landowners. At the outbreak of war they gave merely verbal support to the call for a Jihad, and as the war progressed they steadily lost such little faith as they had had in the Turks. The disaffection of the notables arose partly because of Turkish

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1 'Abd al-'Aziz Qasab, From My Memories, pp. 174-176. Also a man was hanged in Mosul for selling the flesh of murdered children as meat.
2 M. T. al-'Umrai, Iraq Political Destinies, Vol. I, pp. 135-141, 149.

maladministration and partly, when a British victory seemed to be imminent, from hope of a better deal from the British. The suppression of the Arab nationalists in Syria in 1916 by Jamal Pasha, and the declaration of the Hijaz revolt encouraged the Arab nationalists of Baghdad to offer their help to the British in opposition to the Turkish regime. In mid 1916 a number of educated Baghdad nationalists therefore defected to the British, and said that they wished to participate in the Hijaz revolt, among them Sayid Sadiq al-'Araji, formerly owner of the Rasafa newspaper, Sayid Muhi-Din Gilani, a member of the Naqib family, who was a journalist, Rashid al-Hashimi, another journalist, and Haji Majid, a law student.[1]

The Ashraf of Baghdad had been the real force behind opposition to the Turks before the war and their sympathy with the emerging Arab nationalist movement was based more on opposition to C. U. P. domination than on any ideological basis. Most of them remained inactive until the British forces occupied Kut in 1916. Soon afterwards the Ashraf and a number of middle class intellectuals held a meeting attended by, among others: Musa Kadhum al-Bachachi, Jamil Zada 'Abd al-Rahman, Yusub al-Suwaydi, Yusuf Bachachi, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Naqib; and among the intellectuals were 'Abd al-Latif Thunyan, Sayid Muhi-Din, Rashid al-Hashimi. At this meeting A. Thunyan suggested that a message should be sent to the British offering help. All agreed to the proposal except 'Abd al-Rahman al-Naqib, who was reported by Rashid al-Hashimi, who defected to the British afterwards, to have said that he had lived all his

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1 F.O. 371/2775/196445. Telegram from the General Officer Commanding, Force "D", dated 15th August, 1916, to Chief of General Staff, Simla. Sulayman al-Dakhil, owner of the Riyadh newspaper, fled to Hayl until he heard of the British occupation of Baghdad and then he returned to Baghdad.

life under Ottoman rule and would not fight against the Ottomans.[1] Nothing came of the meeting, but most of those present left Baghdad soon afterwards from fear of Turkish persecution. Apart from this meeting, of which there is no mention anywhere apart from the British archives, there was apparently no concerted action by the Baghdadi, whether in defence of or attack against the Turkish regime.

The Military Class

The year 1870 marked the beginning of the formation of a new military class. In that year Midhat Pasha, wali of Baghdad, established the first military intermediate school in Baghdad. By 1914 there were in Iraq three intermediate military schools, two in Baghdad and one in Sulaymanya, in the Mosul Wilaya, and one preparatory military school, whose graduates were sent by the Government to Constantinople to join one of the military colleges. The total number of military students in Iraq in 1914 was approximately:

700 Students in the two military intermediate schools in Baghdad.

138 Students in the two military intermediate schools in Sulaymanya.

500 Students in the preparatory military schools in Baghdad.

1338 Total.[2]

The military students were very important since the total number of students in Iraq was small, consisting in 1914 of:

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1 F.O. 371/2771/125694, Secret, No. 5 Arab Bureau Reports, dated Cairo, 18th June, 1916.

2 'Abd al-Razaq al-Hilali, History of Education in Iraq during the Ottoman Times, Baghdad, 1959, pp. 248-252.

7378 Boys } Students in official schools.
600 Girls }

8020 Boys } Students in private, religious, or foreign schools.
2163 Girls }

15398 Total of male students in Iraq.[1]

Moreover, it should be remembered that these figures, derived from the Turkish official records, were theoretical rather than actual, and the number of students who really joined and attended the schools was much lower than the official figures.[2] Modern teaching subjects, like mathematics, physics and history were first introduced in the military schools. The expenses of studying in the military schools such as accommodation, stationery and clothing were met by the Government. Furthermore military students had the opportunity to continue their higher education in Constantinople at the Government's expense, whereas for the rest of the students, there were only three higher schools, two for teacher-training, opened early in the twentieth century, and a law school, opened in 1908. The number of students who went abroad to continue their studies was also limited by the students' financial resources; thus a foreign education was confined to rich families. From this it becomes obvious that the military officers constituted an important segment of the

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1 Ibid., p. 252. See also Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 58-59. 1905 census of the students in the Government school was 4210 students, 263 teachers.

2 Al-Hilali, History of Education in Iraq, p. 81. A number of students joined in theory government schools just to be exempted from military service.

Iraqi intelligentzia.

The main characteristics of the military class were the following:

1. It drew its members mainly from the middle and poorer classes. This was mainly because military schools were free and the government covered living expenses. Furthermore the military uniform provided 'status seekers' with the opportunity of joining a higher social class.

2. It was mainly recruited from urban areas, especially Baghdad and Mosul. Baghdad had the advantage of having one of the intermediate military schools and the only preparatory military school. Mosul had the advantage of having the great majority of its people from the Sunni sect, and secondly its proximity to Constantinople.

3. The great majority, if not all, were Sunni. This was a natural result of the rivalry between the Shi'i sect and the Sunni sect, to which the Ottoman Government adhered. The Shi'is remained aloof from all government schools.[1]

The year 1908 was marked by an upheaval in the Pan-Arab movement. After the declaration of the Constitution in the Ottoman Empire, a period of political freedom followed which enabled the Arab intelligentzia to organize themselves in political parties. Although the period of political freedom, as far as the Pan-Arab movement was concerned, did not last for long, nevertheless the Arab movement seemed to have gained enough impetus to enable it to grow. And when open Arab nationalist organizations were repressed, secret ones took their place.

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1 Bazirkan, The True Events in the Iraqi Revolution, pp. 47-50. In year 1909-10, there was not a single Shi'i student in any government school.

Constantinople was the centre of political activities, and a number of pan Arab societies were founded there. Iraqis belonged chiefly to secret societies such as the al-Qahtaniya, the 'Ahd and the 'Alam al-Akhdhar (Green Banner) societies. The explanation for this is that the majority of Iraqis in Constantinople were university students and military men, of whom the latter were much the more prominent. The fact that they were Army personnel prevented them from joining political organizations openly, so that they had to join secret societies, while the members of the public societies were mainly civilians, officials, deputies and men of letters and university students.[1]

The 'Ahd society, in which the Iraqi army officers were the predominant element, was founded by 'Aziz 'Ali al-Masri, in late 1913,[2] to replace the al-Qahtaniya society. The 'Ahd was a secret society and was confined to Arab military men. It adopted a similar programme to that of the al-Qahtaniya society, namely that of establishing a decentralized administration giving the Arab wider autonomy and equality with the Turks.[3] None of the major Arab political societies between 1908-1914, except the al-Fatat, professed a seperationist policy, they demanded autonomy within

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1 Sa'id, Secrets of the Arab Revolt, p. 29. During early 20th century the number of the Arab university students in Constantinople was around one thousand.

2 Faydhi, Fi Ghimrat, pp. 136-137. The establishment of the 'Ahd was in October 1913. See 'Askari, My Memoirs, p. 37. Gave the same date as Faydhi. See also G. Antonius, The Arab Awakening, London, 1938, p. 119. The date of the 'Ahd foundation was in early 1914.

3 T. A. Baru, The Arab and the Turks, Cairo, 1960, pp. 557-561.

the Empire as manifested by the resolutions of the Arab Congress in Paris 1913.

The Iraqi Army officers constituted the militant opposition to the Turkish authority. In late 1912, there were references to the establishment of a political society in Baghdad, which included more than one hundred officers, the object of this society being to expel the Turks from Iraq.[1] The formation of the 'Ahd society in Constantinople, late in 1913, enabled the Iraqi officers to be better organized, and extended their power. In early 1914 they were planning a revolt in Iraq. They seemed to have expected that Britain would, once the revolt started, intervene in their favour. But the British Ambassador in Constantinople discouraged the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, from such a venture. He wrote on February 24, 1914:

> "... I have caused it to be known to some of the persons concerned that His Majesty's Government would give no countenance to any such schemes and have no intention of pursuing a policy of adventure, which could only compromise serious British economic interests in Mesopotamia."[2]

Probably the attitude of the British Ambassador was influenced by the fact that Britain was at the time trying its best to gain the friendship of Turkey in its rivalry with Germany. But it is clear that the Ambassador also lacked confidence in the Arab officers' strength. He wrote:

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1 F.O. 371/1796/9241, File 9241, Confidential Despatch, "Summary of Events in Turkish Iraq for December, 1912." By the Acting Consul-General, Baghdad.

2 G. Gooch and H. Temperley, British Documents on the Origins of War 1898-1914, London, 1936, Vol. X, part II, pp. 833-834. Sir L. Mallet to Sir Edward Grey, F.O. 903317963/14/44, No. 117, dated Constantinople, February 24, 1914.

> "Schemes of this kind are of course not new, and I have no reason to believe that the originators of this one are powerful or competent ... "[1]

This incident and others which occurred after the declaration of war, demonstrated, however, that the Iraqi officers were dependent on British support for any rebellion in Iraq.

The leader of the 'Ahd society, 'Aziz 'Ali al-Masri, in August 1914 presented to the British officials in Cairo a plan for starting an Arab revolution, beginning either in Iraq or elsewhere, with the help of British funds and arms. In return

> "England would be assured for ever against a movement through Persia on India, and would receive preferential mercantile treatment throughout a rapidly developing Arabia (including Syria)."[2]

Again Britain was not ready for such a move, because the British government was still hoping to keep Turkey neutral, if not on the British side, in the war which had just started with Germany.

In October, 1914, before the outbreak of war between Turkey and Britain, Lieut.-Colonel Clayton, head of the Intelligence Department of the Egyptian War Office, held a discussion with 'Aziz 'Ali al-Masri about the future of the Arabs and their attitude towards Britain. 'Aziz 'Ali seemed now to be more definite about the possibility of an Arab revolt against Turkey. His plan was to free the Arabs from Turkish rule by means of a revolt, backed by a small, but well equipped force, which could

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1 Ibid. See also al-Bassir, History of the Iraqi Question, Vol. I, p. 34. Mentioned an abortive attempt to revolt by the Iraqi officers, before 1914.
2 F.O. 371/2140/4261. Intelligence Department, Cairo, 17th August, 1914. "Precis of Conversation with 'Abd El 'Masri on 16th August, 1914."

be formed from the Iraqi officers in the Turkish army in Iraq. This force would become the nucleus of a force of some 15,000 men, and the British role in this scheme would be to provide funds and arms. 'Aziz 'Ali strongly opposed the invasion of Iraq by British troops because it might mean the annexation of the territory occupied. As in previous discussions Britain was not ready to commit itself because war with Turkey had not been declared.[1]

Once war had been declared on Turkey, the British officials in Cairo sought the approval of the British Foreign Secretary for making use of 'Aziz 'Ali in Iraq. To this approach the Foreign Secretary consented and sanctioned the payment of £20,000 to 'Aziz 'Ali to facilitate his plans.[2] However the British did not speak with one voice in this matter. The Indian government, which was contemplating the annexation of Basra Wilaya, among other things, found it quite impossible to accept 'Aziz 'Ali's plan, which would have committed the Indian government to accept an Arab-controlled state in Iraq. As a result, the Indian government, which was at the time responsible for the Mesopotamian Campaign, objected to the despatch of 'Aziz 'Ali al Masri to Basra and to all his plans, because they thought "that it is inadvisable to complicate the present and future political situation in Mesopotamia by the introduction of any factor from outside."[3]

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1 F.O. 371/2140/77088.
2 F.O. 371/2140/70884. Mr. Cheetham to Sir Edward Grey, Cairo, November 13, 1914. See also Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Cheetham, F.O., November 14, 1914.
3 F.O. 371/2140/81700. From India Office to F.O., dated 11th December, 1914.

Another attempt by the 'Ahd society to establish contacts with the British in the hope of securing Britain's help in raising an Arab revolt, came when Sharif al-Faruqi, a native of Mosul and an active member of the 'Ahd, defected to the British in August, 1915 during the fighting in Gallipoli. His overture was to help in bringing to the British side a large number of Iraqi officers in Mesopotamia who were still hesitant about joining the British. In return Britain was expected to help the Arabs to achieve independence.[1]

The attitude of the British officials, in London and Cairo, towards this overture was favourable, especially because at the time negotiations were progressing between Britain and the Sharif of Mecca, who was acknowledged as the leader of the Arab rising by the 'Ahd and other societies. But when the British government sounded the officers in command of the British force in Iraq, about sending al-Faruqi and 'Aziz 'Ali to Iraq in March, 1916, the reply of General Lake, the Commander in Chief of the Mesopotamian Campaign was

> ".... From the political standpoint it appears to us that their political views and schemes are much too advanced to be safe pabula for the communities of occupied territories and their presence in any of the towns of Irak would be in our opinion undesirable and inconvenient."[2]

It seemed that the Indian government and their officers in charge of the Mesopotamian Campaign were determined to prevent any attempt by the Pan-Arab movement to participate in the events which were taking

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1 F.O. 371/2486/157740. Enclosure No. 2, in No. 121 of the confidential despatch, dated October 12th, 1915, from Ramelh to F.O.
2 F.O. 371/2768/61639. From General Lake to Secretary of State for India, Basra, 30th March, 1916.

place in Iraq, and so to keep their hands free for any future discussions about the fate of the country.

During the war in Iraq, especially before the occupation of Baghdad in March, 1917, the Iraqi officers in the Ottoman forces in Iraq showed signs of reluctance to pursue the war on the side of the Turks, but at first they did not commit themselves against the Turks, because they were not certain of Allied intentions.

Early in 1915, some Iraqi officers, particularly members of the 'Ahd society, contemplated rebellion against the Turkish authorities. In late March, 1915, before the Sh'ayba battle on 4th April, 1915, a group of Iraqi officers agreed to contact the British command in the hope of securing an agreement to the effect that they would render the Turkish Army ineffective in return for a British promise to favour their national aspirations for an Arab state of Iraq, after the defeat of the Turks. However, the Sh'ayba battle took them by surprise and prevented them from contacting the British.[1] In July, 1915, after the Ottoman forces had suffered a number of defeats, a group of Iraqi officers held a series of meetings in Nasiriya, and agreed to the following:[2]

1. The initiation of negotiations with the British forces on the basis of granting "Iraq" its independence.

2. A declaration of the separation of the Nasiriya division, which was mainly composed of Arab troops, from the Ottoman forces, with the retention of its arms.

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1 From an interview with Tawfiq Wahbi, who was a member of the above mentioned group.

2 Al-'Askari, My Memoirs, Part I, pp. 79-82.

3. Consultation with the chiefs of the local tribes, especially the Muntafik tribes, to secure their support for the move.

This plan failed to come to anything, because, as Tahsin 'Askari assumed, of the failure of the negotiations with the British forces, who refused to commit Britain to the future independence of Iraq. But, Tawfiq Wahbi, a Kurdish officer who was a member of the group, said in an interview with the author that they failed to establish any contact with the British at the time, and this led to their failure to carry out their plan. Furthermore, in the British official records there is no mention of any contact with the Iraqi officers in the Turkish Army in Iraq, except with those who had defected to the British armies. As a consequence, the Iraqi officers remained with the Ottoman forces and pursued the war against the British. Nonetheless, a few Iraqi officers decided to defect to the British, hoping to gain their support for a future independent Arab state. Among those who deserted to the British in July, 1915 was Maulud Mukhlis, who then was followed by 'Ali Jawdat and 'Abdulla al-Dulaymi, all three members of the 'Ahd society.

The fall of Baghdad in March, 1917, increased the number of soldiers and officers who deserted the Turkish army. Among other reasons which influenced the Iraqi soldiers and officers to desert to the British were the following:

1. The successive British victories, and particularly the fall of Baghdad, which led the deserters to believe that their relatives would not suffer from Turkish punishment.

2. The Turkish senior officers had become increasingly suspicious of

the Arab officers and soldiers, and had made life difficult for them.

3. The Arab officers began to hear about the Hijaz revolt, and some of them, especially the members of the 'Ahd, were willing to join the "Arab Revolt" in the Hijaz.

The long-awaited Iraqi army officers revolt in Iraq never materialized. The Iraqi officers found themselves on the one hand suspected by their Turkish superiors, while on the other hand the British treated them as enemies. The beginning of the Hijaz revolt in June 1916, brought the Iraqi officers, particularly those who were British prisoners-of-war in India, on the scene again, because they were looked upon as a source of trained men for the Sharif of Mecca's infant army. Until June 1916, the Arab prisoners-of-war in India were treated no differently from the Turkish prisoners-of-war. Then, suddenly, they were called upon to fight with the Sharif of Mecca against the Turks.[1] But they were given no warning. At the request of the Egyptian authorities, in June 1916, the Indian government consented to the despatch of Arab military prisoners to Egypt, so that they might join the Sharif of Mecca's army.[2] The first group of Arab prisoners were Iraqis, and consisted of eleven officers and 121 non-commissioned officers and soldiers.[3] The Iraqi officers were not informed of their destination or

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1 F.O. 371/2778/111154. From the Viceroy, 7th June 1916. "Arab prisoners though interned in India are kept separate from Turks and received no preferential treatment ... "

2 F.O. 371/2779/152059. "Arabian Report", No. XXA, for the week ending 28th June, 1916.

3 F.O. 371/2773/128768. From Viceroy to Cairo, dated 1st July, 1916.

given any briefing in advance: with the result that to the surprise of the British authorities in Hijaz, 102 of the 132 Arab prisoners who arrived in Hijaz, refused to fight with the Sharif against the Turks, and only three officers agreed to join the Sharifian force. Those were Ibrahim al-Rawi, Khalid al-Madfa'i, Sa'id al-Madfa'i.[1]

This rather bad beginning did not deter Cairo from pursuing the matter further. It requested the Indian government to despatch more Arab prisoners to Cairo where they might be persuaded to join the Sharif's forces. Nevertheless, those Arab prisoners who were sent from Bombay on the 21st of November, 1916 were reported by the Indian authorities to have "showed extreme reluctance to go, and some had to be embarked by force as they feared that they would be handed over to the Sheriff and compelled to fight for him."[2] But after the fall of Baghdad in early 1917, and the successive victories of the Sharifian army, the number of Arab prisoners and particularly Iraqi prisoners, who volunteered to join the Sharifian army greatly increased, to such an extent that the majority of the Sharifian officers were in the end Iraqis. In 1917, however, the Sharif of Mecca began to limit his acceptance of volunteers to fight with him to those who had suitable qualifications both military and political.[3]

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1 F. O. 371/2775/182183. From Colonel Wilson to Henry Mc Mahon, Jeddah, 17th August 1916. "As I already telegraphed 102 Arab prisoners left here for Suez on August 13th ... These men state that they were under the impression that they were released in order to live in Hedjaz ... and were never asked if they were willing to fight against the Turks ... "

2 F. O. 371/2781/244263. From Viceroy to the Sirdar, dated 23rd November, 1916.

3 F. O. 371/3048/27741. Sir F. Wingate (Cairo), dated February 3rd, 1917.

The refusal of the Arab prisoners in the early years of the war to join the Sharif's army, and later their sudden willingness to fight with him may be attributed to:

1. The unamiable attitude of the British authorities in Iraq towards the Iraqi officers, such as Nuri Sa'id and Maulud Mukhlis, who approached them in the hope of securing their co-operation.

2. In the war prisons, in India, Arab prisoners did not receive the sort of treatment that they had expected from the British. Iraqi officers who were prisoners in India and then joined the Sharif's army made this quite clear:

> "It is needless for us to say that we always entertained friendly ideas towards the English, and believed that they also liked the Arabs .... when we were defeated and captured, we expected to be kindly treated by our captors. We are sorry, however, to say that our expectations were not realized and we were insulted and humiliated in every way."[1]

3. For those who calculated matters *in terms of* their personal security, fighting against the Turks, during the early years of the war, involved many risks. In case of capture by the Turks they would be treated as traitors rather than as prisoners of war; the Turkish authorities might even inflict cruel punishment on their relatives. But if they remained passive until the end of the war, they would either, in the case of a British victory, return to an Arab state as the Sharifian propaganda assumed, or, in case of Turkish victory, return to their homes

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1 F.O. 371/2775/187454, Secret. "A statement of my visit to Jeddah and Yonbo. From 30th July to 17th August 1916." From Ibrahim Dimitri to R. Wingate. Dimitri was at the time the Arab Secretary for Sir R. Wingate.

as victors. Thus in either case they would be safe. But the news of the Sharifian victories and then the fall of Baghdad created a very different attitude and many hurried to join the winning side.

4. The fall of Baghdad had a tremendous influence on the Arab prisoners. In the beginning it came as a surprise. It also demonstrated the supremacy of the British forces. Officers in charge of the Arab prisoners in Sumerpur Camp, India, reported the reaction of the prisoners to the news of the fall of Baghdad. One wrote:

> "The fall of Baghdad has aroused in the Prisoners of war, both combatant and non-combatant, an interest in the Revolt of the Sherif of Mecca. A question which I am often asked is 'Are the Allies going to annex Mesopotamia and Syria to the Hedjaz?' Some prisoners go so far as to state that the Allies have promised the Moslem World such annexation to the Dominion of the Sherif. Their reason for such supposition, they say, is that some of the Holy Moslem Shrines are located in Mesopotamia. The majority of the Civilian ex-officials are now happy .... "[1]

In another report dated 8th April, 1917 by the same source, about the effect of the fall of Baghdad on the Arab prisoners in India, said:

> "Mohamedan Arabs, are of course, depressed, but they are in hopes that the British may hand over the conquered territory to the Sherif, ... In this hope, too, a number of Mohamedan Arabs are offering, their services to the Sherif. Some of those who actually had the chance of joining the Sherif and refused are now anxious to be given a second chance. I asked some of them why they had not taken advantage of the opportunity when given to them and they replied that they had not realized that it had meant the independence of Arabia .... "[2]

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1 Cab. 21/60. Secret. From Personal Assistant, Prisoner-of-war Camp, Sumerpur, to Lieutenant-Colonel H. M. Halliday, Commandant, Prisoners-of-war Camp, Sumerpur. Dated Sumerpur, 5th April, 1917.
2 F. O. 371/3050/162431. Signed, H. M. Halliday.

5. The temptation of freedom and a good salary motivated others, who were not interested in Pan-Arabism. This partly explains the willingness of a number of Jews and Kurds to join the Hijaz army.

In Iraq the number of Arab officers and soldiers who joined the British forces after the fall of Baghdad increased rapidly, most of them volunteering to join the Sharifian army. On 1st August 1917, the Viceroy informed the British Foreign Office, that the Commander of the Mesopotamian Campaign had despatched eighteen officers and 116 rank and file volunteers to India, and another 54 officers and 81 men were ready to be despatched to India in order to be sent on to Hijaz.[1]

The majority of the officers in the Sharifian army were Iraqi, the next largest group consisting of Syrians. There were nearly a hundred Iraqi officers, most of whom were members of the 'Ahd society. The Sharif of Mecca needed them, but they never gained his confidence. Sharif al-Faruqi, the Sharif of Mecca's representative in Cairo during the early years of the Hijaz revolt, likewise failed to gain the Sharif's confidence.[2] Later the Sharif of Mecca had quarrels with a number of them, which at one time led to the return to Egypt of such as 'Ali Jawdat and Hamid Shalqi, who identified themselves with 'Aziz 'Ali's political views, namely that of not breaking their bridges with the Turks.[3] In an interview with Sharif Husayn at Jeddah on July 17th, 1918, the British representative

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1 F.O. 371/3043/152533.
2 F.O. 882, Arab Bureau Papers, Vol. 6, Doc. No. HRG/16/79, Secret, dated 13th December 1916. Extract from Mr. Storr's Diary visit to Sharif.
3 Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, vol. 2, pp. 147-148. See also an interview with Tahsin 'Ali.

Colonel Wilson reported

> "I talked to the King about Baghdadi officers and he said he distrusted them all. And in course of conversation said that 'Aziz al-Masri a few days after his arrival in Mecca suggested to the King that it would be as well not to lose complete touch with Turkey and Germany."[1]

Nevertheless, their presence in the Sharifian army was a necessity since there was no one else to replace them. Moreover, Sharif Faysal, unlike his father was able to develop a cordial relation with the Iraqi officers, especially Ja'far al-'Askari and Nuri Sa'id, who were among the leading Iraqi officers.

For most Iraqi officers the Ḥijaz revolt offered an opportunity to pursue their political objective, namely Arab independence, but for some officers it was simply an adventure worth going along with as long as they benefited personally. Most of the Iraqi officers had been of low rank during their service in the Turkish army, but in the Sharifian army they enjoyed high rank and good salaries, as the following table shows:[2]

Rank in the Turkish Army	Name	Present Rank (1918)
Mulazim Thani	Jamil al-Rawi	Kaymaqam
" "	Daud Sabri	Bimbashi
" "	Mustafa Sa'id	Yusbashi
" "	'Abd al-Latif Nuri	Kaymaqam
" "	Jamal 'Ali	Bimbashi
" "	Rashid Khamas	"
" "	Muḥammad Sa'id	Kaymaqam

A British officer in Ḥijaz, Miralai W. A. Davenport, in a secret report to Colonel Wilson, the British representative in Hijaz, wrote about the Iraqi officers in very adverse terms accusing them of being pro-Turk

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1 F.O. 371/3381/146256.
2 F.O. 686/52/file 12/16, dated 1918.

and said "they would do any enormity for money". He gave a list of names; among which was that of 'Abd al-Latif Bey Nuri, second in command of Sharif 'Abdulla's regular army, of whom the British officer said

> "He has chiefly employed his time in amassing wealth. He used to bank nearly £100 with me monthly in the name of his uncle Abdul Kader Pasha al Khidry, Baghdad, at the same time I learned that he was banking about the same allotments with the French ... "[1]

The relation of the Iraqi officers with their Syrian colleagues was one of mistrust. The Syrians, who were in the minority, accused the Iraqis of being pro-Turk and interested in promoting their own welfare only.[2] No doubt the unhealthy relations which prevailed between the Iraqi and Syrian officers during the Hijaz revolt was a major factor in the split of the 'Ahd society, in early 1918, into an Iraqi and a Syrian 'Ahd.

The Tribal Reaction to the British Invasion

The tribal element was a major factor in the war strategy both of the Turks and, to a lesser extent, of the British; but the actual attitude of the tribes during the war was a disappointment to the Turks as well as to the British. A pamphlet, The Turco-British Campaign In Mesopotamia and Our Mistakes, written by Turkish Staff Bimbashi Muhammad Amin and published by the Turkish General Staff records that:

> "Turkish Army Headquarters had .... relied on local gendarmerie and locally raised volunteers and levies to maintain internal order in Mesopotamia, and to guard against foreign aggression .... It was a long time before Turkish Army Headquarters gave up their hopes of

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1 F.O. 686/52/year 1918/file 12/16, secret, despatch from Miralai W. A. Davenport, to Colonel Wilson, dated 16-6-1918.
2 F.O. 686/52/year 1918/file 12/16.

> extensive support from local levies and realised that the tribesmen of Lower Mesopotamia merely looked upon the war as a means of personal profit and were always ready to back the winning side."[1]

The British officers and officials responsible for the campaign were under a totally different impression, namely that the Arab tribesmen, once war was declared, would lend the British their support or at least remain neutral. Among the reasons for this expectation were: the encouraging attitude of the Shaykhs of Kuwait and Muḥammara, who enjoyed a wide influence in the area; the fact that before the war several approaches had been made to the British by Shaykhs on the Tigris appealing for support against the Turkish authorities; the continuous struggle between the warlike tribes of lower Iraq and the Turkish authorities which demonstrated that there was no love lost between them, especially in those areas where the majority of the tribes were Shi'i while the authorities were Sunni.

Sir P. Cox, Chief Political Officer in a private telegram to the Viceroy of India sent on 23 November, 1914, argued that these factors encouraged an early advance on Baghdad:

> Arab element in Baghdad is already friendly and notables here volunteer opinion that we should be received in Baghdad with the same cordiality as we have been here and that the Turkish troops would offer little if any opposition. There remain the tribes between here and Baghdad. From among this element the well-known Muntafik Shaikh, Ajaimi, who ostensibly

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1 F. J. Moberly, The Campaign In Mesopotamia, 1914-1918, London, 1928, Vol. 1, p. 352, Appendix VI. See also al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. I, pp. 100-101. Assumed that the Germans were responsible for leading the Turks to rely on the tribes.

> co-operating with the Turkish troops, has just sent in an emissary to convey his submission and intimate his wish to come in and hand over four thousand rifles received or seized by him from the Turks and it is hoped that the neutrality if not the active co-operation of the tribes can be secured by Judicious diplomacy."[1]

The Chief of the General Staff, India, in commenting on Cox's proposal also emphasised the necessity for Arab co-operation in any advance on Baghdad.[2] General Barrow, the Military Secretary at the India Office, in a minute dated 27 November, 1914, also made it clear that Arab co-operation was needed.[3] Lastly, F. J. Moberly, editor of the official history of the war, wrote

> "The British force in Mesopotamia being only of the strength of one division, the Arabs were as important a factor in 1914 as they had been in 1857, when Sir James Outram had taken a British expedition up the Shatt al Arab to operate against the Persians in Mohammerah."[4]

It was, however, only a matter of a few months before the British command realised that no substantial help could be expected from the Arab tribes and only additional British forces would lead to a successful march on Baghdad.

During the British advance from Basra to Qurna the surrounding tribes remained neutral. The leading Shaykhs of Qurna promptly announced their adherence to the new rulers as soon as Qurna was occupied. But soon the attitude of the tribes became increasingly hostile and to the surprise of the British command the tribes of Hawayza and Muḥammara suddenly turned

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1 Moberly, The Campaign In Mesopotamia, Vol. I, pp. 133-134. General Barrett approved of Cox's proposal in the belief that the Arab would co-operate.
2 Ibid., p. 135.
3 Ibid., pp. 136-137.
4 Ibid., p. 139.

against the British and their ally Shaykh Khaz'al. The British Chief Political Officer wrote:

> ... The appeals which had left the tribes of Iraq cold fell amongst the marshes of Hawizeh on more favourable soil and the Beni Turuf and their neighbours rose in support of the Turks. Their action was something of a surprise even to the most experienced native observers .... [1]

Tribes which normally accepted Shaykh Khaz'al's leadership, such as the Bawi tribe, refused to answer his calls for assistance and by late in February, 1915, Khaz'al was actually deserted by his subordinate tribes, apart from the Muhaysan, his own tribe. Instead of being a source of support for the British, he began to press the British command for aid, without which, as he confessed, most of his tribe would turn against him and join the Turks.[2] The hostility of the tribes frustrated British hopes of support from the Arab tribes; and for that reason, as well as others, the British commander of the Expeditionary Force, General Barratt in February 1915 requested reinforcements.[3]

The Turks did not realise that they too had misjudged the tribes until later, and not without paying a higher price. After many years of deliberate destruction of tribal institutions the Turkish government turned to the tribes for support against the invading British armies. In a sudden change of attitude Turkish officials tried to gain the lost confidence of the Arab tribesmen. Medals and funds were awarded to some

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1 F.O. 371/3061/195343. "A sketch of the political history of Persia, Iraq and Arabia, with special reference to the present Campaign." Office of the Chief Political Officer, I.E.F. "D". Printed in Calcutta, 1917. (For official use only.)
2 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, pp. 173, 187.
3 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 177.

influential Shaykhs, such as Falih and 'Abd al-Karim sons of Sayhud al-Munshid and Zubun al-Faysal of the Bani Lam confederation of tribes and Shaykh Ghadhban al-Khalaf of the 'Isa tribe, who was given a decoration.[1] Shaykhs in trouble with the authorities were pardoned or permitted an easy settlement of debts in the hope of securing their loyalty. For instance, some Shaykhs from the Fatla tribe on the Middle Euphrates were released from prison, and Shaykh Khayun al-'Ubayd of the 'Ubda tribe and Shaykh al-Fadhil of Khafaja, who were both at the time of the declaration of war hunted by the authorities, were allowed to return to their villages after patching up an agreement with the authorities. Cash was a customary Turkish means of persuasion, and money was offered by the Turks to the Shaykhs for each recruit they provided.[2] Finally, appeals were frequently made to the tribesmen's religious sentiments, not without success.

Initially the Arab tribesmen responded favourably to the call for a Jihad. A separate force of tribesmen was formed under tribal leadership, which became known as the Mujahdin, which was formed mainly from the Muntafik tribes and the Middle Euphrates tribes. The Mujahdin were basically a Shi'i force, and 'Ulama and Sayids as well as Shaykhs led it, among them Sayid Hadi Muqutar and the religious divine Muhammad al-Habubi. The Mujahdin was intended to overcome the strong resistance of the tribesmen towards recruitment for the army, but it was influenced by the lack of discipline and organization among the tribes.

At this point it may be helpful to pause for a moment to

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1 Al-'Azzawi, History of Iraq, Vol. VIII, pp. 277-278.
2 Musil, The Middle Euphrates, p. 127. An amount of 10 to 12 T£ was given to the Shaykh of each recruit.

consider what kind of a warrior the tribesman was. War rather than peace had traditionally been regarded as the natural state of the tribes. But war was a limited concept, since war was primarily intended as a means of enhancing one's wealth, and an act of war was usually called a Ghazu, or raid, since it implied the gaining of loot and was an offensive rather than defensive act. The strategy of Ghazu was basically one of surprise and extreme mobility: a small tribal force would launch a sudden raid and loot what it could get hold of and quickly melt away into the vast desert. A tribesman would take pride in what he had gained in a Ghazu, since a Ghazu was not considered as robbery, although other forms of robbery were looked down at.

The Ghazu needed the minimum of discipline and organization, and the tribes which the Turks called upon to fight the British, retained the same old Ghazu strategy. The tribal force was quickly built up and during the first five months of the war the tribes' activities against the British rapidly developed until they reached a peak during the Sh'ayba battle, 12-14 April, 1915. The Arab tribesmen were variously estimated by the British as 11,000 strong and by the Turks as 18,000 strong, the discrepancy probably being caused by the inclusion of Kurd tribesmen in the Turkish total.[1] The Turkish regular troops numbered about 7,000, so that on paper the Arabs were much stronger than the Turks. There was, however, a great limitation to their effectiveness. The tribesmen were expected to fight in terms of conventional military tactics, which were completely strange to

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1 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, pp. 217-218.

them. This partly explains the lack of effectiveness, reported by British sources, of attacks led by Turkish troops, and the relative success of Arab snipers who were a great nuisance to the British forces.[1] During the first two days of the battle of Sh'ayba a large number of casualities was sustained by the tribesmen. Then, on the third day, when defeat seemed certain they "turned on their erstwhile allies and harassed their retreat in the most merciless manner."[2] The charge was a great surprise for the Turks, and assisted their defeat by the British. The Turks were disgusted but so were the tribesmen, who departed to their homes embittered with the Turks, and accusing them of maltreatment.

The sudden change of heart of the tribal force, which, after severe fighting and losing 2,000 killed and wounded,[3] suddenly deserted its allies and left them to face defeat alone is difficult to explain except in terms of the Ghazu. The tribesmen found themselves fighting on an unequal basis a kind of war which was strange to them, when they could use the methods of the Ghazu as in sniping they excelled. Lack of discipline and organisation, along with the psychology of the Ghazu explain their retreat while the Turkish troops were trying to hold on, since for a tribesman once defeat had become certain, retreat was his last effective weapon, especially when he had the advantage of extreme mobility.[4] The tribesmen did not see any contradiction in their behaviour or any treason. Thus when the Turkish officers showed their disgust at the tribesmen's

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1 Moberly, The Campaign In Mesopotamia, Vol. I, p. 202.
2 Ibid., p. 216.
3 Ibid., pp. 217-218.
4 Ibid., p. 185. The Arab tribesmen "when mounted they could always outpace our cavalry and even when dismounted their fleetness of foot more than enable them to hold their own with our horses."

behaviour, the tribesmen began to accuse the Turks of maltreatment.[1]

The Sh'ayba battle shattered all hopes for a massive and organised Jihad campaign. Nevertheless Arab tribes on the Euphrates and the Tigris responded and co-operated with the Turks even after the Sh'ayba but on a much smaller scale. They were used by the Turks to harass the British advance in a manner more suitable to the tribesmen's abilities. Ghadhban al-Bunaya , a Bani Lam shaykh, was the spearhead of tribal raids on the British forces west of the Tigris and became a threat to the oil pipe lines in Persia after instigating the Hawiza and Muhammara tribes against the British and their overlord Shaykh Khaz'al. During the first British advance on Baghdad in late 1915, the tribesmen were a constant menace to the British lines of communication. The Turks seemed to have learned their lesson at Sh'ayba, because during the Battle of Ctesiphon in November, 1915, the tribesmen were given a minor role and only when signs of British retreat were detected, were the Arab tribal auxiliaries called upon to harass the retiring British forces. Even then, however, the tribesmen's desire for loot delayed their pursuit.[2]

As the war progressed the British forces scored successive victories which brought a number of hostile tribes under their control. The attitude of these tribes in most cases changed abruptly in favour of the British. They professed their adherence to the new authority, but that was to a great extent in accordance with their principle of regarding

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1 F. M. Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt of 1920, Baghdad, 1952, p. 40.

2 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. II, pp. 109-110.

life as a struggle. When British forces were forced to retreat the same tribes turned against them , probably less from hatred of the British than from fear of Turkish revenge.

The preservation and the enhancement of the tribal interest was the dominant factor in tribal thinking. The tribesman as an individual could not act independently in matters concerning the whole tribe and decision-making was vested in a traditional machinery consisted of the shaykhly family and the elders of the tribe and heads of Hamulas, who could provide the initiative for a general action. The extent to which a decision was taken which reflected the interests of the tribe as a whole rather than those of the shaykhs depended on the degree of tribal solidarity. Religion as well as the parochial interests of the tribe affected the decision-making process. The majority of the tribes in lower Iraq were Shi'i or recently converts to Shi'ism. Najaf and Karbala were the centres of radiation from whence the Mujtahids despatched preachers and special representatives to the tribal areas to spread the Shi'i faith and act as spokesmen of the Mujtahids. The influence of the Shi'i holy places reflected the geographical proximity of the tribal area: the nearer the holy places the greater the Shi'i influence, the weaker the government authority, and the stronger the influence of the Mujtahids. This factor partly explains the wide influence enjoyed by the Mujtahids in the Middle Euphrates area. Shi'ism appealed to the tribes, many of which had been Sunnis when they first settled, but had been converted. Since the Ottoman administration adhered to the Sunni faith Sunnism was identified with alien oppression, whereas the Sh'i faith stood for local patriotism.

The hostility of the Shi'i holy places towards the Ottoman authorities, had a special appeal because the Shi'is considered government taxes unlawful because the government itself was looked at as usurper of Shi'i rights. True Shi'is were expected to pay the Zakat and other religious dues to their Mujtahids, representatives of the faith rather than of the government.

The Turkish authorities realised the importance of the Shi'i Mujtahids in raising a Jihad among the Shi'i tribes. Many of the Mujtahids at first responded favourably, but for reasons discussed elsewhere, their influence was curtailed by subsequent events. Some Mujtahids were ambiguous, others gave a very limited interpretation to the call for Jihad, holding it to be effective only when the Shi'i centres were attacked. But what really damaged the effectiveness of the call for Jihad was the series of outbursts in Najaf, Karbala and Hilla against the Turkish authorities in 1915-1916. The merciless crushing of the rebellion in Hilla by Turkish troops led certain Shi'i 'Ulama such as the Hadi al-Qaswini to preach Jihad against the Turks rather than the British, who had actually encouraged the Shi'i outbreaks.

The behaviour of each tribe and their shaykhs is difficult to follow in detail. However, the British war records throw much light about the attitude of the tribes in their relations with the British. The Arabic literature is far from satisfying, being either vague and general, or prejudiced.

The following is a survey of the attitude of important shaykhs and their tribes during the war in Iraq. Along the Shatt al-Arab between

Basra and Qurna, Shaykh Khaz'al was the most influential person, and he threw all his weight on to the side of the British, who had been his protectors before the war. While the Shatt al-Arab tribes remained neutral during the British advance other tribes under Shaykh Khaz'al's leadership in the Hawayza and Muhammara area turned unexpectedly against the British and their ally Shaykh Khaz'al. The fact that Khaz'al was doing in Muhammara what the Turkish administration had done in Shatt al-Arab - collecting and levying taxes - explains the rising to a great extent. In Qurna the local shaykhs accepted the British control without resistance. Shaykh Kabashi al-Sa'ad, the most prominent personality in the Qurna district, was installed as local ruler by the British, to act on their behalf in the town and district.

The Albu Muhammad confederation, which extended from the 'Azayr, north of Qurna, to 'Amara along both sides of the Tigris was subject to special stresses. Almost all their land was miri land, part of it having formerly been Saniya land, and in the Tigris area up to Kut al-'Amara, much government land was leased out in large estates called "Muqata" for a period varying from three years to twenty, the tenants usually being the shaykhs of the tribe occupying the land. These leases were a source of dissension among the shaykhs, especially where the land was granted at auction to the highest bidder, and where the land was leased to an outsider or to a rival shaykh from another tribe. Although the estate might change hands its cultivators, the tribesmen, usually remained on the land. Thus the shaykhs' influence depended upon their lease. Another source of dissension was that one person, or a very few persons, might inherit all

the land, leaving the majority of the Shaykhly family landless and embittered. Among the Albu Muhammad the most influential shaykhs were 'Araybi Pasha al-Minshid; Majid al-Khalifa; 'Abd al-Karim, Falih and Hatim, sons of Sayhud; and Zubun and 'Thman, sons of Yasir. 'Araybi Pasha was the most prominent shaykh when war was declared. He professed adherence to the Turks, but early in 1915 he came under Turkish suspicion because he was communicating with the British through their mutual friend, Shaykh Khaz'al of Muhammara. When in early June 1915, the town of 'Amara fell to the British 'Araybi and his nephew Majid al-Khalifa were the first to offer their submission to the British Chief Political Officer. Accordingly they were rewarded generously. 'Araybi, whose main muqata'a was on the Chahala canal on the left bank of the Tigris, had all his arrears to the government, amounting to about £T 50.000, cancelled, and his rent for the muqata'a was reduced by more than half.[1] Shaykh Falih Sayhud, 'Uthman ibn Yasir and Zubun ibn Yasir also offered the British their submission once the latter had obtained control of 'Amara. The Muqata'as of most of these Shaykhs were on the route of the British advance, and thirty miles of railway and road actually passed through the muqata'a of Falih Sayhud in the Qal'at Salih district. The British officers readily accepted their submission and agreed to give financial inducements to keep them on their side. Falih Sayhud's revenue payment was reduced from £T 9.000 to £T 1.600 plus £T 200 sheep Kodah. 'Uthman and Zubun al-Yasir, who farmed two muqata'as Nsif Shatt al-Gharbi and Nsif Shatt

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1 F.O. 371/3049/126993, Confidential, Personalities of Iraq by the Arab Bureau, Basra Branch.

al-Sharqi did not do quite so well. 'Uthman's rent was reduced from £T 14.000 to £T 7.600 plus £T 193 Koda tax, Zabun's rent was only slightly reduced from 756.490 piastres to 602.207 piastres (£T 6.000). But both these Shaykhs were installed by the British to act as temporary official representatives in their districts.[1]

In the 'Amara district and along the Majar al-Saghir canal the Shaykhs of the 'Azayrij tribe, Salman al-Minshid and Shawai al-Minshid sided with the British once their area was under British control. The fallahin of the 'Azayrij of Majar al-Saghir were drawn from other tribes, notably the Bani Lam, Bahadhil and Albu Darraj, and the muqata'a were not permanently under their control. For instance, before 1911 the Shaykh of the 'Isa section of the Muntafik, used to lease part of the 'Azayrij estates. Ziyara ibn Mahi, a cousin of Salman al-Minshid and once his partner, although since alienated from him by land disputes, was promised by the British officials a muqata'a "provided that he behaves well ... "[2]

Above the 'Azayrij, where the Bani Lam tribal confederation extended on the left bank of the Tigris from a point above 'Amara to south of Kut al-'Amara, near Shaykh Sa'ad Town, the land was also mostly miri or Saniya land. Here, however, the muqata'as were usually leased to Bani Lam Shaykhs because of the great influence of the Lam tribe. But the Lam

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1 F.O. 371/3406/102207. Administration Report of the Qal'at Salih for the year 1916-1917, by the A.P.O. M. Hiles. See also F.O. 371/2489/81178. Secret Telegram from General Nixon, Basra, 14th June 1915.
2 F.O. 371/3049/126993, Confidential, Personalities of Iraq, Arab Bureau, Basra Branch, the Azairij.

tribe suffered from the same difficulties as the Albu Muḥammad as a result of the land system. Shaykh Ghadhban al-Bunaya, the foremost Shaykh among the Beni Lam, joined the Turks against the British and his activities extended as far as Persia, but when 'Amara town fell to the British forces Falih al-Bunaya wrote to the British authorities offering his and his brother's submission to them. As a sign of their friendly intentions he also offered to hand over to the British two Turkish field guns which were in his possession. The British readily accepted, but Falih al-Bunaya changed his allegiance again as soon as the Turks regained the upper hand. This was not Falih al-Bunaya's first dealing with the British. In 1912, Falih al-Bunaya had contacted the British Consul at Basra seeking for help against the Turkish authorities who had imprisoned his brother Ghadhban: however the British failed to provide any material assistance. After the occupation of 'Amara the British, in the hope of detaching Falih from Ghadhban and of winning him over permanently, turned a blind eye to his arbitrary control of the Maghribiya muqata'a. Balasim al-Bunaya, another brother of Ghadhban, but who was hostile to him, tried to outbid Falih by persistent offers to help the British. Other shaykhs of the Beni Lam submitted to the British during the summer of 1915, but the intricate relationship between them, arising from land tenure, posed a difficult task for the British. 'Alwan ibn Fulayh, whose land was near Shaykh Sa'ad town, made it clear to the British that he offered his submission only on the condition that they would guarantee him security of tenure of his land in the event of a Turkish attack. A few days later, when the Turkish army advanced towards Shaykh Sa'ad, 'Alwan, seeing the

way things were going, prematurely threw in his lot with them. When the Turkish attack receded he paid the penalty of bad judgment, his muqata'a was handed over by the British to the pro-British shaykh Hasan al-Majid. By contrast, Shibib al-Mizban, who rendered special services to the British, was exempted from taxes as a reward.

The Shaykhs of a smaller tribe called the Sudan farmed part of a Muqata'a called the Bahatha situated on the Tigris. Amir ibn Faris with his four cousins, the brothers Mahud, Sayhud, Wadi and Zaydan ibn 'Ajil had once farmed the land but internal strife and jealousy led to the murder of Zaydan and the flight of Amir ibn Faris in 1914. With the occupation of 'Amara by the British, Amir ibn Faris returned to his lands, and succeeded with British help in gaining part of his old farm. The charge started a series of troubles which ended with the eviction of Mahud and Wadi by the British. As a result Mahud and Wadi joined the Turks, leaving the land in the hand of Sayhud who remained faithful to the British.

The Albu Darraj tribe, another small tribe, and an offshoot of the Darraj of the Bani Rabi'a, lived along the Dujayla canal and near the Kumayt district. Muhammad Hattab was the foremost Shaykh and the Darraj under his leadership fought the British alongside the Turks. The British successes in July 1915 persuaded him and other Darraj Shaykhs to submit to the British, but, later in the same month, when the Turkish forces launched a temporary counter attack, Hattab hurriedly joined them with the result that the British confiscated his Muqata'a and granted farming rights to pro-British elements in the tribe and installed a cousin of Hattab, Mutashar ibn Faysal, as the overlord of the Darraj. However, because Mutashar was a weak

man, Hattab was able to retain the loyalty of a large section of his tribe.

From Kut al-'Amara up river to Bughayla and south of Kut down the Gharaf, lay the territory of the Bani Rabi'a, of which the 'Amara, Mayah, Maqasis and the Sarraj were the main tribal sections. The 'Amara and Mayah were stronger than the Maqasis and the Sarraj, and the Shaykhly family came from the 'Amara. Muhammad Sayhud al-Habib, known as the Amir, was the paramount Shaykh of the Bani Rabi'a and his tribe, the 'Amara, inhabited the right bank of the Tigris below Bughayla. As in the case of the other tribes, once the British forces advanced through his district, he turned to them offering his co-operation; likewise the Shaykh of the Mayah, Muhammad al-Yasin, whose tribe was settled along the Gharaf, offered his submission once Kut al-'Amara was occupied by the British. Both men subsequently switched sides when the Turks advanced, but gave their support to the British once more, after the second advance on Baghdad. By contrast, Qassab ibn 'Attar, Shaykh of the Sarraj, on the east of the Gharaf, remained in opposition to the British, although his relative, Tayh ibn Zamzir, head of a younger branch of the Qassab family, supported the British.

Upstream on the Tigris, above the Rabi'a territory, the Zubayd confederation and the Shammar Tuqa were the main tribes in the region. The Shammar Tuqa were an offshoot of the Shammar of Najid, but they had developed a separated entity and by contrast to the rest of the Shammar tribes had become Shi'is. Their territory extended along the left bank of the Tigris from Imam Mahdi to Ctesiphon (Salman Pak) and some of the tribe had crossed the desert and settled in the Ruz district. The Shammar roamed the desert for pasturage. Many of them opposed the British advance

and when Baghdad fell to the British, sections of the Shammar, al-'Atba, Mujabla and Dlabja left the Tigris for Balad Ruz. The fact that they were of a nomadic character facilitated their move, but when the British occupation was extended northwards they were obliged by October, 1917 to yield to the British. Hummyid al-Sufuq, Tarfa al-Sabr and Su'ayid al-'Alwan were the paramount shaykhs of the Tuqa during the war. The first two, who lived on the Tigris, submitted to the British when they appeared in their district, but 'Alwan whose dira was in Ruz remained hostile and joined arms with Hamid al-Hasan, shaykh of Bani Tamim, in fighting the British, whose overwhelming military superiority led to their submission in September, 1917.

The Zubayd confederation, whose territory extended between the right bank of the Tigris (from Bughayla to opposite Salman Pak) and the left bank of the Euphrates, included a Hilla branch whose territory stretched from the Mahawil canal above Hilla to the Dhalamiya canal near Daghara. The majority of the Zubayd were nomads, roaming the Jazira desert between the two rivers of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Sheep and camel breeding was their main occupation, but a small segment of the Zubayd was settled along the river banks of both rivers. Several of the tribal sections of the confederation such as the Juhaysh, Mu'amra and Albu Sultan, were [illegible] virtually independent, and owed only a nominal allegiance to the paramount shaykhly family. 'Ajil al-Samarmad was the paramount chief of the Zubayd. His authority was most effective on the Tigris, where his tribal section lived, and he remained in opposition to the British even after the occupation of Baghdad and declined their terms

for submission until later years. 'Amran al-Zanbur, shaykh of the Bani 'Ajil section of the Zubayd also proved to be a staunch ally of the Turks, but his brother with whom he was at enmity supported the British. The shaykh of the Albu Sultan on the Euphrates, 'Adai al-Jaryan, was in favour of the British and established contact with them when they reached Ctesiphon and remained loyal to them subsequently.

North of Baghdad on the Tigris and its tributaries, sections of the Bani Tamim, 'Ubayd, and al-'Izza were the important tribes. In Balad Ruz district the Albu Hashim and the Albu Hasan of the Bani Tamim were hostile to each other. The Albu Hashim, Sunni in faith, were supported by the Turkish administration against the Albu Hasan, a Shi'i tribe, who were driven by the former from the right bank of the Tigris below Samara to the 'Adhem.[1] The shaykh of the Hashim, Husayn al-Thamir, was loyal to the Turks until his arrest by the British in July, 1917. Hamid al-Hasan, shaykh of the Bani Tamim in the Ruz area, constituted a constant threat to the British lines of communication and troops until several months after the occupation of Baghdad, when a strong punitive force with aircraft was able to crush his resistance in July 1917.[2]

Until the occupation of Baghdad in March, 1917 the British troops did not move along the Euphrates beyond Nasiriya, which was occupied on 25th July, 1915, except for a temporary advance along the Gharaf river and the despatch of a small river force upstream to Samawa in October, 1915. The reason why the British troops did not continue their advance along the

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1 Arab Tribes of the Baghdad Wilayat, July 1918. Arab Bureau, Baghdad. Calcutta, 1919.
2 J. E. Tennat, In the Clouds Above Baghdad, London, 1920, p. 180.

Euphrates was that the Tigris afforded better means of communication. Furthermore the Turkish forces after the Sh'ayba battle were concentrated on the Tigris. A British move on the Euphrates would have been irrelevant to the achievement of victory, especially after the occupation of Nasiriya and the outbreak of rebellions in the Shi'i holy centres.

The Muntafik confederation which occupied both sides of the Euphrates from Chabaysh to Darraj on the Euphrates bank and from Shatt al-Gharraf as far north as the town of Hai. The Muntafik was an aggregate of a large number of tribes, over which the Sa'dun family claimed overlordship, but the overlordship was a nominal one and in fact the tribes were independent. They were noted for their solidarity and warlike behaviour, the tribesmen were loyal to their shaykhs, and the tribes as a whole had long been a constant menace to the Turkish authorities, who failed to stamp their authority upon them. The Turks had tried to weaken them both by force and by indirect methods, such as the introduction of the Tapu system, which resulted merely in alienating the tribesmen from the Sa'dun family, holders of the Tapu deeds. The Shatra tribes along the Gharaf also suffered from the deterioration of their land because of negligence, emigration, and diminished incomes from their lands. The British were hopeful that such was the relationship between the Muntafik and the Turks that the Muntafik would welcome them. A note by the Arab Bureau in Cairo on 8 July, 1916 comments that, "These tribes fought the Turks so long and so consistently that one might have expected them to welcome us as friends."[1] But with a few exceptions, all the Muntafik

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1 F.O. 371/2771/144047, Secret, No. 8, Arab Bureau, Cairo, 8th July 1916.

tribes joined the Turks during the early stages of the war.[1] Sir Percy Cox's expectation that 'Ajimi Pasha, head of the Muntafik, would join the British against the Turks came to nothing, although 'Ajimi corresponded with Cox. In the British documents relating to the 'Ajimi correspondence one finds no more than an expression of the desire of 'Ajimi to meet Cox and to enter negotiations, followed by an exchange of messages and a refusal by Cox to commit himself to any specific agreement, although he made it clear that the British government was not hostile to the Arabs and that it aimed at freeing the Arabs from Turkish oppression. Cox was clearly impatient with 'Ajimi and ended the correspondence on a threatening note:

> Now the time is slipping away and it has become necessary for the British authorities to conclude that those of the sheikhs of the Basrah Vilayat who have not used their opportunities to come to a friendly understanding with the British Government have no wish for friendly relation with them, but desire to show hostility ...[2]

That ended 'Ajimi's relations with the British, who later made use of Ibn Sa'ud of Najid to effect a rapprochement between 'Ajimi and the British authorities. But in 1915 'Ajimi's reaction was a definite rebuff. In a letter 'Ajimi wrote to 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud on the 17th Rabi Awal (11th January, 1917) 'Ajimi in fact takes a very high tone:

> Oh my honoured brother it is known to me and is beyond doubt that my attitude is one which is necessary in order to earn the approval of the Most High God and the elevation of the

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1 Ibid. There were nearly 70 tribal sections on the Gharaf and of these only 6 were even nominally friendly to us.

2 F.O. 371/3048/47532. To 'Ajimi Bey al-Sa'dun, dated 30th January, 1915, signed P. Z. Cox, Chief Political Officer.

> name of the Arabs, by the discharge of loyalty: and what greater loyalty is there than this, that I should carry out faithfully what God ordered me in his unchangeable book in regard to Jehad against non-believers, the enemies of God and of our religion .... and according to my conviction and belief I am walking in the true path which pleases God and the Arabic race.[1]

However, the fall of Nasiriya at the south end of the Gharaf river on the 25th July, 1915 followed a few months later on the 28th September, 1915, by the fall of Kut al-'Amara at the northern end of the Gharaf river, brought the majority of the shaykhs into submission to the British. The British General Headquarters at al-Kutani telegraphed on the 19th November, 1915 to the Secretary to the Government of India, Delhi:

> Starting from the Southern end with the Nasiriya and Shattra tribes .... and finishing at the Northern end with the Rabiah at Kut Al Amarah, all the tribes of Shatt Al Hai are now pro-British as a result of the victory on the 28th September.[2]

But a few weeks later the news of the British retreat from Ctesiphon had an instant effect on the Muntafik tribes. A British force under the command of General Gorringe was attacked on the 14th January, 1916, while advancing towards Shattrat al-Muntafik by an Arab force, estimated by the British to consist of 3,000 Arab tribesmen, which, in a sudden attack, forced the British force to retreat to Butayniya, 12 miles to the north of Nasiriya.[3] Subsequently, in February, 1916, when the remainder of the

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1 F.O. 371/3048/47532. From 'Ajimi al-Mansur to 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud, dated 17th Rabi Awal (11th January 1917).
See also F.O. 371/4152/file 144. "Short History of Shatrah tribes during last half century by Captain B. S. Thomas, 1919." All the Sa'dun shaykhs remained loyal to the Turks through the whole of the war except 'Abd al-Falih al-Sa'dun who wavered.

2 F.O. 371/2770/7818.

3 Moberly, The Campaign In Mesopotamia, Vol. II, pp. 210-211.

British force at Butayniya was withdrawn to Nasiriya, it was attacked by further tribes, the Azayrij and Khafaja, who had before professed adherence to the British.[1] In a confidential military report dated Basra 22nd January, 1916 from the British General Headquarters, to the India Office, London, the position was summarised as "upstream of us, hostile; downstream, friendly."[2]

The following is a rough survey of the attitude of a number of Muntafik and other Euphrates shaykhs. In Chabaysh, the habitat of the Bani Asad, Shaykh Salim al-Khayun was the paramount shaykh, but because of his hostility to the British he was replaced by his brother Majid who proved to be loyal to them. Khayun al-'Ubayd of the 'Ubuda tribe, living near Shattrat al-Muntafik, was among the outstanding shaykhs of the Muntafik. Before the war he was hostile to the Turkish authorities, but the latter felt the need for his support, and succeeded in appeasing him. He fought the British until the fall of Nasiriya in July, 1915, when the Turks appointed him as Qaymmaqam to act on their behalf in the Shattra area which they evacuated. When news of the British advance on Baghdad reached him, he entered into negotiations with the British officials at Nasiriya, but his apparently cordial attitude to the British changed to one of hostility when the British began their retreat from Ctesiphon, and he was able with the help of other tribes to drive the British troops out of Gharaf. After the occupation of Baghdad he with other Muntafik shaykhs

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1 F.O. 371/2770/111917. General Headquarters I.E.F. "D". Dated 28th April 1916.
2 F.O. 371/2770/34913.

were outlawed. Shaykhs of the Hacham, Qasid al-Nahi and Farhud Ibn 'Abdulla Findi, joined the Turks in Sh'ayba but when their tribal dera came under British control both of them abandoned their hostility to the British and remained loyal throughout the war. Farhud al-Mughashghash, shaykh of the Bani Khayqan, extending from the Hor al-Hamar and further north on the Euphrates, was imprisoned by the Turks in March 1915 on suspicion of being in touch with the British, and when the British troops advanced across his land he welcomed them. For his services he was compensated by the British for all his losses caused by the war.[1] Shaykh 'Ali al-Fadhil of the Khafaja tribe above Nasiriya was in alliance with Khayun al-'Ubayd of the 'Ubuda tribe. He fought the British before their occupation of Nasiriya and, like Khayun, maintained friendly relations with them until the British defeat at Ctesiphon, when in collaboration with the 'Ubuda tribe, he drove the British troops out of Gharaf. He was outlawed after the occupation of Baghdad.

The Beduin tribes east of the Euphrates and as far south as Zubayr remained aloof, although sometimes helpful to the British. The shaykh of Zubayr, Ibrahim Ibn 'Abdulla al-Rashid, was installed by the British to replace Muhammad al-Mishri, who was in alliance with 'Ajimi of Muntafik. Shaykh Ibrahim was loyal to the British and his reward was a valuable estate on the left bank of the Shatt al-Arab. The Dhafir tribe refused to join the Turks, ostensibly because of their hatred of the Muntafik shaykhs, but this was to a great extent a matter of form, because

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1 F.O. 371/3049/126993.

in fact their aloofness was due to pressure from the shaykh of Kuwait.

Although only a small British river force reached Samawa in 1916, further upstream on the Euphrates, certain shaykhs availed themselves of the opportunity either to gain influence or to settle old grievances against the Turks or other tribes. In Samawa town, Sayid Taffar Ibn Ja'far, leader of the east end of the town, seized the opportunity to depose the remaining Turkish authority which a year before the war had been striving to imprison him. The British appointed him to control the town on their behalf, and subsidised him with an allowance.[1] The Arab tribesmen of the Middle Euphrates above Samawa became virtually independent after the outburst in the Shi'i holy centres. Shaykhs of the once strong Khaza'il confederation established contacts with the British as early as January 1916 when Muhammad 'Abtan, one of the Khaza'il shaykhs, wrote to the British offering his co-operation. Salman al-Dhahir, another leading shaykh, from Khaza'il, wrote on June 23, 1916, and also later in October, 1916 offering his co-operation if the British forces should advance further north on the Euphrates.[2] The shaykhs of Khaza'il were motivated by enmity towards the Turkish authorities who had in fact persecuted their people for

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1 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qasab, From My Memoirs, pp. 122-130. The author was, at the time of the British advance, the Qaymmaqam of Samawa.
See also, Ministry of Interior, Iraq, copy of telegram No. 2800N, dated 23rd November, 1917 from Political Officer. An allowance used to be given to Taffar as well as some other shaykhs of Hachim tribes in Samawa area.

2 Cab. 17/vol. 192.
See also, F.O. 371/3049/126993, Arab Bulletin No. 38, Secret, dated 5.6.1916.

decades, turning part of their land into Saniya and encouraging the Fatla tribe against them. The majority of the Middle Euphrates tribes didn't have any contact with the British until the occupation of Baghdad in March, 1917, particularly those who had previously fought in the Sh'ayba. Shaykhs like Sayid Hadi Muqutar of Shanafiya and Sayid Muhsin abu Tabikh remained hostile until the occupation of Baghdad.

Chapter 5

British Plans for the Future of Iraq

Part 1

Before the First World War military responsibility for Iraq (i.e. as regards the collection of information and preparation of plans) was shared between the British and the Indian Governments. Basra at the head of the Persian Gulf was allocated to the Indian Government, while the rest of Iraq was left to the British Government.[1] When the Allied Powers declared war on Germany the British Government, and more especially the Indian authorities, were keen to avoid a rupture with Turkey. The Indian Government was most concerned about the adverse effect a war against Constantinople, the seat of the Muslim Sultan-Caliph, would have on the millions of Muslims under British rule in India and Egypt. On August 22nd, 1914, the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, instructed the British Ambassador in Constantinople to offer the Turkish Government the following bargain:

> The three Allied Powers will jointly give a guarantee in writing that they will respect the independence and integrity of Turkey, and will engage that no conditions in the terms of peace at the end of this war shall prejudice this independence and integrity. They will also secure for Turkey economic advantages ....
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> In return, Turkey must repatriate at once the German officers and crews of all ratings of the Goben and Breslau, and give a written assurance that she will observe all the obligations of neutrality during the present war.[2]

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1 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. 1, pp. 69-70.
2 E. Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916, London, 1925, Vol. II, pp. 165-168.

But Turkey had already been committed to take the German side, by signing on 4th August, 1914 a secret treaty of alliance with Germany.[1]

The Indian Government had envisaged for many years the possibility of the occupation of Basra, which was the only gateway to the Persian Gulf not directly or indirectly under British control. In 1911, General Douglas Haig, then Chief of Staff in India, dealt in a memorandum with the possibility of military action in southern Iraq. The same theme recurred in January 1912, and later in January 1914, when Anglo-Turkish relations were strained.[2] In August 1914 the Indian authorities received alarming reports about the Turkish attitude towards the British in Iraq and about the increasing danger to British oil installations at Abadan. Consequently, after referring to the menacing conditions in Iraq, the Indian Viceroy wrote on 21st August, 1914 to the India Office:

> Regarding the situation as requiring precautionary measures, we were preparing to send H.M.S. "Odin" or "Lawrence" with 100 sepoys from Bushire garrison to protect oil settlement. Local officers, however, consider that, having regard to acute anti-British attitude of Turks in Shat-il-Arab, despatch of gunboat would involve some risk, and despatch of sepoys great risk of precipitating collision with Turks ....
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> There is no doubt force in suggestion that location of British sepoys at Abadan may irritate Turks and will be a matter of some inconvenience to Sheikh of Mohammerah, and in any case we would be inclined to send only as many men as "Odin" can accommodate and let them remain on board; but the comparative importance of possible destruction of numerous oil reservoirs and the alternative risk of precipitating collision with Turks by above measures for their preservation is a question for consideration by His Majesty's Government.
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> Our own feeling is that it is the highest importance that hostile action should in the event of war be first taken by

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1 H. Temperly, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, London, 1924, Vol. VI, p. 2.

2 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, pp. 73-74.

> Turkey even if some loss or military disadvantages be thereby entailed ...[1]

The India Office concurred in the Viceroy's desire to avoid stirring up trouble. However the Admiralty reacted differently, and recommended the preparation of an expeditionary force at Karachi to be ready for despatch to the head of the Persian Gulf.[2] The Admiralty reaction arose from the fact that the British Navy was by 1914 predominantly dependent on oil,[3] and that the British Government had acquired just before the war, a controlling share in the Anglo-Persian Company.

A month later, when war with Turkey seemed to British officials to be imminent the idea that it was necessary to make a British demonstration of force at the head of the Persian Gulf gained ascendency. The chief arguments for a show of force were: first, the fear that Turkey at the head of the Persian Gulf, backed by Germany, would launch an effective holy war (Jihad) which, with Arab support, might lead to rebellions in Persia, Afghanistan and India;[4] secondly, British inactivity in the Persian Gulf would enable Turkey to win the support of the Arab chiefs in that area and in Arabia. On this point a senior official in the Foreign Office wrote on September 26, 1914:

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1 F. O. 371/2136/42068.
2 F. O. 371/2136/43049, Secret.
3 W. Churchill, The World Crisis 1911-1918, London, 1964, abridged edition, pp. 102-103.
4 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, pp. 80, 86-87, Sir Arthur Hirtzel, Political Secretary at the India Office, Memorandum dated 2nd September, 1914. See also Memorandum by Sir Edmund Barrow, Military Secretary at the India Office, dated 26 Sept. 1914.

> General Sir E. Barrow ... and Admiral Slade called this morning to explain that the Indian authorities were seriously alarmed at the effect made on the Arabs by our absolute inactivity in the face of Turkish provocation and warlike preparation. Captain Shakespear had been consulted and had expressed the opinion that if we allowed the Turkish government to win over the Arabs, our position not only in Arabia, but in the Persian Gulf, would be gravely menaced. He strongly urged that some steps should be taken at once to show Bin Saud and the Arabs that we were ready to meet any Turkish movement against us. If we acted promptly, he felt sure the Arabs would support us against the Turks, and with Arab support we should be absolutely safe in Egypt against any Turkish attack.
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> The India Office have accordingly communicated with Lord Crewe who is with the Prime Minister in Ireland, and with Lord Kitchener, and they have agreed to lay before the cabinet at once a proposal to divert part of the Power-division now awaiting embarkation at Bombay, to the head of the Persian Gulf. The plan is to land a mixed brigade near Mohammerah (not in Turkish territory), ostensibly for the protection of the Admiralty oil-pipe-line which is threatened by the hostile attitude of Turkey ...[1]

Following this line of argument, the protection of the oil installations at 'Abadan, served merely as a pretext for action.

There was also some opposition to a major campaign in Iraq. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, commented on September 1st, 1914 on a naval memorandum asking for troops to protect the oil installations that

> "There is little likelihood of troops being available for this purpose. Indian forces must be used at the decisive point. We shall have to buy our oil from elsewhere. The Turks also can be dealt with better at the centre."[2]

Furthermore the force, later despatched to the head of the Persian Gulf,

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1 F.O. 371/2139/53671. A minute by A. C. of the Foreign Office.
2 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, p. 82.

was inadequate to protect the oil-pipe line which extended some 130 miles in Persian territory.[1]

On 2nd October, 1914, the British Cabinet agreed to ask the Indian Government to despatch a force to the head of the Gulf. The destination of the force was to be 'Abadan, but after Indian Government objections, Bahrain was chosen instead. The role of the expeditionary force was:

1. To protect the oil installations at 'Abadan.

2. To cover the landing of reinforcements, as necessity arose.

3. To show the Arab potentates in Kuwait, Muhammara and Bahrain on the Persian Gulf and Bin Sa'ud in Arabia, that Britain intended to support them against Turkey.[2]

On 23rd October, 1914 the British forces under the command of Brigadier-General W. S. Delamain arrived at Bahrain. The appearance of British troops in the Gulf rallied the Arab chiefs towards Britain and provided the British with the opportunity to strike first, because the Turkish

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1 W. Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, 1914-1918, London, 1926, Vol. II, pp. 23-24. Also see Cab./19/Vol. 2. Proceedings of Mesopotamia Commission. "Memorandum on the Mesopotamia Expedition from October, 1914, to June, 1915" by Marquis of Crewe, then Secretary of State for India Office. "I wrote privately to Lord Hardinge on 9th October, 1914, as follows: Of the various objects to be attained by sending a force up the Gulf I have always regarded the moral effect on the Arab Chiefs as the primary, and the protection of the oil stores as the secondary ... "

2 F.O. 371/2143/56422. Telegram from the Secretary of State of India Office to the Viceroy, dated 5th October, 1914.

authorities were not expecting a British invasion from Basra.[1] On 5th November, 1914 Britain formally declared war on Turkey, and on the next day the British forces successfully landed at Fao after slight Turkish resistance. Basra was occupied on 22nd November, 1914. The initial objectives of the British expeditionary force were finally achieved by the occupation of Qurna on 9th December, 1914, and the defeat of the Turks at the Battle of Shu'ayba in April 1915, save only for the need to protect the oil pipe-lines at 'Abadan. And the fact that the objectives had been achieved was recognised both by the Mesopotamia Commission and the Chief of the Imperial Staff, Sir William Robertson.[2] Neither the British Government nor the Indian Government had long-term plans for using the expeditionary force beyond Basra. Nevertheless the expeditionary force embarked on a series of moves which led to the occupation of the whole of Iraq.

Sir Percy Cox, Chief Political Officer with the I.E.F. "D", telegraphed on 23rd November, 1914, to the Viceroy of India:

> General Officer Commanding and I are studying the topographical details bearing on the question of advance to Bagdad in case that course be decided on.
>
> ... It would be convenient if we could learn the intentions of Government on this connection as soon as possible in order that through proposals may be submitted without delay .... After earnest consideration of the arguments for and against we find it difficult to see how we can well avoid taking over Bagdad. We can hardly allow Jamshedi to retain possession and make difficulties for us

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1 Summary of a pamphlet "The Turco-British Campaign in Mesopotamia and our Mistakes" by Staff Bimbashi Muhammad Amin. Cited in Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, p. 352.

2 Cd. 8610. "Mesopotamia Commission, 1917."
Also see W. Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, 1914-1918, Vol. II, p. 41.

> at Basrah; nor can we allow any other Power to take it; but once in occupation we must remain, for we could not possibly allow the Turks to return after accepting from Arabs co-operation afforded on the understanding that the Turkish regime had disappeared for good.[1]

Even before this Baghdad had been thought by certain officials to be the ultimate objective, but it was not regarded as an immediate goal. General E. Barrow, Military Secretary at the India Office, when he wrote his memorandum of 26th September, 1914, recommending the despatch of a force to the head of the Gulf, was thinking among other things of British interests in Baghdad as well as Basra.[2] And when the Viceroy wrote on 8th October, 1914, to the Marquess of Crewe, he included Baghdad as well as Basra as possible objectives for a military expedition.[3] However, before Cox's telegram the India Government and the India Office, which were responsible for the campaign, did not have any definite plans for the extension of military operations in Iraq, or a set policy for the future of the occupied area. Cox's telegram forced the appropriate British departments to formulate a policy, which would give direction to military planning. General E. G. Barrow wrote on 27th November, 1914 an appreciation of Cox's suggestion: he considered an advance on Baghdad premature.

> "Time is on our side. It would be unwise to decide on going to Baghdad till we can frame a policy for the future, and this we cannot do till we see clearer the general trend of events and the inward attitude of the Arabs. But whatever we do, let us not stand still. Let us move on to Kurna directly general Barrett gets his 3rd Brigade and

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1 F.O. 371/2143/76658.
2 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, p. 81.
3 Cd. 8610. "Mesopotamia Commission, 1917." Pp. 20-21.

is ready for the move."[1]

Apart from the military difficulties of an advance on Baghdad, which are beyond the scope of this work, attention was concentrated on the political implications of such an advance. The India Office, in its reply to the Viceroy of 27th November, 1914, commented that,

> We are not disposed to authorise an advance at Baghdad at present as there are grave international considerations involved, but as soon as General Barrett is ready to do so we sanction an advance to Qurna ...[2]

The Secretary of State for India later told the Viceroy that the grave international considerations were in fact that an occupation of Baghdad would "oblige consideration by Allies and by Arabs of ultimate settlement regarding Mesopotamia and other parts of the Turkish Empire. It will be a most complicated matter, and we are not at present able to do more than assert, as we have, our paramount claims and powers at the head of the Persian Gulf."[3] The refusal of the British Government to adopt a definite policy on the future of Mesopotamia and an advance on Baghdad, prompted the India Government, in conformity with Cox's further suggestions, on 27th November, 1914 to ask the British Government to permit Sir Percy Cox to make a public announcement that Basra would be under permanent British rule. The India Government argued that such a pronouncement would establish British supremacy in the Gulf beyond question; secure 'Abadan and its oil installations and pipe-lines; offer additional security to the friendly

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1 F.O. 371/2143/76658.
2 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, pp. 136-137.
3 Ibid.

shaykhs of Muhammara and Kuwait; deny the Baghdad railway access to the Gulf; make money ("It will pay, as Basrah and surrounding country are capable of enormous commercial development."); and because it would encourage the Arab population to accept British rule by diminishing their fear of subsequent Turkish reprisals.[1] The British Government in its reply on 9th December, 1914, reiterated its objections (given in answer) to the previous enquiry about an advance on Baghdad; the Secretary of State for India wrote:

> .... After careful examination here and consideration by Cabinet I am certain that it would be unwise now to announce permanent occupation. It would be regarded as definite breach of the undertaking between Allies that final settlement must await end of the war, ... Russia in particular would feel fairly entitled to a free hand both in Europe and Asia for parallel announcements.

The nature of the administration should be that of "military occupation ensuring civil order and care of revenue with as few organic changes as possible for the time being".[2] This remained the official attitude of the British Government until the occupation of Baghdad, when a modified policy was endorsed by the British Government. Between the two dates, December 1914, and March 1917, the British and Indian Government embarked on the one hand on a discussion about future policy in Iraq, and on the other hand on detailed negotiations with the Allies and the Arab leaders.

The India Office was among the first to try to formulate a

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1 F.O. 371/2144/85892. From Viceroy to India Office, Lord Crewe, dated 7th December, 1914.
2 F.O. 371/2144/85892. From Secretary of State to Viceroy, dated 9th December, 1914.
Also see Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, pp. 139-140.

policy. Sir Arthur Hirtzel, Political Secretary at the India Office, wrote a detailed memorandum dated 14th March, 1915 about the future of Mesopotamia. As was the case with his previous memorandum about the initiation of the campaign at the head of the Gulf, this document proved to be of great importance. Hirtzel's memorandum tried to establish two propositions, the first that with the exception of part of Kurdistan in the north-western part of the Mosul Wilaya, the three Wilayas of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra constituted a geographic and ethnographic unity. The second proposition was that the detaching of any part of the Ottoman Empire by any Power must besides political expediency have a "moral justification", which in the case of Mesopotamia should be the reclamation and development of the long-neglected land and resources:

> The Power which detaches those regions from the Ottoman Empire cannot stop at that. By its action it has made itself morally responsible to humanity and to civilisation for their reclamation and development; that is to say, it must either undertake the work itself or make it possible for others to do so.

Accordingly Hirtzel argued that the primary needs of the area in question were communications, irrigation and administrative reorganization. From his study of the road, railway and waterways communications he deduced the following points:

> (1) that whoever holds Bagdad commands British trade with Persia of an annual value of upwards of a million sterling; (2) that whoever controls the Shat-el-Arab must control the irrigation works north of it; (3) that the Power which commands the sea, and holds Basra and Alexandretta, has two independent and equally easy lines of approach towards the pass of Bitlis.

And in accordance with his principle of "moral justification", irrigation would be a major field of development, and similarly he wrote "the Power

that intends to develop the Basra vilayet must also be the Power that develops the vilayet of Bagdad, and must also be the Power that commands, at least politically, the upper reaches of the rivers to Mosul and Rakka."
In addition irrigation development would offer a good opportunity for the immigration of Indians to Iraq, partly because of the need of Iraq for labourers in case irrigation plans were carried out, but also for other reasons, Hirtzel argued:

> (1) that we should get from the Punjab and Sind colonists admirably suitable for the agricultural development which irrigation will make possible, (2) that we should be giving India a tangible reward for her services in the war, and by directly interesting her in the country remove some of the resentment which Indian Moslems may be expected to feel at the British share in the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, (3) that by creating an Indian colony the excuse for emigration to the white men's colonies would be removed, (4) that an Indian, and especially a Punjabi, colony would help to provide the army necessary for its own defence.

Nevertheless the Memorandum raised certain objections, although they were not unsurmountable to such immigration. Hirtzel did not contemplate any difficulty in ruling the Arabs, provided there were certain measures of reform in the administration. The area needed for the fulfilment of the above plans covered nearly the whole of the three wilayas, bounded by the Gulf in the south and the Turkish-Persian frontier line from Muḥammara to Kala Nuft on the east. Both these frontiers constituted natural boundaries, but on the west and north arbitrary lines were selected: the northern boundary would be from a point near Kala Naft and along the hills of Jabal Ḥamrin to the Fatḥa, where the Ḥamrin range cut the Tigris and then in a straight line across the Jazira to a point at the Euphrates near 'Ana or Hit, preferably 'Ana; the western boundaries would run parallel to the

Euphrates from 'Ana to the vicinity of Kuwait. The political and administrative future of this area would be annexation to the British Empire, while areas north and westwards inclusive of Mosul and part of the western desert, would come under a British protectorate. Hirtzel wrote:

> Nature has provided it with frontiers to the south and to the north and to the east. But to the north and west nothing better has been found than arbitrary lines across the wilderness, and it has already been hinted that, for tribal reasons, it will be necessary to extend our political control in the shape of a definite protectorate beyond those lines. The next question is where that control is to stop. It would seem necessary that it should not stop until the points are reached at which the control of other civilized Powers begins ... 1

General Sir Edmund Barrow, Military Secretary to the India Office, in a minute dated 16th March, 1915, agreed with that part of Sir A. Hirtzel's memorandum which dealt with the limitation of the frontiers of the area to be placed under British control, but he opposed the annexation of the whole area because, he argued, it would alienate the Arabs as well as making the Turks permanent enemies after the war, it would give rise to suspicion among Muslims, in particular among Indian Muslims, and even if it was politically desirable, such extensive annexation would, militarily, strain British resources beyond their capabilities. Barrow accordingly advocated the annexation of the wilaya of Basra only, leaving the wilaya of Baghdad under the nominal suzerainty of the Turkish Sultan, although in fact it would be administratively and politically supervised and protected by the British Empire, in the same way as was Egypt. Such an arrangement

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1 Cab./37/126. Secret. Notes and private telegram from the Viceroy regarding the future settlement of Eastern Turkey in Asia and Arabia. "Note by the Secretary, Political and Secret Department, India Office."

would have the additional advantage of minimising the jealousies of the other allied Powers, Russia and France.[1]

The Viceroy of India supported Barrow's view. As he put it in his "most secret" and "private" telegram to the Secretary of State for India, dated 15th March 1915, Basra wilaya should remain permanently under British rule, but Baghdad should be ceded by Turkey and constituted a British protectorate with a local administration. The kind of administration would be easier to determine once it was under British occupation, but he envisaged as a temporary solution the formation of a Council of Sunni and Shi'i 'Ulama under the direction of a British Resident. The northern boundary of the protectorate would be a point north of Samra. The Viceroy's thinking was dominated by fear of over-stretching the India Government's military responsibilities:

> I am averse from increasing our military responsibilities more than is absolutely necessary, but the situation has to be faced, and it must be realised that with an unfriendly Government at Bagdad our political, military and commercial position at Basra might become very difficult."[2]

For the India Government and the India Office, the future of Iraq, even before it came into British hands, was, within certain limits, already decided; it was now simply a question of deciding exactly what area should be annexed and what should be left under nominal Arab rule. But other official circles became increasingly interested in the fate of the area. Lord Kitchener advocated the incorporation of the whole of Iraq into the

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1 Ibid. "Note by General Sir Edmund Barrow on the Defence of Mesopotamia".
2 Ibid. Cab./37/126. Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, dated 15th March 1915.

British Empire. "If we do not take Mesopotamia, the Russians undoubtedly will sooner or later", Kitchener argued, and such a move would enable Russia to control part of the Gulf and challenge British supremacy in the area. With a weak power in Baghdad and Basra the British could be easy but, argued Kitchener, "If the Ottoman Empire is to be wholly or partially broken up, it is imperative that Mesopotamia should become British." But Kitchener did not think only in political and in balance-of-power terms. He also argued in economic terms:

> Strong argument can be adduced for incorporating Mesopotamia in the Empire merely on the grounds of its potential agricultural resources. It is universally recognised that this region only stands in need of irrigation and of scientific development to become again one of the most fertile and highly productive areas in the world. But even stronger arguments can be adduced on the grounds that this, at present thinly populated and unproductive tract provides an almost ideal field of colonisation for the surplus population of India, and that its possession would help to solve one of the most serious problems with which the Indian Government is confronted.

Furthermore the control of Mesopotamia would safeguard British oil interests in Persia and the land routes from the west and north towards the Gulf.[1] The British Admiralty, in a secret memorandum to the Committee of Imperial Defence, dated 17th March, 1915, was even more blunt in its demands. "Clearly it is our right and our duty, if we sacrifice so much for the peace of the world, that we should see to it we have compensation, or we may defeat our end.", stated the memorandum. Mesopotamia was to be the chosen reward. The Admiralty emphasised the role that Mesopotamia

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1 Cab./42/2. No. 10. Secret. Committee of Imperial Defence. Memorandum by Lord Kitchener, 2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W., dated March 16, 1915.

would in future play in meeting the increasing demand on oil.[1] By contrast Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, were reluctant to accept a policy of annexation, although they did not stand against the advance on Baghdad.[2]

British financial groups and individuals with material investments in Iraq urged the British Government to take over the whole of Iraq. Sir Percy Cox, Chief Political Officer with the Expeditionary Force, commented that his telegram of 23rd November 1914 to the Viceroy, suggesting an advance on Baghdad "was specifically prompted by urgent representations from the heads of the British Mercantile community."[3] Lord Inchcape, who had substantial commercial interests in the Persian Gulf and Iraq, especially in the Lynch Navigation Company, wrote to the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey on 3rd December, 1914, urging the British Government to extend the operations to Baghdad and went on to say:

> Now is our chance to get hold of the Baghdad Busreh section of the Baghdad Railway, to permanently secure our position in the Persian Gulf, that highway to India, ... British and Indian trades are greatly interested in Mesopotamia, and there are enormous developments possible there if the country is properly and honestly administered.[4]

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1 Ibid. Secret. Memorandum by the Admiralty, 2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W., dated 17th March 1915.

2 Earl Asquith, Loyalties, Memories and Reflections, 1852-1927, London, 1928, Vol. II, p. 69 wrote on 25th March, 1915, in his diary "Grey and I ... both think that in the real interests of our future the best would be if at the end of the war we could say that we had taken and gained nothing .... Taking Mesopotamia, for instance, means spending millions in irrigation and development ... "

3 Ireland, Iraq, p. 63, footnote 2.

4 F.O. 371/2144/78661.

Colonel C. E. Yate, M.P., received many letters from British residents in Iraq advocating an advance on Baghdad and the annexation of Iraq or at least part of it, and all these letters gave the prospective wealth of the country as a major reason for its control by the British.[1] Thus the general mood on the British side was in favour of the political control of the whole three Wilayas constituting Iraq and the annexation of at least the Wilaya of Basra. Until March 1915 the British Government, although it envisaged future British control of Iraq, occupied only the Wilaya of Basra, so that speculations about the future were not translated into a definite and set policy. Besides the differing views about the extent of area that should be annexed and the kind of administration to be introduced, there was much else to cause some careful thinking.

The British Government, and particularly the Cairo authorities, were also thinking of the Arab leaders, and especially the Sharif of Mecca, as a potential source of military support if they were able to induce them to rise in rebellion against the Ottoman Government. Such an eventuality would diminish the effect of the call for Jihad, and create a diversion, which would provide a safeguard for Egypt and the Suez canal from a possible Turkish attack. But for Arab support there was a price, namely the recognition of Arab independence. The problem for the British Government was to find a formula which would on the one hand provide the Arab leaders, particularly the Sharif of Mecca, with sufficient incentive to secure their co-operation against the Turks, and on the other hand not

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1 F.O. 371/2482/19342. Enclosed in a letter from C. E. Yate to Sir Edward Grey, dated February 16th, 1915.

to prejudice British political and economic designs in the area or rouse suspicion among the allies, primarily France, whose ambitions in the area were similar to those of the British. British officials in Egypt had been in contact with Sharif Husayn of Mecca and particularly his son 'Abdulla before the war.[1] On 24th September, 1914, the British Foreign Office at the suggestion of Lord Kitchener, instructed the Cairo authorities to contact 'Abdulla to ascertain his father's attitude if Turkey threw in its lot with Germany. 'Abdulla came down on the side of the British but with certain qualifications, namely that:

> So long as she protects the rights of our country and the rights of the person of His Highness our present Emir and Lord and the rights of his Emirate and its independence in all respects, without any exceptions or restrictions, and so long as it supports us against any foreign aggression and in particular against the Ottomans, especially if they wish to set up any one else as Emir with the intention of causing internal dissension - their principle of government - and provided that the Government of Great Britain would guarantee these fundamental principles clearly and in writing.[2]

The Foreign Office reply was sent on 31st October, 1914, when Britain had already declared war on Turkey.

> .... If the Arab nation assist England in this war that has been forced upon us by Turkey, England will guarantee that no internal intervention takes place in Arabia, and will give Arabs every assistance against internal aggression.
>
> It may be that an Arab of true race will assume the Khalifate at Mecca or Medina ...

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1 'Abdulla Ibn al-Husayn, Memoirs of King 'Abdulla Ibn al-Husayn, Beirut, 1965, pp. 73-75. 'Abdulla visited Egypt before the outbreak of the war. He had conversations with Kitchener, then British High Commissioner in Egypt. 'Abdulla enquired whether Britain would help his father in case he had to defend his country against the Turks. Kitchener at the time declined on the assumption that Britain could not interfere in Turkey's internal affairs. See also Antonius, Arab Awakening, p. 127.

2 F.O. 371/3384/180425. Memorandum on British Commitments to King Husayn, dated November 1918.

The Cairo authorities added further assurances of British assistance and recognition of the position of Sharif Husayn, and agreed to offer him protection against external aggression.[1] This correspondence was in fact the prelude to the famous Husayn - McMahon correspondence between July 1915 - March 1916, which led to the Hijaz Revolt in June 1916. This correspondence must be examined in some detail because, inter alia, it was concerned with the future of Iraq and thus became a factor in the British plans for Mesopotamia.

The Sharif Husayn - Sir Henry McMahon negotiations were opened on 14th July, 1915 when Husayn wrote to McMahon asking

> England to acknowledge the independence of the Arab countries, bounded on the north by Mersina and Adana up to the 37 of latitude, on which degree fall Birijik, Urfa, Mardin, Midiat, Jezirat, Amadia, up to the border of Persia; on the east by the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basra; on the south by the Indian Ocean, with the exception of the position of Aden to remain as it is; on the west by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea up to Mersina. England to approve of the proclamation of an Arab Khalifate of Islam.

It will be noted that these demands were far more extensive than those previously submitted by 'Abdulla. They in fact embodied, as regards the boundaries, the decision of two Arab secret societies in Syria, communicated to Faysal, in May 1915, to pass to his father as their conditions for co-operation with the Allies.[2] This became clear in his subsequent letter of 1 January, 1916, to McMahon when Husayn wrote that his demands were not personal but rather those of the Arab people. However

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1 Ibid.
2 Antonius, The Arab Awakening, pp. 157-158.

the British High Commissioner and his Government were not willing to commit themselves to any specific arrangement which no doubt would tie their hands in a future settlement, so McMahon replied to the Sharif on August 30, 1915 simply that:

> We declare once more that His Majesty's Government would welcome the resumption of the Khalifate by an Arab of true race. With regard to the questions of limits and boundaries, it would appear to be premature to consume our time in discussing such details in the heat of war, and while, in many portions of them, the Turks is up to now in effective occupation; ...

But after a second letter from Sharif Husayn dated September 9, 1915, complaining of the ambiguity and coldness of the British reply, the British High Commissioner replied on October 24, 1914, defining the British Government's pledges and its reservations about Arab independence:

> The two districts of Mersina 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, and should be excluded from the limits demanded.
>
> With the above modification, and without prejudice to our existing treaties with Arab chiefs, we accept those limits.
>
> As for those regions lying within those frontiers wherein Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interests of her ally, France, I am empowered in the name of the Government of Great Britain to give the following reply to your letter:-
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> 1. Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sherif of Mecca.
>
> 2. Great Britain will guarantee the Holy Places against all external aggression and will recognise their inviolability.
>
> 3. When the situation admits, Great Britain will give to the Arabs her advice and will assist them to establish what may appear to be the most suitable forms of government in those various territories.
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> 4. On the other hand, it is understood that the Arabs

> have decided to seek the advice and guidance of Great Britain only, and that such European advisers and officials as may be required for the formation of a sound form of administration will be British.
>
> 5. With regard to the vilayets of Bagdad and Basra, the Arabs will recognise that the established position and interests of Great Britain necessitate special administrative arrangements in order to secure these territories from foreign agression, to promote the welfare of the local populations and to safeguard our mutual economic interests.[1]

This letter became the key to British pledges to the Arabs. In Iraq the wilayas of Baghdad and Basra (Mosul was not included) were accorded a special status - the British reserved the right to have "special administrative arrangements" - what this status meant was not, however, defined. The sharif in his reply of November 5, 1915, consented to the exclusion of the wilayas of Mersina and Adana, and objected to the exclusion of any part of Syria. As regards the Iraq wilayas, although the sharif emphasised their role in Arab history, and their unity with the other Arab areas, he agreed that

> "In order to render an accord easy, and taking into consideration assurances mentioned in the fifth article of your letter to keep and guard our mutual interests in that country as they are one and the same, for these reasons we might agree to leave under the British administration for a short time those districts now occupied by the British troops without the rights of either party being prejudiced thereby (especially those of the Arab nation; which interests are to it economic and vital), and against a suitable sum paid as compensation to the Arab Kingdom for the period of occupation."[2]

At this juncture the India Government and British command of the British expeditionary force in Iraq, began to shower the British Government

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1 Cmd. 5957. "Correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon and Sharif Husayn of Mecca, July 1915 - March 1916."
2 Ibid.

and the Cairo authorities with protests against Sir Henry McMahon's pledges to the sharif about the wilayas of Baghdad and Basra. The Viceroy of India in a telegram of 4 November, 1915 to the Foreign Office, repeated to Cairo, expressed himself in strong terms:

> "By the inclusion of provinces of Baghdad and Bussorah in the proposed independent Arab state, only 'special measure of advanced administrative control' in these two vilayatis being reserved to His Majesty's Government or the Government of India. We think we should not have been committed to such a policy .... We have always regarded with much (not clear word) creation of strong Arab State lying outside our interests in the East and in Gulf as not unlikely source of ultimate trouble, ... We have always contemplated as a minimum eventual annexation of Bussorah vilayat and (? some form) of native administration in Baghdad vilayat under our close political control."[1]

The India Office agreed with the India Government, and emphasised to the Foreign Office on 6 November, 1915 that such a pledge would prevent the annexation of Basra and limit the British predominance over Baghdad which was envisaged as the natural result of the Mesopotamia campaign.[2] The British command of the Expeditionary Force in Iraq, namely General Nixon and the chief political officer, Sir P. Cox, had on 9 November, 1915 communicated their views about the future of Iraq to the British Government

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1 F.O. 371/2486/165415. Furthermore as early as November 1914, the Viceroy had expressed his mistrust of the Arabs, "we must face fact that Arabs generally are not unlikely to forget for time being their grievances against their co-religionists, the Turks, and either remain passive or join against us. Cab./37/122, year 1914, no. 169.

2 F.O. 371/2486/166483. The India Office mistrust of the Arab was evident in a memorandum by the Political Department, dated May 25, 1916. "Indeed, the policy of fanning the Arab nationalist spirit to a flame is, ... a two-edged weapon of a very dangerous description - innocuous only if the Turk is beaten in the field, but otherwise likely eventually to result in acute antagonism between the Arabs and ourselves."

before knowing of the McMahon pledge to Husayn.

> As stated therein the formation of an autonomous state in Iraq appears unnecessary and impossible. There is no sign here, in Iraq, of the slightest ambition of the kind among the people who expect our administration and seem to be quite ready to accept it.

And the General Officer Commanding, Force "D" went on to draw an analogy:

> As they have in India, other ideas may grow in the course of years, but we are of opinion that from the point of view of Iraq it is highly unnecessary and inexpedient to put into the heads of the backward people of the country what seems to us the visionary and premature notions of the creation of an Arabic state; ... [1]

The British authorities in Iraq, engaged in a war for the occupation of Baghdad, inevitably reacted against McMahon's pledges to Husayn. General Nixon commented:

> "Apart from fact that such a commitment appears to be premature and will prejudice existing British interests at Basra and Baghdad and future of this great country, it seems to me to involve complete disconception of attitude of inhabitants of vilayets. It, moreover, overlooks the important and fundamental fact that four-fifths of the population of Basra and two-thirds of Baghdad vilayets are Shiahs."[2]

Sir Henry McMahon tried in a telegram dated 5th November, 1915 to explain to the Indian authorities that, contrary to their impressions, the clause

> "With regard to the vilayets of Bagdad and Basra, the Arabs will recognise that the established position and interests of Great Britain necessitate special administrative arrangements in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression, to promote the welfare of the local populations and to safeguard our mutual economic interests,"

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1 F.O. 371/2492/196455.
2 Cab./37/136, year 1915, no. 38. From General Nixon, Aziziyah, 14th November, 1915, to India. It is worth noticing that between 12-14 the Battle of Ctesiphon occurred ending with British defeat.

was intended,

> "to give us everything short of definite and open annexation i.e. a free hand regarding military measures, internal administration as well as development and commercial and industrial enterprize.
>
> Read in conjunction with preceding clause it practically amounts to our monopoly of all administration and control in those Vilayets and was interpreted in that sense by Arab representatives here."[1]

The India Government remained unsatisfied with McMahon's pledge to the Sharif of Mecca because it seemed to rule out annexation of any part of Iraq by the British Empire.[2] Nevertheless, McMahon's telegram of November 5, 1915, clarified Britain's intentions in Iraq, namely that "special administrative arrangement" meant in fact a British protectorate.

But surely such an interpretation could hardly be deduced from the wording of the clause,[3] but arose from quite different factors, which can be sensed in McMahon's comment that other Arab representatives in Cairo concurred in his interpretation. McMahon did not give the names of the Arab representatives in Cairo, but it can be surmised that they did not include 'Aziz 'Ali, a prominent leader of the Arab movement in Turkey, who definitely opposed the cession of any Arab lands to Britain.[4] The British documents suggest that the Arab leaders in Cairo were little more than a

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1 F.O. 371/2486/165761. Secret. From Sir H. McMahon, dated November 5, 1915. No. 674.
2 F.O. 371/2486/169399. From Viceroy, dated November 11, 1915.
3 Antonius, The Arab Awakening, p. 171, an Arab historian and to a certain extent King Husayn's apologist. The special measure meant "a measure of Anglo-Arab partnership in that part of the independent Arab State".
4 See section about military class and political parties.

myth since the British authorities had dealings with only a single Arab officer, al-Faruqi, Muhammad Sharif, a member of the 'Ahd society who had defected to the British at Gallipoli. In October, 1915, he approached the British authorities in Cairo as the accredited representative of his secret society to seek an agreement with them.[1] Though no specific agreement was concluded, he held many meetings with British officials and during these discussions the British officials were given to understand that al-Faruqi agreed with them as to the future of the Arab countries and particularly Iraq. In early November, 1915, Sir Mark Sykes, the British Government representative in discussions with the French about the future of the Arabs, met al-Faruqi and [illegible] telegraphed on 20th November, 1915.

> Your private letter of 5th November just received. Previous to getting it I saw Faruki, and, anticipating French difficulty, discussed the situation with him with that in view. Following is best I could get, but seems to me to meet the situation both with regard to France and Great Britain. Arabs would agree to accept as approximate northern frontier Alexandretta-Aintab-Birijik-Urfu-Midiat-Zakho-Rowanduz. Arabs would agree to convention with France granting her monopoly of all concessionary enterprise in Syria and Palestine, Syria being defined as bounded Euphrates as far south as Deir Zor, and from there to Deraa and along Hedjaz Railway to Maan.
>
> Hedjaz Railway as far south as Arman, could be sold to French concessionaire. Arabs would further agree to employment of none but Frenchmen as advisers and European employees in this area. Noted Arabs will not (? undertake to) employ Europeans if they can do without them, but Faruki points out this stipulation is to avoid any shadow of control. Arabs would agree to all French educational establishments having special recognition in this area.

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1 F.O. 371/2486/157740. Memorandum dated Cairo, October 11, 1915, by G. Clayton, Director of Military Intelligence.

> Arabs would agree to identical convention with Great Britain with regard to remainder of Greater Arabia, viz., Irak and Jazirah and Northern Mesopotamia. Further, Arabs would agree to any territory north of Greater Arabian frontier being French possessions under French flag.
>
> Arabs would agree to Basra town and all cultivated lands to the south being British territory.

Furthermore, the Arabs were pledged by al-Faruqi to make an agreement with the Entente Powers under which they, the Arabs, would have no relations with Germany, Austria and Turkey for fifteen years and in return the Entente Powers would guarantee to protect the independence of the Arabs.[1] Surprisingly McMahon didn't mention Sykes' report in his telegram of November 5, 1915, nor the fact that Basra and the land to the south of it were to be absolutely British territory. But Sir Mark Sykes in his telegram to Sir Percy Cox, dated November 22, 1915, reported his talk with al-Faruqi in full and concluded his telegram:

> If we have a permanent monopoly of enterprise and of European assistance Military and Civil in Mosul, Baghdad and Basra Provinces for duration of War, I think that we need not fear for the future: If pan-Arabism succeeds and if it does not we have given nothing away.[2]

These sweeping concessions by al-Faruqi later became one of the foundations of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of May 1916.

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1 Cab./37/142. Enclosed in a telegram from Sir H. McMahon to Sir E. Grey, Cairo, dated November 20, 1915.
Also see F.O. 371/2486/157740. Memorandum by G. Clayton, Cairo, October 11, 1915, al-Faruqi maintained that the society aimed at Arab Independence; however he realised that such a scheme is difficult to fulfil, but still he hoped "that England should promise to assist them to obtain a reasonable measure of independence and autonomous Government in these Arab countries where England can fairly claim that her interests are greater than those of her Allies. El Farugi states that a guarantee of the independence of the Arabian Peninsula would not satisfy them, but this together with the institution of an increasing measure of autonomous Government, under British guidance and control, in Palestine and Mesopotamia would probably secure their friendship."

2 F.O. 882/13/(MIS/15/18). Arab Bureau Papers. From Mark Sykes to Sir P. Cox, dated Cairo, November 22, 1915.

There are two issues which should be clarified at this stage. First, was al-Faruqi in fact, as he claimed, the accredited representative of the Arab secret societies when he offered his concessions? The British officials seem to have accepted him as such and in his discussions with the British Director of Military Intelligence, G. Clayton, al-Faruqi is reported to have said "that he is accredited by the Committee and that through him the reply of England may be given".[1] However, G. Antonius, an Arab historian author of the well-known book, The Arab Awakening, maintained that al-Faruqi was never in fact the authorised spokesman of the secret societies the 'Ahd and the al-Fatat.[2] The second point is did Sharif Husayn know of al-Faruqi's concessions at the time? In commenting on these points I limit myself to the commitments about Iraq, although al-Faruqi's concessions concerned a much wider area.

Al-Faruqi was a member of a well-known Mosul family. When the war broke out he was a Mulazim Awal (Lieutenant) in the Ottoman Army. He joined the secret Arab society of al-'Ahd and during the early months of the war he was in Syria where he was an active member of the 'Ahd. He soon, along with other Arab officers, came under suspicion, and consequently he was sent to Constantinople, from there he was posted to Gallipoli, where he made his escape to the British. In October, 1915, he was brought to Egypt where he was involved in discussions with the British authorities. The reasons for his defection which al-Faruqi gave to the

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1 F.O. 371/2486/157740.
2 Antonius, The Arab Awakening, p. 169.

British were high sounding.

> I hastened to escape to the British Army for the reason that as long as I am the Commandant of a Turkish company I shall be obliged to fight my friends and the friends of my party - the English - and, at the same time, be doing service to my enemies and the enemies of my party - the Turks - who wish to kill me and my party. For this reason and in accordance with our programme and principles I availed myself of the opportunity and escaped to the English Army in Gallipoli. But for the guarding of my honour I made my stay to be under the following conditions:-
>
> 1st. Not to be considered as a prisoner but as a guest of the British Government.
>
> 2nd. To be sent first to the British Authorities in Egypt and then to a place which I will nominate and which would be for our mutual benefit.
>
> 3rd. My name and object to be kept secret.
>
> 4th. Turks not to know that I came of my own free will, but that I was taken prisoner, as if the Turks know that I came to the English they will increase the pressure on my party.[1]

Al-Faruqi's reference to a previous programme was that when he with other Arab officers came under suspicion they decided that:

> Each of us to go to Constantinople to try and escape to the Sherif of Mecca on the first opportunity, either with or without the help of the English.[2]

In the above there is no mention of an attempt to negotiate an agreement with the British officials nor of the claim that he was a representative of the Arab secret societies. However he offered his help in bringing about an early agreement between the British and the Arabs.

> I am not authorised to discuss with you officially our political programme, but if not agreement between you and our representatives who came to Jedda has yet been made I can, for the sake of shortening negotiations, keeping in mind the complications of social problems of the Arabs

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1 F.O. 371/2486/157740. Intelligence Office, War Office, Cairo. "Statement of Mulazim Awal (licutenant) Mohammed Sheril El Farugi."

2 Ibid.

> amongst themselves and the political complications between us and one of the Powers of Europe (France), for the above reasons and for the confidence in myself and my party and all Arabs, and the good wishes of the English towards the Arabs, and my conviction that England does not wish to alienate the Arab from her, give answers to any questions you wish to make re the agreement and if necessary make modifications in its articles including the Mersina-Diarbekr line; modifications which I promise to try my utmost to convince most of them to go by my agreement.[1]

This was the basis for al-Faruqi's discussions with the British. According to this account any agreements made were not to be considered binding: al-Faruqi simply promised to do his best to gain the consent of his party to any agreements reached. Furthermore, al-Faruqi's letters which were published by al-'Umari in 1925,[2] do not contain any indication that he was an accredited representative of the secret societies while he was negotiating with the British official in Cairo, although after the revolt in Hijaz in June, 1916, al-Faruqi was appointed by the Sharif of Mecca to act as his agent in Cairo, and the Arab secret societies had already in early 1916 acknowledged the sharif as their representative in negotiations with the British authorities.[3] If the 'Ahd had contemplated direct contact with the British 'Aziz 'Ali, a prominent leader of the society who was residing in Cairo at the time, would have been the natural spokesman rather than a twenty-four years old lieutenant. When al-Faruqi arrived in Cairo the British were already negotiating with Sharif Husayn who posed as the spokesman of the whole Arab world, and al-Faruqi made

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1 F.O. 371/2486/157741. "Statement of Mulazim Awal (Lieutenant) Mohammad Sherif El Farugi."
2 Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq,
3 Antonius, The Arab Awakening, pp. 157-158.

clear to the British officials that the secret societies were in accord with the sharif. The Sharif of Mecca's reference to al-Faruqi in his letter to McMahon dated 1 January, 1916 was to show that he was speaking not only for himself but also for the other nationalist movements. Thus it would have been odd for a matter of such importance not to be discussed with Sharif Husayn, the authorized spokesman of the secret societies. This fact must throw doubt upon the genuineness of al-Faruqi's concessions. There is, moreover, some doubt as to how far the British took seriously their negotiations with al-Faruqi. An official memorandum dated November, 1918, "Memorandum on Britain Commitments to King Husein" specifically says:

> But there is no other record of such a concession on his part (Sharif Husayn - my note) or on the part of any other representative of the Arab nationalist organisations in Turkey. And King Husein has never mentioned the possibility of this, nor have His Majesty's Government mentioned it in their correspondence with him.[1]

Similarly the published letters of al-Faruqi do not mention concessions by al-Faruqi to Sykes or any other British official with regard to Basra. In one British document, however, al-Faruqi's concessions were referred to as the Iraqi party view.[2] Clearly a more limited interpretation of al-Faruqi's role as the spokesman of some Iraqis would to a great extent explain the whole matter. To sum up, it may be reasonably said: first, that the sharif did not know about al-Faruqi's concessions; secondly, that there is reason to doubt whether al-Faruqi was actually the accredited spokesman of the 'Ahd; thirdly, that in practice some British

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1 F.O. 371/3384/180425. "Memorandum on Britain Commitments to King Husein", dated November, 1918.
2 F.O. 371/2768/80305. Secret. Enclosed by despatch from the Residency, Cairo, dated April 19, 1916.

officials in Cairo treated al-Faruqi as an accredited representative of the secret Arab societies, though for only a few months; fourthly, that the British, in later stages, were not clear about al-Faruqi's position with the result they did not report his concessions to the sharif, and that they spoke of him on one occasion as the representative of the Iraqi party; and finally, that al-Faruqi himself does not seem to have been aware of the role thrust upon him, since he makes no mention of it in his letters. We may conclude therefore that the claim that al-Faruqi was an accredited representative of the secret societies was based on a misunderstanding. Nevertheless, it had done its harm, because Sykes the co-author of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, had in mind al-Faruqi's concessions when he endorsed the agreement.

On 14th December, 1915, Sir Henry McMahon resumed his correspondence with Sharif Husayn. His reply to Husayn's proposal of a temporary British occupation of the area under their occupation at that time (November 5, 1915) in return for suitable financial compensation was vague and non-committal:

> The Government of Great Britain, as I have already informed you, are ready to give all guarantees of assistance and support within their power to the Arab Kingdom, but their interests demand, as you yourself have recognised, a friendly and stable administration in the vilayat of Bagdad, and the adequate safeguarding of these interests calls for a much fuller and more detailed consideration than the present situation and the urgency of these negotiations permit.[1]

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1 Cmd. 5957. "Correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon and the Sherif Hussein of Mecca."

This passage was written with the protests of the India Government against his previous commitments in mind. But Sharif Husayn's reply on 1st January, 1916, seems to have missed the importance of McMahon's conditions and proceeded as if his previous proposal had been accepted. The Sharif wrote:

> With regard to what had been stated in your honoured communication concerning El Iraq as to the matter of compensation for the period of occupation, we, in order to strengthen the confidence of Great Britain in our attitude ... leave the determination of the amount to the perception of her wisdom and justice.[1]

For Husayn the only problem was apparently the exact amount of money to be paid.

As far as Iraq was concerned the Sharif Husayn - Sir Henry McMahon Correspondence was an unfinished dialogue. The Sharif did not agree to the permanent alienation of any part of Iraq, but conceded a temporary occupation of the area under British occupation by November 5, 1915, in return for a subsidy to be paid to him during its occupation. The British for their part failed to define the terms on which they were to occupy Iraq, although they agreed that they would hold Iraq or part of it "not by Imperial right, but under concession from the Arab".[2] The Sharif was content to leave the question of Iraq unsettled and to behave as if the other side had accepted his demands, although whether he did so as a matter of deliberate policy or as a result of a misunderstanding is not clear, since he always acted as if the British had accepted his demands.[3] The

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1 Ibid. Also see Antonius, The Arab Awakening, pp. 173-174.
2 F.O. 371/2768/80305. Memorandum by the Arab Bureau. "The Arab Question."
3 F.O. 371/2775/195007. Copy of letter from the Sharif to High Commissioner, Egypt, dated August 25, 1916. "Your Excellency knows

Continued/

British were aware of the inconclusive character of their negotiations, but were satisfied to leave things as they were because, as McMahon argued in April, 1916,

> Realizing that the present stage of military operations in the Ottoman Empire is transitional, but daily declaring itself more and more in our favour, we have made every attempt to avoid definite commitments for the future; and consequently the longer a final programme is postponed the stronger becomes our position as negotiators, and the more reasonable will the other two parties, both Turk and Arab, be likely to show themselves towards our views.[1]

Only one thing was clear: that most of the Arab leaders and particularly the Iraq officers who belonged to the secret societies, believed that the British had promised them both freedom from the Turk and independence.

The second major factor that the British Government had to think of before deciding upon any definite policy for the future of Iraq, was the likely view of her allies, namely Russia and France. Any British statement on the future of Iraq would render it imperative to satisfy Russian and French territorial ambitions in the Ottoman Empire. Britain for a variety of reasons wished to avoid premature discussions about the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, at least until there was no hope of avoiding a binding agreement about the fate of Constantinople, which was to be Russia's share of the spoils of war.[2] But the conclusion of the

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that the above mentioned monthly pay of £125,000 ... will be deducted from the amount which we left to the justice of Great Britain to decide for our deficient Government which is under Great Britain's guardianship and protection during the occupation of Basra and Iraq."

1 F.O. 371/2768/80305. Secret. From Sir H. McMahon to the F.O., dated April 19, 1916.

2 Keddourie, England and the Middle East, p. 32.

Constantinople agreement, on March 18, 1915, according to which the future of the Straits, Constantinople and Persia was arranged primarily in accordance with Russian demands gave the British the green light to assert claims in Iraq. The Constantinople agreement contained a provision that "The rights of England and France in Asiatic Turkey to be defined by special agreement between England, France, and Russia are recognized."[1] In accordance with the above clause the French took the initiative and requested the British Government as early as 23rd March, 1915 to implement it. Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, in a despatch to the British Ambassador in Paris, wrote:

> M. Cambon informed me to-day that M. Delcasse had observed that, as the question of Constantinople and the Straits, which was the chief question affecting Russia, had now been disposed of, it was rather for France and Great Britain to discuss other questions respecting Asia Minor ...

Sir E. Grey agreed to enter into negotiations and went on to explain the British position:

> ... that we had already stipulated that, when Turkey disappeared from Constantinople and the Straits, there must, in the interests of Islam, be an independent Moslem political unit somewhere else. Its centre would naturally be the Moslem Holy Places, and it would include Arabia. But we must settle what else should be included. We ourselves, had not yet come to a definite opinion whether Mesopotamia should be included in this independent Moslem State, or whether we should put forward a claim for ourselves in that region.[2]

In November, 1915, at the commencement of the Sykes-Picot negotiations, the

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1 Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. VI, p. 6.
2 F.O. 371/2486/34982. Confidential. No. 250.
Also see Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916, Vol. II, pp. 229-231.

British claims which were submitted by Mark Sykes, were (as far as Iraq was concerned) limited to the control of the Baghdad and Basra Wilayas.[1] The Sykes-Picot negotiations were terminated by the conclusion of the widely known Sykes-Picot Agreement of May 1916, according to which Iraq and Syria and the adjoining area were divided between the two Powers, Britain and France.

> (1) That France and Great Britain are prepared to recognise and protect an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States in the areas (a) and (b) marked on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief. That in area (a) France, and in area (b) Great Britain, shall alone supply advisers or foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States.
>
> (2) That in the blue area France, and in the red area Great Britain, shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States.[2]

According to this agreement Iraq, comprising the three wilayas of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, was split into three. The first part, included in the red area, comprised the whole of Basra wilaya and the major part of Baghdad wilaya with the city of Baghdad. In this area Britain was given a free hand and could settle for any solution from annexation to Arab rule. The second part was included in the (b) area of British area of influence. Its boundaries in Iraq ran in the south along a line from the town of Khaniqin, near the Turco-Persian frontier, to a point above the town of

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1 Cited by Kedourie, England and the Middle East, p. 35 - A. Pingaud, Histoire Diplomatique de la France Pendant La Grande Guerre, Vol. III, 1940, pp. 226-227. Based on the official French Archives.

2 F.O. 371/2768/87247. Secret Series. In a despatch from Sir Edward Grey to M. Cambon.

Faluja and below Ramadi, then downward excluding all the Euphrates Valley. The northern boundary was fixed as a line along the Lesser Zab river to the town of Albu Kemal on the Euphrates.[1] Lastly, the Mosul wilaya was to be part of the (a) area of French influence.

The incompatibility of the Sykes-Picot Agreement with the British pledges to the Sharif of Mecca and the fact that the agreement was kept secret from the Arabs, have been widely discussed and commented upon and it is beyond the scope of this work to discuss it except in so far as it concerned Iraq. The agreement became generally known after the Bolshevik revolution. The Russians published the document and the Turks, to embarrass the British, made it their business to spread it among the Arabs, to whom it was, without doubt, a source of dismay. The agreement negated the principles of the Husayn—McMahon Correspondence, providing for the partition of Iraq into two spheres of politics, a French and a British, rather than for a single state. The Arabs were not consulted about the agreement, although al-Faruqi's concession might be said in part to justify it, and the Sharif of Mecca certainly knew nothing about it in advance. Arab sources and particularly those best-informed about Sharif Husayn, have always denied that the Sharif was told about the Sykes-Picot agreement even after the event. British documents opened recently make it clear that this was not quite the case: while the Sharif was not informed officially of the Agreement, he was given by British officials on different occasions an outline and some details of the Agreement. In April, 1917, the British

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1 Cab. 17/175.

High Commissioner, Sir R. Wingate, telegraphed to the Foreign Office that he

> will instruct Sir Mark Sykes to try and clear up the situation as follows:-
>
> 1. To re-assure King Husein in regard to French aims in interior of Syria.
> ....
> 3. To make it clear that in Bagdad and district whilst desirous of promoting Arab culture and prosperity, we will retain that position of military and political predominance which our strategical and commercial interests require.[1]

Accordingly, Sykes gave Husayn an account of the terms of the Anglo-French agreement to the Sharif during his visit to Hijaz in May, 1917. Mark Sykes reported on May 6, 1917:

> On May 2nd I saw Faisal at Wedj and explained to him principle of Anglo-French agreement regarding Arab confederation. After much argument he accepted principle and seemed satisfied.[2]

Sir Mark Sykes was accompanied by M. Picot in his visit to Hijaz in May 1917, and their conversation with the Sharif was clearly of great importance. Although the Sharif was not told categorically of the existence of the secret agreement, the Sykes-Picot mission appears to have discussed those parts of the secret agreement which seemed to conflict with the Sharif's view. Their discussions with the Sharif were not easy and sometimes the French representative seemed disenchanted with the Sharif, but the discussions ended with a public declaration made by the Sharif on 20th May, 1917:

> He would be content if the French Government pursued the same policy towards Arab aspirations on the Moslem Syrian

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1 F.O. 371/3054/97289. Telegram dated April 28, 1917.
2 F.O. 371/3054/93335. Telegram from Sir R. Wingate, dated May 7, 1917. Enclosure.

littoral as the British did in Bagdad.

This was considered by British officials as an endorsement by the Sharif of the British and French claims in Iraq and Syria.[1] But much doubt has been thrown on the conduct of these conversations. Sir R. Wingate, wrote in a despatch dated August 16, 1917, to A. J. Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary:

> A verbatim report of the conversations in Jeddah last May between King Hussein, Monsieur Picot and Sir Mark Sykes does not exist and Lieutenant-Colonel Wilson has expressed some uncertainty as to how correctly the King has interpreted the present intentions of ourselves and the French in regard to the future political arrangements in our respective spheres.[2]

The Sharif seems to have come out from his talks with the Sykes-Picot mission with a totally different impression from that of Sykes and Picot. Captain T. E. Lawrence reported a conversation with the Sharif in Jeddah on 29th July, 1917, during which the Sharif referred to his talks with Sykes and Picot earlier in May.

> The King is extremely pleased to have trapped M. Picot into the admission that France will be satisfied in Syria with the position Great Britain desires in Iraq. That, he says, means a temporary occupation of the country for strategical and political reasons (with probably an annual grant to the Sherif in compensation and recognition) and concessions in the way of public works."

Captain Lawrence went further:

> In conclusion the Sherif remarked on the shortness and informality of conversations, the absence of written

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1 F.O. 371/3044/153075. Memorandum by H. G. Nicolson. British obligations to Arabs and Allies in Turkey, dated 13.7.1917.
2 F.O. 371/3054/174974. Telegram from R. Wingate to A. Balfour, dated August 16, 1917.

> documents, and the fact that the only change in the situation caused by the meeting was the French renunciation of the ideas of annexation, permanent occupation or suzerainty of any part of Syria - "but this we did not embody in a formal treaty, as the war is not finished. I merely read out my acceptance of the formula "as the British in Iraq" proposed to me by M. Picot, since Sir Mark Sykes assured me that it would put a satisfactory conclusion to the discussion."[1]

Although Lawrence made it clear that the Sharif had formed a misleading impression of the Anglo-French Agreement, British officials felt it advisable at the time not to pursue their discussions with the Sharif any further, although Sir R. Wingate considered it imperative that in due course they should "correct any erroneous opinion he may have, or profess to have, formed in regard to the future administration of the Syrian littoral and Palestine and the provinces of Baghdad and Basra."[2]

Events moved faster than anybody could have expected. The Sykes-Picot agreement was disclosed by the Russians before the British were able to tell the Sharif more about it, and in June, 1918 Sharif Husayn protested strongly against it. Sir R. Wingate reported the incident in his telegram dated June 16, 1918.

> King of the Hedjaz who has apparently only just seen in newspaper Mosakbil number 101 report of speech delivered by Jamal Pasha several days before fall of Jerusalem, has sent rather a violent telegram to his agent here instructing him to make enquiries about alleged Anglo-French agreement and its scope.
>
> You will recollect that King was never officially informed of Sykes-Picot Agreement.
>
> Agent has asked me urgently to suggest a suitable

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1 F.O. 371/3054/174974. A note by Captain T. E. Lawrence, dated Jeddah, 30 July, 1917. Enclosed in telegram from R. Wingate to A. Balfour, dated August 16, 1917.

2 F.O. 371/3054/174974. Telegram from R. Wingate to A. Balfour, dated August 16, 1917.

reply which he can send to King's telegram.

> I have advised agent to say that Bolsheviks found in Petrograd Foreign Office record of old conversation and provisional understanding (not formal treaty) between Britain, France and Russia early in the war to prevent difficulties between Powers in prosecuting the war with Turkey.[1]

This was definitely a misrepresentation of the nature of the Sykes-Picot agreement which was in fact a formal treaty; and such a "political lie" served only to widen the gulf of mistrust between the British and the Arabs. Sir Mark Sykes commented on Wingate's telegram of June 16, 1918, on the following day that: "the King has frequently been given the outline and detail of the agreement in question, both by myself, Monsieur Picot, Colonel Bermond and Commander Hogarth who was specially sent down for the purpose".[2] Only one thing was clear, namely that the Sharif had not been informed about the agreement officially. British endeavours to acquaint the Sharif with the terms of the secret agreement, seem at best to have been half-hearted. No doubt the British officials responsible tried to give the Sharif a verbal account of the agreement, but it is quite evident that the Sharif formed a different impression or professed to have formed a different view. And since no official record of these talks with the Sharif was made and sometimes the conversations were informal, no one could say whether the British story or the Sharif's was the right one. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the British were given to mystery-making, otherwise why should the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir R.

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1 F.O. 371/3381/107379. Telegram from Sir R. Wingate, No. 948, Alexandria, dated June 16, 1918.
2 F.O. 371/3381/107379. Memorandum by Sir Mark Sykes, dated June 17, 1918.

Wingate, deny the existence of a formal commitment to the Sykes-Picot agreement in June, 1918.

The appointment of General Sir John Nixon to the command of the Mesopotamia expedition in March 1915, marked a change in the attitude of the India Government, which was still responsible for the campaign in Iraq. Among the orders given to General Nixon was that "After acquainting yourself on the spot with the present situation you will submit:- 1. a plan for the effective occupation of the Basra Vilayet; 2. a plan for a subsequent advance on Baghdad."[1] These orders were in harmony with the opinion held by the India Office and the India Government about the necessity of controlling Baghdad, and Nixon took them as indicating a change in policy from a defensive to an offensive campaign.[2] The ambitions of the Indian authorities were not the only factor making for an extension of the campaign and the occupation of Baghdad. There were also good short-term military and political reasons for a further advance: 1. Successive victories, and the subsequent occupation of Amara, Nasiriya, and then Kut al-Amara, encouraged the army command to contemplate further advances.[3] 2. The occupation of Baghdad would be a tangible victory only a little less striking in its effects than the fall of Constantinople. Such a victory would impress Persia and Afghanistan, where anti-British

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1 F.O. 371/2778/119978. Telegrams and Correspondence relating to Outbreak of War and Occupation of Mesopotamia, No. 107, dated 24 March, 1915. Also see Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, p. 194.
2 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, p. 196.
3 Cd. 8610. Mesopotamia Commission, p. 8. Also see Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, 1914-1918, Vol. II, pp. 33-34.

movements were gaining force, and would deprive the Germans of a strategic base of great importance. The Viceroy of India telegraphed to the Secretary of State for India on 6th October, 1915:

> In view of German activities in Persia, increasing pressure on Afghanistan, and the aspects in the Balkans and Dardanelles, we hold that the capture of Baghdad would have such an effect in the Near East and offers such important political and strategical advantages as to justify movement ... [1]

Two days later, on 8th October, 1915, the Secretary of State telegraphed to the Viceroy: "Cabinet are so impressed with great political and military advantages of occupation of Bagdad that we shall make every effort to supply necessary force ... " [2] The Report of an Inter-Departmental Committee representing the India Office, War Office, Admiralty and Foreign Office, on the strategic situation in Mesopotamia and the advance on Baghdad dated October 16, 1915, came out unanimously for the advance and occupation of Baghdad. [3] The India Office in a memorandum dated October 6, 1915 submitted to the Inter-Departmental Committee argued that:

> The political advantages to be anticipated from the occupation of Bagdad are thus two-fold:-
>
> 1. It will revive British prestige in the Middle East; and
> 2. It will place us in a position to cut the German line of communication with Persia.
>
> Once the occupation is a fait accompli, we may fairly expect a rapid improvement in the present highly unsatisfactory

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1 F.O. 371/2778/119978. Telegram no. 182.
2 F.O. 371/2778/119978. Telegrams and Correspondence relating to Outbreak of War and Occupation of Mesopotamia, No. 185.
3 Cab./24/1. Secret G. 28. Committee of Imperial Defence. Report of an Inter-Departmental Committee on the Strategical Situation in Mesopotamia.

> situation in Persia, and an easy solution of the various problems (defence of oil-fields, &c.) with which we are confronted in that country. The danger of jihad on the North-West Frontier will be greatly lessened, and the belief in our ultimate victory greatly strengthened both within and beyond our own borders.[1]

Similarly, the Foreign Office in a memorandum dated 7 October, 1915 submitted to the Inter-Departmental Committee, urged the occupation of Baghdad mainly because of its settling effect in Persia and Afghanistan.[2]

3. The occupation of Baghdad would facilitate the rallying of the wavering Arab tribes.[3]

4. Last but not least Baghdad was an "irrestible lodestar",[4] a romantic name, which might easily catch the imagination of the British: the capture of Baghdad was thought of as a "striking victory" that would compensate for want of success in Gallipoli and the German invasion of Serbia.[5]

5. The lack of a definite and prepared policy at the commencement of the campaign, gave greater weight to local conditions and the advance on Baghdad was to some extent influenced by this.[6]

Although the military aspect of the campaign is outside the scope of this work, it is worth mentioning that two prominent military figures,

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1 Ibid. Appendix VI.
2 Ibid. Appendix VII.
3 Cd. 8610. Mesopotamia Commission, p. 24.
4 E. Candler, The Long Road to Baghdad, London, 1919, Vol. I, p. 3.
5 Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, 1914-1918, Vol. II, pp. 42-43.
Also see A. T. Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia, 1914-1917, p. 82.
"Baghdad was the glittering prize to which all eyes were turned."
6 Cd. 8610. Mesopotamia Commission.
Also see Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, 1914-1918, Vol. II, pp. 23-24.

Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and Colonel A. T. Wilson, considered the occupation of Baghdad from the military point of view as far from being advantageous.[1] Nevertheless the advance on Baghdad was sanctioned on 23rd October, 1915. It was soon brought to a halt at Ctesiphon, and after a severe battle on 14-15 November, 1915, the British troops began to retreat and at Kut al-'Amara the retreating British Army under the command of General Townshend capitulated on April 29, 1916, after a long seige. The surrender of nearly eleven thousand British troops was a great blow, which necessitated a review by the British of the way the campaign was conducted and accordingly the responsibility for the campaign was transferred to the War Office, although policy making remained the concern of the India Office. After a period of reorganization and reinforcement a fresh attempt was successfully made by General Maude in early March 1917, which culminated in the capture of Baghdad on 11th March, 1917. By then the British Government and the India Government had further reasons for the occupation of Baghdad, which led Lloyd George, now Prime Minister, in February 1917, to urge Sir W. Robertson, "But you must give us Baghdad if you possibly can."[2] Among the additional motives for the occupation of Baghdad was the desire to control the area assigned to Britain by the secret agreements, particularly the Sykes-Picot agreement. Furthermore the British were anxious to destroy the effect of the

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1 Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia, 1914-1917, p. 226.
Also see Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, 1914-1918, Vol. II, pp. 42-43.
2 Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, 1914-1918, Vol. II, pp. 75-76.

humiliating defeat at Kut al-'Amara. The Under Secretary, India Office, in a secret note about the war with Turkey dated 1916 wrote,

> As regards the question of prestige, it would not be human nature, to say nothing of British nature, not to wish to efface the memory of the failure at Kut, ... The Taking of Baghdad would undoubtedly impress the Middle East, and would be an appropriate first step to the predominant position which is sought to be acquired for Great Britain in Lower Mesopotamia.[1]

A. T. Wilson argued that the knowledge that a possible Russian advance through Persia might lead to the occupation of Baghdad also encouraged the British Government to reach a quick decision about the advance on Baghdad.[2]

Part 2

On 11th March, 1917, Baghdad fell to the British troops, terminating four centuries of Ottoman rule and opening a period of British political supremacy. On 17th March, a proclamation was issued by General Maude, setting out what purported to be British policy:

> To the People of the Baghdad Vilayet
> .... our armies have not come into your Cities and Lands as conquerors or enemies but as liberators.
>
> Since the days of Hulaku your citizens have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into

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1 Cab./17/Vol. 168, Year 1916.
2 Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia, 1914-1917, p. 216.
Also see Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. III, pp. 125-126, 204. It was desirable for political reasons that the British should occupy Baghdad before the Russians.

> ruins, your gardens have sunken in desolation and yourselves have groaned in bondage.
>
> .... It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance that you should prosper .....
>
> But you, the people of Baghdad, ... are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realised again.

The declaration ended with a reference to the Hijaz revolt, the desire of the British Government to see the Arabs on their feet again, and an appeal:

> O! People of Baghdad .... I am commanded to invite you, through your Nobles and Elders and Representatives to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the Political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army so that you may unite with your kinsmen in the North, East, South and West in realising the aspirations of your race.

Behind this declaration there was a story of irony and conflict; the irony is that the draft of the declaration was written by the liberal-minded Sir Mark Sykes, but that it appeared over the name of the person who strongly opposed its publication, namely General Maude. Sir Percy Cox was also unhappy about Sykes's draft, which was preferred to his own draft, which was submitted on 8th March, 1917. Cox's draft was couched in very guarded and general terms: it put the blame on Turkey for starting the war and claimed that Britain was at war with Turkey and not with the Arabs, reiterated Britain's promise to respect the holy places, drew the attention of the people to the Turkish maltreatment of the Arabs and their holy places, and asked the people to compare the flourishing condition of Basra under British administration with the depressed situation of Baghdad during the period of Turkish control: the draft ended by saying:-

> It is for those who have the cause of Islam and of the Arab race and Arab progress at heart to co-operate with forces and Government of Great Britain in accomplishing the complete expulsion of the Turks, and thereby assisting to bring war to speedy conclusion, and to ensure their own emancipation. For the present they can best promote that end by going quietly about their daily vocations and assisting the British authorities to carry on normal administration.[1]

It mentioned nothing about the future of the country nor invited the population to participate in the management of civil affairs.

Sykes's draft, by contrast with Cox's, though written in flowery language, revealed definite sympathies with Arab Nationalism by its emphasis on the British role in Iraq as liberators rather than occupiers, with no desire to impose alien institutions on the people, and by its call for the unity of the Arab peoples to fulfil their national aspirations. As a result the proclamation tended to give the local population the impression that the political future of the country would be independence. This was, indeed, what Sykes personally wanted for the Arabs.

> Towards all Arabs, whatever their condition, whether independent allies as Ibn Saud and the Sherif, inhabitants of protectorates, spheres of influence, vassal states, we should show ourselves as pro-Arabs, and that wherever we are on Arab soil that we are going to back Arab Language and Arab race

Sykes had written this in June, 1916, before going on to say,

> that where we govern we shall employ Arabs in the administration where we do not employ Englishmen and that

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1 F.O. 371/3042/ From Political Officer, Basra, 8th March 1917, to Secretary of State for India.
Also in the same document: General Maude's telegram of 16th March 1917 to the Secretary of State for India objecting to the Sykes draft as unsatisfactory for the Jewish minority which was predominant in Baghdad as well as to the rest of the communities in Baghdad.

> where we employ Arabs we intend to give them the executive authority of their rank ... further that we do not intend to introduce the idea of a ruling race.[1]

The British authorities in Iraq belittled the proclamation and did not take it seriously. A. T. Wilson described it as a piece of "politics" in the American sense, designed for local consumption, and described its author as a "romantically-minded traveller".[2] Philip Graves, biographer of Sir Percy Cox commented that "It promised nothing" and went on to say "It only gave a vague general impression that the Allies looked favourably upon some sort of Arab union, and that was all, barring its purple patches and frequently inaccurate historical references."[3]

The division between Sykes and Wilson corresponded to that between the two schools of thought into which British official opinion was divided, the Indian school and the Egyptian school. McMahon's pledges to the Sharif of Mecca had already caused friction between the two, and the same theme recurred later. Mark Sykes's attitude was representative of the Egyptian approach. He considered India incapable of handling the "Arab question" basically because Indian officials were unduly influenced by the attitude of the Moslem Indians, who were pro-Turkish and highly suspicious of the Arab nationalist movement, which opposed the Ottoman Government and the Sultan-Caliph of Islam. Also, argued Sykes, Simla, the centre of the India Government, was excluded by its remoteness from

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1 Cab./17/175. Year 1916. Secret. "The Problem of the Near East" by Mark Sykes, dated June 20, 1916.
2 Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia, 1914-1917, pp. 239-240.
3 Philip Graves, The Life of Sir Percy Cox, London, 1941, p. 218.

effective contact with the war and remained obsessed by local Indian problems, and old traditions of racial superiority crippled the Indian approach:

> The Indian Government is accustomed to treat affairs relating to natives and native government from a social and political stand points as Englishmen and natives, based on a colour line and on dominion, in a way which is utterly alien to Arabs and Arabian questions. Moreover, Arabs detest the domestic habits of India and Indians, both Moslem and Hindu ... [1]

Although the Indian authorities, the India Office and the India Government, as early as 1915 had demanded the control of the whole of Iraq and the annexation of part of it, yet no definite policy for the future administration of Iraq had been decided, partly because it would have been premature to prejudge the outcome of the war and a peace settlement. The first serious attempt to formulate such a policy came soon after the occupation of Baghdad when the War Cabinet formed a committee, called the Mesopotamia Administration Committee, to consider the political future of Iraq, with Lord Curzon as chairman, and the Secretary of State for India, the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir F. A. Hirtzel, Sir T. W. Holderness and Sir Mark Sykes as members. On March 19, 1917, the Committee held its first meeting;[2] the summary of the important draft conclusions of the Committee were on 29th March 1917 communicated by the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy:

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1 Cab./17/175. "The Problem of the Near East" by Mark Sykes, June 20, 1916.
2 F. O. 371/3051/68626. Draft extract from War Cabinet 98, Minute 11.

1. Occupied territories to be administered not by Government of India, but by His Majesty's Government.

2. Busrah to remain permanently under British administration western and northern limits to be Nasiryeh, Shatt-el-Hai, Kut, Bedrai.

3. Bagdad to be an Arab state with local ruler or Government under British Protectorate in everything but name ....

4. Behind Arab facade Bagdad to be administered as an Arab Province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible. In particular (a) Irak Code not to be used but local judicial system maintained as regards both law and personnel, only substituting Arab for Turk; (b) similarly with executive and administrative machinery, tribal system of Government, provisional and local councils; (c) present land revenue system not to be disturbed; (d) employment of Indians in any branch of administration to be strictly discountenanced as inconsistent with the above principles, and no Asiatics from outside to be employed unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile. The same to apply as far as possible to Basrah Vilayet.

....

7. Shiah places to form separate enclave not under direct British control, care being taken not to include in it any important irrigated or irrigable areas.

....

Lastly, it is regarded of utmost importance that administrative arrangements introduced into Bagdad Vilayet should from the very outset strictly conform to above principles ... [1]

The India Office invited the India Government and Sir Percy Cox to offer their comments before the War Cabinet reached a final decision.

The Cabinet Committee's draft seems to have been shaped in conformity with Sir Mark Sykes's views. It severed India from Iraq by transferring its control to the British Government and by banning the employment of Indians in the new administration. Local administration was

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1 F.O. 371/3042/ From the Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, dated March 29, 1917.

to be preserved except for the substitution of Arab for Turkish ideas and personnel.[1] Most important of all, it was an implementation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, save that the blue area mentioned in the secret agreement was to be divided into the province of Basra under direct and permanent British rule and Baghdad under an Arab facade, but under effective British control in the form of a Protectorate.

Sir Percy Cox, Chief Political Officer in Iraq, replied on 7th April, 1917, tactfully and in detail. He did not comment on the transfer of Iraq from the India Government to the Foreign Office, but he took exception to the ban on the employment of Indian staff in the Iraq administration, at least during the period of the war. He showed a definite preference for a unified administration for both Baghdad and Basra, although if Baghdad were to be a separate state he could see no chance of finding a suitable Arab ruler. Hence, he argued, an Administrative Council presided over by a British High Commissioner would be a better solution. As to paragraph 4, he agreed to the maintenance of the existing laws and institutions, but again emphasised the advantages of having unified codes for both Baghdad and Basra and opposed the treatment of Najaf and Karbala as an enclave. Cox ended his reply with a warning that the military crisis was not over:

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1 Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia, 1914-1917, p. 255. A. T. Wilson commented on the India Office instruction of March 29, 1917: "The voice was that of the India Office, but the hand was that of the versatile Sir Mark Sykes, who was now the recognized Mesopotamian expert at the Foreign Office."

> Both Army Commander and I, however, are strongly of opinion that when His Majesty's Government contemplate formally introducing above principles during the existence of martial law, and while the military position of Baghdad is as it is (namely, that we are in almost daily conflict with Arab tribes ahead of us, and that unless determined Russian advance is made, of which at present there is no evidence, we must expect severe fighting around Baghdad when enemy has had time to recover and concentrate fresh troops against us), they are taking too much for granted, and are making demands upon us which may at any time, and in many particulars, be incompatible both with military interests at stake and the freedom of action of Army Commander .... At same time His Majesty's Government may rest assured that as long as I am here I will proceed on the spirit of it as far as possible and do nothing which I can avoid either in principle or in detail to prejudice its complete inauguration when the time comes. Army Commander desires me to convey similar assurance on his behalf.[1]

As a sort of afterthought he suggested the despatch of a special commission, probably in the autumn, to visit Iraq to study the situation on the spot with a view to formulating a future policy.

Sir Percy Cox's reply amounted to a request to postpone the implementation of the conclusions of the committee of the War Cabinet, until military conditions permitted so drastic a change. The subject was taken up again by the Mesopotamia Administration Committee at its meeting of May 8, 1917. Their recommendations were adopted by the Government and the following telegram was sent to the India Government:

> His Majesty's Government desire to assure you at once that they do not contemplate immediate establishment of an Arab administration on principles indicated in my telegram of 29th March. They fully realise that military situation requires that Army Commander and Chief Political Officer

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1 F.O. 371/3042/ From Sir Percy Cox to India Government, dated 7 April, 1917.
Also see Graves, The Life of Sir Percy Cox, pp. 241-3.

> should have free hand, but what they are concerned about is that nothing that can be avoided should be done during military occupation that would prejudice subsequent introduction of above-mentioned principles, and in particular establishment of separate administrative system for Basra and Baghdad. Subject to clear understanding on this point, Cox may carry on in consultation with Army Commander as heretofore, until whole problem has been examined and reported on by a Commission as he suggests. Such questions as administrative Councils, permanent Judicial system, regulation of Indian immigration &c., are reserved for consideration of Commission. Meanwhile only such minimum of administrative efficiency should be aimed at as is necessary to preserve order and meet needs of occupying force. Amendment of laws and introduction of reforms should be kept within narrowest possible limits.[1]

Thus the position by May 1917 was that the British Government had laid down the principles for the future administration of two separate Wilayas, Basra to be under permanent British administration and Baghdad to have a facade of Arab rule. In addition it had been decided to discourage the Indianization of the new administration and (encourage) the preservation of local laws and institutions with as little change as was necessary. In Iraq, Cox and Maude opposed immediate implementation of these policies, because they argued that they would hinder the fulfilment of their military objectives, and the British Government had no option but to accept deferment of its plans. Until conditions were more settled it was agreed that only a minimum of administrative innovation was called for, and that without prejudice to future developments. This was the end of the first round in planning the future of Iraq.

A few weeks later, in May 1917, the issue came up again as a

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1 Cab. 21/60. Confidential. Mesopotamia Administration Committee. Also see Cab. 27/22. Secret. Mesopotamia Administration Committee. Second meeting.

result of a clash of views and personalities between Cox, Chief Political Officer, and Maude, General Officer Commanding.[1] On May 25, 1917, Cox put his case in a "personal" telegram to the Secretary of State for India:

> General Maude's military successes have established his reputation as a soldier beyond all criticism, but he is purely a soldier and without any previous experience of the East or of Orientals, and I find him as is only natural, unsympathetic and somewhat intolerant in regard to political problems and unable to appreciate important bearing of apparently simple problems of daily occurrence on larger political and even military interests.
>
> With the limited power which I at present possess as his Chief Political Officer, which gives me no right to report to Government, and having regard to his pronounced divergence of outlook, I find myself unable to make good the undertaking which I have given to Government to allow nothing to be done calculating to prejudice their declared policy, and I realise that if that policy is to be safeguarded I must be placed in a stronger position vis-a-vis the Army Commander, and at any rate be given right to send a regular report ... to higher authority to keep them au fait with current questions and at large ...

Cox offered his resignation if his position was not to be modified and suggested that if he was to stay he be appointed as nominal High Commissioner as one way of strengthening his position.[2] After further discussion by the Mesopotamia Administration Committee and consultations with the War Office, the Secretary of State for India proposed to the India Government a solution, Cox to be appointed Civil Commissioner and in that capacity to send periodical reports to London about political and economic conditions and the progress of civil administration. It was proposed,

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1 Graves, The Life of Sir Percy Cox, pp. 222-230, gave a detailed account of the clash between Cox and Maude from Cox's point of view.

2 Cab./21/60. Confidential. Mesopotamia Administration Committee. Position of Chief Political Officer (Sir Percy Cox).

however, that the General Officer Commanding should remain, subject to the control of the Government, the ultimate authority in Iraq.

To make this clear,

wrote the Secretary of State for India,

> His Majesty's Government propose that the reports of the Civil Commissioner should be submitted to me through the General Officer Commanding, who will forward them with any observations which he may wish to make .... As by degrees normal conditions are re-established in parts of the territories, and the civil staff is increased and strengthened, it will be natural and desirable that a larger measure of independence should be conceded in civil affairs to Civil Commissioner.[1]

For Cox these proposals were good news, but for General Maude they were a setback and on 9th July, 1917, he wrote to the War Office, repeating the views reported by Cox:

> I would ask that I should be given every opportunity to concentrate my whole energies on this issue, (pursue of war) and that development of civil administration of Baghdad Vilayet, except as regards such matters as clearly do not clash with military necessity, and which we are already taking in hand, should wait until we are securely established here once for all. We are engaged in a vast war, the issues of which are vital, and it seems to be that if we attempt to combine general development of country with defeat of enemy, we shall be attempting too much, and we shall fail.

General Maude further argued that the creation of a civil administration, even unintentionally, might distract him from concentrating on his main task, that of winning the war. The future of the country had waited so long, the argument went, it might well wait another year by which time he expected to be militarily secure.[2]

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1 Ibid. Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, dated July 4, 1917. Also see F.O. 371/3051/122544 - 133910.
2 Cab./21/60. Position of Chief Political Officer (Sir Percy Cox).

On the face of things the two positions were not incompatible. Cox was asking for the right to report directly to the Government while Maude was against extensive expansion of the civil administration. Accordingly the Government decided in August, 1917, to give effect to a compromise. The Secretary of State for India telegraphed to the Viceroy on 14th August, 1917, that the authority of the General Officer Commanding should remain unimpaired and

> that only the minimum of administrative efficiency necessary to preserve order and to meet the needs of the occupying force should be aimed at; that the amendment of laws and introduction of reforms were to be kept within the narrowest possible limits; and that no large or controversial administrative questions were to be raised.[1]

Cox was to act as Civil Commissioner and send regular reports to the Government either through Maude or direct. With the exception of the change in Cox's position, these instructions reiterated the previous instructions of May 10, 1917. In practice, the new instructions did little to deflect Cox from his policy of building up the civil administration, and both Cox and his successor, A. T. Wilson, set out to expand the administration,[2] especially after Maude had died in November 1917.

Before August 1917 the British Government was primarily influenced by the attitude of the Cairo authorities and the Arab policy of Sir Mark Sykes, but thereafter increasing weight was given to the advice of the local authorities in Iraq. Cox and Wilson succeeded by

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1 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. IV, p. 27.
2 Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia, 1914-1917, pp. 164-265.

perseverance in obtaining the initiative on the spot, and by building up the civil administration in their own way soon began to dominate events. Life was made easy for them by the failure of the government in London to create an alternative source of information about local conditions, such as a commission of enquiry might have provided.

Until 1917 the future of the two wilayas of Baghdad and Basra was primarily a British imperial concern, and it was for the various British policy-making bodies, the India Office, the Foreign Office, the War Office, the India Government, the Cairo authorities and particularly the Arab Bureau, to harmonize and to a certain extent to reconcile different British views about the future of the area. The peace settlement at the termination of the war seemed certain to be in accord with British views, provided that the British could agree amongst themselves. The main principles of the prospective administration were laid down in March and August 1917, but the door to a future revision was left ajar by the decision to defer the creation of a permanent administration until after the Turks had been beaten.

After 1917 new developments at the international level made a great impact on the British government and induced it to have second thoughts about the future plans for the two wilayas of Baghdad and Basra. The advent of the United States of America in the arena of European politics and war, as well as the withdrawal of Russia from the war were the main factors which led to a change in the attitude of the British Government. The Russian withdrawal was accompanied by strong criticism of European imperialistic designs and the revelation of the secret agreements

between the Allies. The United States introduced, or rather tried to introduce new rules for the game of war and politics, notably in the Fourteen Points of President Wilson, of 8th January, 1918. The twelfth point was of particular relevance to the future of Iraq, since it upheld the right of self-determination of nations, and by implication negated the claims of the Allies to annex the conquered areas of the German and Turkish empires. These two factors set in train a strong wave of anti-imperialism. One major outcome was the abandonment of the Sykes-Picot Agreement by Britain, not as a result of the conversion of the British government to the anti-imperialist camp, but as part of a change in tactics. The old drive on strategic grounds for political and economic predominance in Iraq remained.

The British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, on January 5th, 1918, showed the way the tide had turned in a much-publicised speech on War aims. He referred to Iraq in the following context:

> Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine are, in our judgment, entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions.

But he made it plain that this did not yet involve a complete reversal of British policies:

> What the exact form of that recognition in each particular case should be need not here be discussed, beyond stating that it would be impossible to restore to their former sovereignty the territories to which I have already referred.[1]

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1 Lloyd George, The Truth About Peace Treaties, London, 1938, Vol. II, pp. 758-759.
Also Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. VI, p. 23.

Continued/

This statement obviously excluded the annexation of Mesopotamia or any part of it, but Lloyd George had been careful to leave a loophole which would later enable Britain to demand British political and economic predominance in Iraq. It was now necessary for the British departments concerned with Iraq to find a new formula other than that of March 1917. Sir Arthur Hirtzel of the India Office set out the new position in a note dated January 11, 1918, to the Middle East Committee, which now replaced the Mesopotamia Administration Committee. After reference to the Prime Minister's war aims speech and President Wilson's Fourteen Points and also to pledges to the Sharif of Mecca, Hirtzel raised the question:

> What does national self-determination mean as applied to these regions? Is Mesopotamia to be treated as a separate unit for this purpose, and, if so, what body or bodies in Mesopotamia are to exercise the right; and what steps are we taking or can we take to see that they exercise it the right way?
>
> Annexation (e.g. of Basra) is presumably now out of the question, or even the veiled annexation contemplated in the Anglo-French agreement. The Arab facade of which the Committee talked must be something more than a facade. What do we propose?

It seems to have been clear to Hirtzel that Britain's ultimate objective in Iraq was British predominance: the question was now simply a matter of means.

Also see Cab./25/42. Memorandum by Professor Oman, "Turkey in Asia and its Problems", dated January 8, 1918. Suggested by Mr. L. George's recent speech.

> "Tempting as the idea of a British annexation of all or the southern part of Mesopotamia appears, under the Indian Civil Service it would develop into one of the great grain producing districts of the world - it is probable that the repudiation of "Imperialism" must necessitate the putting aside of the notion .... "

> It is clear that somehow or other we must retain predominating influence in Mesopotamia. By what means?
>
> It has been proposed to send out a commission to study these questions on the spot ....
>
> Suggest that the entirely altered political conditions in Europe be put fully to Sir P. Cox by telegraph, and be asked what proposals he can make.

Meanwhile Hirtzel urged the need for British commercial expansion in Iraq while Britain was alone in the field.[1]

In Cairo, the British authorities were increasingly worried by the growing volume of Turkish propaganda among the Arabs, especially after Russia's disclosure of the secret agreements among the allies. Sir Reginald Wingate suggested as a counter measure a new announcement to the Sharif of Mecca making it plain that Britain intended to keep its promises to the Arabs, and "that His Majesty's Government will countenance no permanent foreign or European occupation of Palestine, Irak, (except province of Basrah) or Syria after the war", and that foreign interference in Arab affairs would be limited to assistance and protection.[2] This statement would have reduced the future British role in Baghdad to one of assistance and protection, which could hardly be acceptable to the India Government or the British authorities in Baghdad. Both the India Government and Sir Percy Cox took very strong exceptions to Wingate's proposal, and emphasised instead the necessity of effective

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1 Cab./27/23. Secret. War Cabinet, Middle East Committee. "Future of Mesopotamia" by Sir A. Hirtzel, dated January 11, 1918.

2 F.O. 371/3380/14573. From Sir R. Wingate (Cairo), dated 22nd January 1918.

British control over the area.[1] Thereupon, Wingate, who was in closer touch with the rising Arab nationalist movement, in which the Iraqi officers were an important factor, sought the co-operation of more sympathetic British officials. He wrote to Sir Mark Sykes on February 10, 1918:

> I have heard unofficially that you are now installed at the Foreign Office and definitely in charge of the politics of this side of the theatre of war ....
>
> The "Mesopotamians" are apparently taking fairly kindly to the idea of British rule: but here, and amongst the more sophisticated Arabs elsewhere, there is an increasing doubt as to our (Entente) intentions and an open distrust of French aims upon Syria.
>
> ... I also agree that anything like annexationist or selfish Protectionist proposals will stand self-condemned at any future conference regarding the future of the Arab countries: and I sometimes wonder whether India's view about Irak etc. has given sufficient attention to this aspect of the matter .... [2]

At that time Sykes seemed to have undergone a considerable change of view. The architect of the Anglo-French agreement, which to his dislike became known as the Sykes-Picot agreement, was anxious to abandon it. Sykes argued that the circumstances that necessitated its conclusion had been changed by the withdrawal of Russia and the entry of the United States in

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1 F.O. 371/3380/18462. From Sir P. Cox, to Foreign Office, repeated to S/S for India, and Cairo, dated 25th January, 1918. Cox denied the existence of any sort of Arab restlessness in Iraq, and found no reason why Iraq be included in such an announcement; he deplored treating Iraq as a pawn in negotiations with the "Young Arabs of Egypt and the Sherif", and lastly Cox argued that in the world faced with cereal shortages Iraq could be a great centre of production provided "fully effective administration is maintained ... "
Also see F.O. 371/3380/19106. From Viceroy, dated January 28, 1918. Concurred in Cox's view and went further to urge the modification of McMahon pledge to the Sharif by impressing the Sharif to agree to the continuance of British administration of both wilayas of Basra and Baghdad.

2 F.O. 371/3398/36795. Cairo, 10th February, 1918, signed by R. Wingate.

the war, and by recent declarations about the future of Constantinople such as Lloyd George's war aims speech.[1] But the change was not confined to Sykes. The Prime Minister, Lloyd George, also disapproved of the Sykes-Picot agreement, which he later described as a "foolish document".[2]

The Middle East Committee, previously known as the Mesopotamia Administration Committee, during early 1918 considered the effect of the new developments on their policy in Iraq, and adopted the policy outlined in Hirtzel's note of January 11, 1918, which was communicated by the Secretary of State for India to Sir Percy Cox on 9th February, 1918. Cox was asked to come to Cairo for consultation:

> It concerns question of adjusting policy of His Majesty's Government, as to future of Mesopotamia described in telegram of 29th March, 1917 to latest developments of political and military situation in Europe and to peace pronouncements of Entente Powers, the adjustment to be such as to interfere as little as possible with the progress of the country under British auspices ...[3]

So began the second round in Britain's attempts to plan the future of Iraq.

Sir Percy Cox proved to be the victor of the second round. On 20th February, 1918, Cox received another telegram from the India Office requesting him to come to London rather than Cairo for consultation, an indication that the issue of the future of Iraq was becoming more urgent. When Cox reached Cairo on his way to London, a meeting was held on March 23,

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1 F.O. 371/3399/31030. Memorandum by Sir Mark Sykes, "Anglo-French Agreement (Asia Minor), 1916", dated February 16, 1918.
2 Lloyd George, The Truth About Peace Treaties, p. 1025.
3 Cab./27/23. Middle East Committee - War Cabinet. Telegram No. p. 538. Personal and Confidential. Dated 9th February, 1918. Also F.O. 371/3398/27459.

1918, in the Residency, at which, besides Cox and the High Commissioner, there were a number of others present, Brig. General G. F. Clayton, Col. Wilson, Lieut. Col. Symes, Lieut. Col. Jacob and two prominent members of the Arab Bureau, Commander Hogarth and Major Cornwallis. This was a direct confrontation of the two rival schools of policy, the Indian school represented by Cox alone and the Egyptian school represented by the others. Sir Reginald Wingate expressed the view that with Russia out of the war, Turkey's position had become stronger and that the Arabs, realising this, had become more inclined to reach an agreement with the Turks. Wingate did not consider this development altogether objectionable from the British point of view, but thought that it might lead to a situation like that in Egypt before the war, when under nominal Turkish suzerainty European advisers dominated the administration. Sir Percy Cox's views on Iraq were much more forthright and anti-Turkish:

> ... that in view of our Baghdad proclamation the people of Mesopotamia no doubt expected some form of Arab facade to the administration but it was essential that there should be complete British financial and administrative control, free from the slightest Turkish taint. They did not apparently contemplate or demand any Arab individual as ruler. The above seemed a reasonable and satisfactory solution to the question ... on the other hand, if the trend of the general political situation made it necessary to retain a nominal recognition of Turkish suzerainty ... Sir Percy Cox did not consider that the solution would be a difficult one to arrange; ... [1]

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1 F.O. 882, Vol. 3. Arab Bureau Papers, No. AP/18/1. Very Secret. Arab Bulletin Supplementary Papers, dated Cairo, April 1, 1918. Also, F.O. 371/3407/70822. Secret. Account of a meeting held at the Residency on March 23rd, 1918.

It will be noticed that Cox, as in previous communications, tended to give the impression that the people of the country, Iraq, were passive where they did not positively favour a British administration. This impression was later also given in his talks in London. This was a very strong point in the arguments of Cox and other British officials in Iraq: if the man on the spot said the people wanted the British to rule them and no contrary view had reached the British Government, there could hardly be an opposition to Cox's views, especially when Cox reinforced his arguments by occasional reminders of the great wealth of the country and the need for effective British administration to develop them. In London Sir Percy Cox submitted a detailed memorandum, "Future of Mesopotamia", to the Middle East Committee, dated April 1918. The memorandum was in two parts: the first laid down the principles for future administration and the second contained comments on details. After reference to the new developments, namely President Wilson's statements and Lloyd George's war aims speech Cox wrote:

> I gather that it is now proposed to deliberate as to what particular steps or line of action are advisable in order to square our working policy with the above principle and announcements ....

Cox then suggested a way to reconcile Britain's interests and the principles of the Allies.

> I assume that, if at the end of the war we find ourselves in a sufficiently strong position, and in effective administrative control, we should still hope to annex the Basrah Vilayet and exercise a veiled protectorate over the Baghdad Vilayet; but it is recognised that the question of annexation has become exceedingly difficult vis-a-vis the President of the United States, who will presumably exercise the most potent influence at the Peace Conference. Our original proposals must consequently be regarded as a

> counsel of perfection and we must be prepared to accept something less.

The something less which Sir Percy Cox would settle for was the annexation of Basra and the elimination of Turkish rule from the rest of Mesopotamia: the retention of the Turkish suzerainty would only be acceptable as a last resort. His argument for Basra was that:

> ... we have the strongest grounds, in view of our assurances to the inhabitants and the millions of money we have sunk in making the port, for standing out for the annexation of Basrah and from thence to the sea, with a small block of territory necessary to round off the enclave.

This was a change of policy, since annexation was to be limited to a small area rather than to the whole of Basra Wilaya as proposed in the 29 March, 1917, telegram. As regards the Wilaya of Baghdad

> ... we must set our faces against the admission of the slightest Turkish element or participation in the administration. In this connection, I should mention that when I was in Cairo it was suggested that, as events were shaping, we might be obliged to decide to come to some compromise with Turkey at any moment; I also learnt there of Sharif Faisal's secret overtures to the Turks; and when asked my opinion I expressed the view that if in the last resort we were compelled to come to some compromise with Turkey I did not consider that the retention of nominal Turkish suzerainty need be considered altogether incompatible with the realisation of our practical aims, always provided that the country were safeguarded against the least control or interference by Turkey in the administration. As cases in point we have the precedent of Egypt and the more pertinent one of Koweit. The fact is that the bulk of the people of the country are not concerned with abstract theories or niceties of international principles, for example, as long as the Shaikh of Koweit feels assured that his interests are under our practical protection, and are safe in our hands, he does not trouble his head as to whether in the distance Turkish suzerainty exists or not. I think the position would be the same in the case of the inhabitants of Iraq, where nine-tenths of them are altogether inarticulate, and all they are concerned with is the manner of their treatment by the Government actually in control of Baghdad. As regards the remaining tenth, who are capable of understanding the real

> issues, they would, of course, not be completely reassured (supposing that the fiction of Turkish suzerainty were being maintained) unless they were absolutely safeguarded against the participation of Turkey in the administration ...

Cox's division of the people of Iraq into ninety per cent inarticulate and ten per cent enlightened inhabitants, who according to Cox would need reassurance that Turkey would have no say in the administration, ruled out any possibility of pro-Turkish elements or even Arab nationalists. This, as later events revealed, proved to be an underestimate of the strength of the last two elements. But at the time it was accepted without question. Cox in his Memorandum recurred to the same points raised in his reply of April 7, 1917. He advised, in particular, that the administration of the two Wilayas should be unified:

> ... in my very definite opinion that a homogeneous administration in all practical aspects is not in any way incompatible with a technical difference of political status, and that it is essential in the interests of the country that the administration of both Vilayets should be uniform ...

As for the precise form of the administration to be established in Baghdad (Basra was not included on the presumption that it could be made to fit in with Baghdad) the premise from which Cox started was that the administration should be under British guidance and direction "and the more complete the British control can be, the better for the country." Because "unless it is assured the country has no future, for it would be impossible to get money for its development unless investors are satisfied that their interests are fully safeguarded, a condition which cannot be assured except under protective British supervision." Cox suggested two alternative patterns of administration, the first and, as Cox put it,

> The most satisfactory solution would seem to be government by a High Commissioner assisted by a Council, formed partly of the Heads of the most important Departments of State, and partly of representative non-official members from among the inhabitants. But the foreign relations of such a government must obviously lie in British hands, and it would thus be practically a British protectorate.

The second alternative, which would apply only in case of opposition by the Powers to the first proposal, would be the establishment of a titular native ruler. He would be a mere "nominal headpiece" and the title would be something such as Sultan or Hakim (Ruler) which fell short of the full title of King. Sir Percy Cox suggested the Naqib of Baghdad as a possible titular head and at the same time objected to any scheme that would introduce the Sharif Husayn or his family into Iraq.

The second part of Cox's memorandum is chiefly concerned with the view that in Iraq local people for staffing the new administration did not exist and that he had, especially for the higher posts, to rely on non-Arab staffs; and also the view that the administration should not be based on Indian models. But there was also an important section about the social groups that should be encouraged and with whom the British administration should work. The first was the Jewish community and Cox recommended that Dr. Weizmann, the prominent Zionist leader whom he had met in Cairo on his way to London, should be requested to visit Baghdad or send a representative to Baghdad to persuade the Jewish community to support the British administration. The second social group identified as likely to be pro-British consisted of the Arab notables in the cities of Baghdad and Basra:

> They are a somewhat impecunious and backward element, but one which it is very necessary to encourage and take

into our counsels as far as possible.

Thirdly, support was to be had from the wealthy landlords, both Arab and Jewish, and the leading shaykhs of the settled tribes. This identification of the sources of support for a British administration became the basis of subsequent British policy.[1] Gertrude Bell, who enjoyed an ever-increasing influence in Iraq, shared Cox's views. She sent with Cox a private letter to her friend Lord Hardinge of the Foreign Office, in which she expressed similar views to those of Cox.[2]

The War Cabinet Middle East Committee adopted Cox's memorandum and authorized Cox to proceed accordingly; but in fact the job was left to his successor, A. T. Wilson, because in July, 1918, Cox was transferred to another post in Persia. A. T. Wilson's assumption of responsibility in Iraq was the beginning of a long period of disillusionment and conflict in planning the future of Iraq, which will be discussed later. Meanwhile the British Government was becoming increasingly disenchanted with the Sykes-Picot Agreement. On June 20, 1918, Foreign Secretary Balfour declared in the House of Commons that the

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1 F.O. 371/3387/142404. Enclosure - "The Future of Mesopotamia" by Sir Percy Cox. London, 22nd April, 1918.

2 Burgoyne, Gertrude Bell, pp. 78-79.
A letter dated February 22, 1918, from Bell to Lord Hardinge, included the following passage
"... The stronger the hold we are able to keep here the better the inhabitants will be pleased .... they can't conceive an independent Arab government. Nor, I confess, can I. There is no one here who could run it. As far as you can get at public opinion - you can't get at it by any other means than personal intercourse and the impression derived therefrom - ....
One other point which I've no doubt Sir Percy will develop: there must be an administrative distinction between the two vilayets."

secret treaties concluded during the war under certain conditions were no longer an obstacle to peace and that the Allies were ready to listen to "reasonable suggestions".[1] As Balfour explained in August, 1918, however, there was no intention of prejudicing Britain's interests in Iraq, where it was "vital necessity for the British Empire to secure a settlement which would not endanger our facilities for obtaining oil from this region".[2] Furthermore, the abandonment of the Sykes-Picot agreement meant in fact an extension of British control northwards, to include the whole Wilaya of Mosul, which was assigned by the agreement to France. The allocation of Mosul to France had been a matter of expediency, because Britain at the time was reluctant to have a common border with Russia and Mosul was intended to form a buffer separating Russia from Britain. Such a buffer had been sought both by Lord Kitchener,[3] and by Sir Mark Sykes. Indeed, Sykes's biographer says boldly that "Giving Mosul to France, however, was Mark's idea".[4] Once Russia was out of the war, Sykes was one of the first leading officials to change his mind about the future of Mosul, and as early as October, 1917, he expressed the view that Mosul should be added to the area to be placed under British control.[5] Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, was also anxious to include Mosul within the

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1 Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. I, pp. 189-190.
2 Cab./23/7. Secret. War Cabinet (with Prime Ministers of Dominions) meeting at 10 Downing Street, London, dated August 13, 1918.
3 Documents on British Foreign Policy, Series I, Vol. IV, p. 374. Memorandum by Balfour, September 9, 1919.
4 Shane Leslie, Mark Sykes: His Life and Letters, London, 1923, pp. 249-250.
5 Ibid., pp. 273-275. From a letter from Sykes to Lord Robert Cecil, October 13, 1917.

British sphere of influence, chiefly because of its potential wealth, particularly its oil. Lloyd George subsequently, in The Truth about Peace Treaties, argued that the Sykes-Picot Agreement had been discredited, and that "the British authorities were convinced that in at least two respects amendment was essential. The first in regard to the severance of Mosul from Mesopotamia. Deprived of the grain and oil supplies of this region, Irak would have been seriously crippled financially and economically."[1] Furthermore, Lloyd George argued that an extension of British territorial claims would, during an eventual peace conference, be an asset to bargain with.[2] Thus the War Cabinet in its meeting on October 2, 1918, agreed on the desirability of advancing as far as possible in Iraq and the General Officer Commanding British Forces in Mesopotamia was instructed accordingly.[3] Needless to say these instructions were well received by the British authorities in Iraq, particularly A. T. Wilson, who was anxious to bring Mosul under British control. On October 16, 1918, A. T. Wilson telegraphed suggesting that in case Turkey offered a cessation of hostilities and an armistice was concluded, the British side should insist on the military occupation of the Mosul. In a minute on that despatch, Sir Mark Sykes expressed his

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1 George, The Truth about the Peace Treaties, pp. 1037-8. The second influence on British policy mentioned, concerned Palestine.
2 Lord Hankey, The Supreme Command, London, 1961, Vol. II, p. 599.
3 Cab./23/8. Secret. Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet on October 2, 1918.
Also see Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. IV, p. 259. Instruction to advance as far as possible up the Tigris before Turkey would ask for the cessation of hostilities.

concurrence.[1] And that was what in fact had happened, because the city of Mosul was occupied on 8th November, 1918, eight days after the conclusions of the armistice with Turkey on 30th October, 1918. Thus the war ended with Britain in control of the three wilayas of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul.

Part 3

On the 30th of October, 1918, an Armistice was concluded with Turkey, which ended four years of war. British policy in Iraq until then had been based on the two documents of March 29, 1917 and April, 1918. Since, however, Cox's memorandum of April 1918 did not lay down a definite course of action but rather kept open a number of alternative courses, to be dependent on events after the war, British policy was in a fairly fluid state. There had not even been a decision about the form of British rule. Cox proposed,

> government by a High Commissioner, and in the discussion at a meeting of this committee he suggested that the High Commissioner might be assisted, if required by a cabinet half of natives and half of British officials, behind which might be an administrative

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1 F. O. 371/3413/176006. From Political Officer, Baghdad, 16th October, 1918. Also F. O. 371/3413/176, a minute by Mark Sykes on a despatch from C. P. O., Baghdad about Mosul, dated 16th October, 1918.
Also see 371/3384/180424. From Political Officer, Baghdad, 27th October, 1918. Wilson expressed the same desire of occupation of Mosul.
See also Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 18.

> council, or some advisory body consisting entirely of prominent natives.... If a figurehead had to be set up, he would recommend an old gentleman, Naqib of Baghdad....[1]

But until the end of the war no action was taken in that direction. Gertrude Bell in May, 1918, objected to the appointment of the Naqib: "I feel quite sure that the Naqib would not be acceptable here.... He has scarcely ever counted here except as a religious factor and is not politically a personality."[2] But nothing was done to settle the matter, A. T. Wilson was not officially informed of the government's acceptance of Cox's memorandum, although Sir Percy Cox on his way to his new post in Persia reported to him the result of his discussions in London. Wilson in accordance with Cox's memorandum, proceeded in September, 1918, to amalgamate the administrations of Baghdad and Basra,[3] but he did not take any step towards Arab participation in the administration. More important was that, although Wilson in compliance with the government instructions of August, 1917 refrained until the end of the war from raising any question of policy, he embarked on building up a civil administration.

> I presumed, perhaps rightly, that if the Oracles were dumb, it was because their doubts were even greater than ours. Our duty as the 'men on the spot' seemed clear - to go ahead and, to the best of our ability, to re-create out of the wreckage of war a system of civil administration adequate to the needs of the people of Iraq....[4]

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1 F. O. 371/4148/13298. War Cabinet - Eastern Committee. Secret. 39th Meeting. November 27, 1918. Annex.
2 F. O. 371/3407/143466. To Lord Hardinge from G. Bell, dated Baghdad, May 25th, 1918.
3 F. O. 371/3381/159486. From Chief Political Officer, Baghdad, 15th September 1918. A month later the India Office sanctioned the amalgamation. "Note by Political Department, India Office", dated October, 1918.
4 A. T. Wilson, Mesopotamia 1917-1920, A Clash of Loyalties, London, 1931, p. 99.

Once the Armistice had been concluded the issue of future policy in Iraq became the overriding one. There was a general belief among the British authorities in the need for British control over Iraq: the question was what area, degree and means of British control were desirable?

It fell to the Eastern Committee of the Cabinet, which was subsequently replaced by an Interdepartmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, to formulate a policy. The British Government and the Committee were out of touch and lacking in ideas and direction about the future policy in Iraq; plans for the despatch of a special commission to study the position on the spot failed to come to anything. Originally, Sir Percy Cox had suggested the despatch of a commission to Iraq during the cold weather of 1917-1918, but no attempt was made because of war conditions until September 27, 1918, when Wilson revived the suggestion.[1] Though the India Government objected, the India Office welcomed the idea, but the Eastern Committee came out against it because it feared that it would provoke suspicions among the Allies that Britain had "stolen a march on them by creating a system of government in advance."[2] Also Wilson lost interest in the despatch of the commission after the publication of the 8th November, 1918 declaration. Wilson wrote on 23rd November, 1918:

> The Anglo-French declaration of 8th November has radically modified local situation, and the arrival of a Commission at this juncture would be widely misunderstood. Until the future status and form of government of this

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1 F.O. 371/3381/159486. From Political Officer, Baghdad, 27th September, 1918.

2 F.O. 371/4148/13298. War Cabinet - Eastern Committee. 39th Meeting. November 27th, 1918. Annex.

> country has been decided, which cannot happen for some months, and will involve reference and consultation with representative of people of Iraq, the deliberations of proposed Commission can scarcely be of value as the necessary data on which an announcement can be founded will not be forthcoming. Apart from this my whole energies and those of the principal members of my staff will be required for the delicate and responsible task of ascertaining trend of responsible indigenous opinion in Mosul, Southern Kurdistan, the Baghdad and Basra vilayats, and neither I nor my staff can now afford to devote the time necessary to prepare data for guidance of Commission.[1]

As the British government was precluded from ascertaining conditions for itself, it welcomed proposals and recommendations from any informed source. An array of suggestions reached the Cabinet Committee during the few months after the Armistice: General Mac donogh submitted a memorandum advocating a single state comprising the three wilayas, with 'Abdulla, the second son of the Sharif of Mecca, as head, with a direct British administration controlled by a British Resident at Baghdad. This was followed by another proposal, submitted on 4th November, 1918, by Colonel T. E. Lawrence, recommending the establishment of three Arab states: Lower Iraq from Basra to 'Ana and Lower Zab in the north to be under 'Abdulla; Mosul under Zayd; Syria under Faysal. Commander Hogarth, a reputed authority on the Middle East and prominent member of the Arab Bureau, submitted a memorandum on 15th November, 1918, advocating a separate state in Mosul wilaya.[2] But the view of the man on the spot would naturally carry special weight.

In Iraq A. T. Wilson (born 1884 - died 1940) was in charge of the

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1 F. O. 371/3387/194885. From Political Officer, Baghdad, 23rd November, 1918.
2 F. O. 371/4148/13298. War Cabinet - Eastern Committee. 39th Meeting. November 27th, 1918.

administration. He succeeded Sir Percy Cox in April, 1918 as Acting Civil Commissioner and remained at his post until October, 1920. The personality and convictions of Wilson had a strong effect on the development of political events in Iraq between 1918 and 1920. John Marlowe in his recently-published biography of A. T. Wilson, has dealt with his career in great detail.[1] Here it suffices to mention certain facts about Wilson. From his early years, wrote Marlowe,

> Arnold was already, in his own estimation, a dedicated man, dedicated to the bearing of the White Man's Burden. His reading, his predilections, his chosen profession, the example of his half-brother Edward, the spirit of the time, had made of him a convinced Imperialist.... He was deeply read in British Imperial history and interested in the minutiae of Imperial administration. He was already looking beyond a career in the Army to the prospect of governorships, governor-generalships and viceroyalties.[2]

After graduation from the military college in 1903 he went to India, where he joined the political service. When British forces began the invasion of Iraq he was appointed as Assistant to Sir Percy Cox, the Chief Political Officer with the Indian Expeditionary Force.

Wilson professed himself an ardent believer in Milton's exhortation, "Let not England forget her precedence of teaching the nations how to live."[3], but for Wilson it was not only by setting a good example but also by carrying the cross of civilisation to the backward peoples of the east. Wilson wrote:

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1 John Marlowe, Late Victorian, The Life of Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson, London, 1967. Part Two.
2 Ibid., p. 21.
3 Sir Percy Cox, "Iraq", United Empire, Vol. XX, No. 3, March, 1929, p. 143.

> The faith that was in us was this, that Britain's contribution to the welfare of mankind is to infuse the principles of Christianity into its governance. We believed of 'Iraq, as did Herbert Edwardes of India, that the British Government held 'Iraq in trust, that 'Iraq needed something more than the advantages of material civilization, and that our policy should be first to fit 'Iraq for freedom and then to set her free. We believed that till 'Iraq was leavened with the principles of Christianity she would be unfit for the exercise of freedom.[1]

In Iraq Wilson advocated a policy of direct and effective British rule because he did not believe in the ability of the Iraqi people to administer their own affairs. First under the direction of Cox and then on his own initiative he set out to build up the British civil administration in the occupied areas of Iraq. Wilson was a hardworking and energetic officer but the trying conditions in Iraq, the climate and hard work, had an adverse effect on him and after his illness in late 1915, he was not "really a well man"[2] for the rest of his time in Iraq. A puritanic crusader by nature, he was consistent and persistent in his views and demands. Until the conclusion of the Armistice he was under the impression that the British government shared his own views and that Iraq would become a British protectorate, similar in status to Egypt under Lord Cromer.[3] When the course of events showed that the British government was prepared to take a different line, Wilson persistently fought for his own policy against the policy-makers in Whitehall. The

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 193-194.
2 Marlowe, Late Victorian, p. 108.
3 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 110.

undecidedness and the inefficiency of the policy-making machinery in London helped Wilson to get his own way until the autumn of 1919, when the gulf between the British government and Wilson became so wide that it was thought necessary to contemplate Wilson's replacement by Cox. Nevertheless, Wilson continued in his attempts to effect a change in London's attitude. The following is a characteristic letter from him to his friend, Captain G. G. Stephenson in the India Office, dated 15th September, 1919, at a time when the tide was turning against him.

> I am not loved in the India Office I should think by now, I shall be less loved before long. They seem determined to do this country down if they can by making suitable political arrangements, and I have no intention of allowing them to do it, if it can be prevented by anything that I can say or do.[1]

And even when Wilson had already lost the confidence of the British government and it had been decided that Cox was to relieve him, he wrote again to the same friend on June 9th, 1920.

> Please do not think from the nature of my telegraphic correspondence that my tail is in any other position but its usual one, but I intend to put the wind up the Cabinet and I imagine that I shall have succeeded. If they thought that they would shut my mouth by giving me a K. they are much mistaken.[2]

When the Armistice had been concluded on 30th October, 1918, Wilson prepared a statement without reference to London, which was delivered by the Commander-in-Chief on 2nd November, 1918. It gave no indication as to the political future of Iraq, but announced measures

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1 Sir Arnold Wilson Papers. Vol. II. Add. MS. No. 52456.
2 Ibid.

designed to relax wartime austerities, e.g. the return of non-Turk prisoners of war, the free movement of trade and personnel in the occupied area, and the opening of the route to the sacred places for pilgrimages and for the conveyance of bodies for burial at Karbala and Najaf.[1] It was a great disappointment to Wilson when a radical declaration was made in Europe a few days later, namely the Anglo-French declaration of 8th November, 1918. This at once became one of the most important declarations made to the Arabs, not only because of the promises it made, but also because of its timing, just after the end of the war when the tide of nationalism was rising among the Arabs. The Anglo-French declaration boosted the hopes of the nationalists and, unlike most policy documents, was widely publicised. The declaration read as follows:

> The end which France and Great Britain have in view in their prosecution in the East of the war let loose by German ambition is the complete and definite liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national Governments and Administrations drawing their authority from the initiative and free choice of indigenous populations.
>
> In order to give effect to these intentions France and Great Britain are agreed to encourage and assist in the establishment of indigenous Governments and Administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia, which have already in fact been liberated by the Allies, and in countries whose liberation they are endeavouring to effect, and to recognize the latter as soon as they shall be effectively established. Far from wishing to impose any particular institution on these lands, they have no other care but to assure by their support and effective aid the normal working of the Governments and Administrations, which they shall have adopted of their free will. To ensure impartial and equal justice, to facilitate economic developments by evoking and encouraging indigenous

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 101-102. See also Compilation of Proclamations, Notices, etc. from October 31st, 1914 to August 31st, 1919. No. 31.

> initiative, to foster the spread of education and to put an end to the divisions too long exploited by Turkish policy - such is the role which the two allied Governments assume in the liberated territories.[1]

In the manner of a Puritan crusader, Wilson tried to destroy the effects of what he called the "disastrous error"[2] of publishing the Anglo-French statement, and throughout his correspondence with London he endeavoured to discredit it.

The declaration was a piece of "politics". It was meant to abate the increasing apprehension of the Arabs in Syria towards the Allies, particularly, France.[3] It served also to impress the American Peace Delegation in Paris, and especially President Wilson.[4] It was not the intention of the French or the British to go along with the desires of the indigenous peoples if it appeared to be against their plans or interests. This led in due course to a situation in which the high expectations raised by the declaration among the Arabs were frustrated by contradictory acts by the two Powers.

On 10th November, 1918, A. T. Wilson telegraphed to London that

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1 Compilation of Proclamations, Notices, etc. from October 31st, 1914 to August 31st, 1919. No. 32.

2 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 103. See also H. B. Philby, Arabian Days, London, 1948, p. 173. The 8th November 1918 Anglo-French Declaration, "to Wilson it was a veritable bombshell, shattering in advance the gigantic imperial structure, of which he had long dreamed as covering the whole area of the Middle East."

3 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 110-111. India Office telegram dated 30 Nov. 1918. See Lloyd George, The Truth About the Peace Treaties, Vol. II, pp. 1036-7. See also F.O. 371/3384/180425. India Office telegram dated 28th Oct. 1918.

4 Zeine, Struggle for Arab Independence, p. 205.

he intended to proceed with the establishment of municipal councils and divisional local councils. The municipalities in the urban centres were to have limited authority and to consist partly of appointed members and partly of elected members. The divisional local councils were to be established in the rural areas: "To ensure full benefit of co-operation by tribal leaders and large landowners in administration of these territories" wrote Wilson "I am reviving forthwith .... the institution of divisional local councils, which already existed in somewhat nebulous form in Turkish times."[1] These councils were advisory and all their members would be appointed by the Political Officers of the Divisions. These two institutions were to assist in the education of the people in self-government, and, until "time is ripe", for a second step, namely the creation of an advisory or legislative assembly for the whole area.[2] No doubt this move was a disappointment for the indigenous population, or for those of them who expected far more from the Anglo-French declaration, because municipalities and councils had existed for a long time under Turkish rule, when they were elected rather than appointed.

A few days later, on 16th November, 1918, Wilson, apparently indignant at the new trend in policy, wrote a most revealing despatch to London:

> I should not be doing my duty if I did not first of all record my conviction that the Anglo-French Declaration of November 8th, in so far as it refers to Mesopotamia, bids

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1 F.O. 371/3407/188752. From Political Officer, Baghdad, 10th November, 1918. No. 9696.
2 Ibid., and also telegram No. 9695 of the same date.

fair to involve us in difficulties as great as Sir Henry MacMahon's early assurances to the Sharif of Mecca.

... unless the latter is superseded or modified by a pronouncement of the Peace Conference I anticipate that in years to come we shall be faced with the alternatives of evading the spirit whilst perhaps keeping within the letter of this Declaration, or of setting up a form of Government which will be the negation of orderly progress and will gravely embarrass the efforts of the European Powers to introduce stable institutions into the Middle East.

The Declaration involves us here on the spot in diplomatic insincerities which we have hitherto successfully avoided and places a potent weapon in the hands of those least fitted to control a nation's destinies.

I would emphasize the almost entire absence of political, racial or other connexion between Mesopotamia and the rest of Arabia.

If the future status of this country is to be dealt with successfully it must, I am convinced, be treated independently of Arab problems elsewhere.

The Arabs of Mesopotamia will not tolerate that foreign Arabs should have any say in their affairs, whether those Arabs come from Syria or from the Hijaz....

The average Arab, as opposed to the handful of amateur politicians of Baghdad, sees the future as one of fair dealing and material and moral progress under the aegis of Great Britain, and is clear-sighted enough to realize that he would lose rather than gain in national unity if we were to relinquish effective control. He will learn more quickly than the Indian. But he is still behind him in education and experience.

Irrespective of this, the tribal element is a constant potential source of dissension and grave public insecurity. Nor can we afford to ignore the mutual contempt and jealousy that exist between townsmen and tribesmen.

With the experience of my Political Officers behind me, I can confidently declare that the country as a whole neither expects nor desires any such sweeping scheme of independence as is adumbrated, if not clearly denoted, in the Anglo-French Declaration.

The Arabs are content with our occupation; the non-Muhammadan element clings to it as the tardy fulfilment of the hopes of many generations; the world at large recognizes that it is our duty and our high privilege to establish an effective protectorate and to introduce a form of Government which shall make possible the development of this country, which

> in spite of centuries of neglect is still the ganglion of the Middle East.
>
> If we allow ourselves to be diverted from this path by political catch-words, our soldiers will have fought and died in vain and the treasure we have lavished in this country will in the eyes of the world and of the peoples of the Middle East have been wasted; for it was not merely to defeat Germany that we came here.
>
> I submit, therefore, that our best course is to declare Mesopotamia to be a British Protectorate, under which all races and classes will be given forthwith the maximum possible degree of liberty and self-rule that is compatible with that good and safe Government to which all nations aspire but so few now enjoy....[1]

It is evident from the passage quoted that Wilson based his argument on two basic premises, first that the great majority of the populace did not want independence and, more important, desired British control, secondly that it was Britain's duty to assume responsibility for the spread of civilization and development in the country.

Two questions arise from Wilson's telegram of 16th November, 1918. First, if the Arabs in Iraq would "not tolerate that foreign Arabs should have any say in their affairs" why should they want the British, alien in race and religion, to control their affairs? Secondly, if the majority of the people of Iraq wanted British rule, why should Wilson fuss and worry about the Anglo-French Declaration, which professed adherence to the wishes of the people? This contradiction was partly resolved in his telegram to the India office dated 19th November, 1918:

> H.M. Government will doubtless bear in mind that during the next four months several thousand Arab prisoners of war

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 104-105.
See also F.O. 882/13. In the last paragraph it differs from Wilson by using 'think' instead of 'submit'.

> will be repatriated to Mesopotamia, including some fanatical pro-Turks and some of the worst characters in the country; also several hundred ex-Turkish officials of Arab race whose anti-British proclivities were the cause of their arrest. Their arrival will of course be a source of no little embarrassment. The problem, however, has to be faced; any lack of definiteness in our status, policy, or aims in this country will greatly add to difficulties confronting this Administration during the period of reconstruction.[1]

Otherwise, Wilson seemed confident of the attitude of the people in Iraq.[2] When a few days later the India Office communicated to Wilson Lawrence's proposal for the creation of three Arab states with the three sons of the Sharif Husayn as rulers, Wilson quickly replied on 20th November, 1918, strongly objecting to the proposals, notwithstanding the cautionary clause in the India Office communication that "it is of course understood that both states would be in the British sphere and Lower Mesopotamia under effective British control".[3] Wilson described Lawrence's proposal as "totally impracticable and unsuited to conditions of Mesopotamia", and emphasised the advantages of unified administration of all Iraq. Wilson in particular opposed a Sharifian solution, "I have stated that Mesopotamian Arabs will not tolerate domination of foreign Arabs" and augmented his objection to the proposals by referring to the attitude of

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1 F.O. 882/13. From Political Officer, Baghdad, to Secretary of State for India, dated 19th November, 1918.
2 Ibid. Telegram from Political Officer, Baghdad, to Secretary of State for India, dated 20th November, 1918.
3 F.O. 371/4148/13298. From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department, repeated to Baghdad, dated November 18th, 1919. See also F.O. 882/13.

the minorities and even the nationalists.

> The argument applies with double force to Jews and Christians, who (particularly the former) are numerous and powerful communities, and would indisputably demand, and probably secure, consular protection and the consequent maintenance of the capitulation with their attendant evils....
>
> Acceptance of policy of effective British control of Iraq involves substantial modification of Anglo-French Proclamation, which will doubtless create certain amount of resentment among small politically-minded Muhammadan section in Baghdad who have been busily engaged since November 10th in spreading stories of the return of Turkish rule or its Arab equivalent and have thereby aroused already an amount of apprehension and unrest which bodes ill for the future of any such scheme. If British control was coupled with introduction of a foreign puppet ruler, as suggested, this class would have strong weapon for seditious propaganda and would certainly use it.

Wilson concluded his telegram with an emphatic appeal to the British Government "to exclude this country definitely once for all from any contemplated Sharifian settlement and from further discussion in that connection, our past conversations with the Sharif notwithstanding".[1]

Wilson, who was most probably aware of the Government's undecidedness, sent another telegram on 24th November, in a further attempt to prevent any move in the Sharifian direction, and suggested a definite alternative. Wilson argued (in rather contradictory terms) that in Baghdad the consensus was for a single Arab state including Mosul, under an Arab Amir (Prince) with a British High Commissioner and Advisers in all the ministries and departments; and that all were agreed that Sir Percy Cox

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1 F.O. 882/13. From Political Officer, Baghdad, to Secretary of State for India, dated November 20, 1918.

should be the first High Commissioner. However "None agree as to the Amir to be chosen".[1] Then Wilson mentioned four possible Amirs, Hadi al-'Umari, a member of the family of the Sultan of Egypt, a son of the Sharif of Mecca, and lastly, the Naqib of Baghdad. He added:

> I am now advised that the third proposal would meet with widespread acceptance in Baghdad, and that it would probably be well received outside, because all know who the Sherif is. It is also considered that he would be acceptable to Shiahs on account of the Sharif's well-known latitude in religious views. I am, however, strongly opposed to it. For reasons connected with Persian Gulf and Central Arabian politics and on other grounds.[2]

However, Wilson submitted in the same telegram a workable alternative:

> A fifth alternative has not yet been discussed in Baghdad, but if I might be authorized to suggest it would probably meet with immediate acquiescence in Baghdad and would be even more acceptable to the rural districts, namely, that Sir P. Cox should be appointed High Commissioner for the first five years without any Arab Amir or other head of the State, but with Arab Ministers backed by British Advisers. I earnestly hope that this course will be adopted if it is at all compatible with our national peace policy and the general scheme of things in Arabia.

This alternative, argued Wilson, would give the British

> ... a breathing space during which settled Government would be more firmly established and the thinking classes given some education in the management of their affairs and opportunity to look beyond the City walls would be of immense advantage to the whole country.[3]

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1 Ibid. From Political Officer, Baghdad, to Secretary of State for India, dated November 24, 1918.
See also Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 107-108.

2 F.O. 882/13. From Political Officer, Baghdad, dated 24th November, 1918.
The word "advised" is used instead of "convinced".
Also see Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 108.
Also see Ireland, Iraq, pp. 158-9.

3 Ibid.

This proposal was in fact reminiscent of Cox's April, 1918, memorandum, with minor modifications. Since Cox's memorandum had previously been accepted by the British Government, Wilson must have had every hope of securing the Government's concurrence, especially as he backed his proposal by suggesting that steps might be taken to ascertain the views of the people by a plebiscite.

The British Cabinet's Inter-departmental Committee, at its meeting on 27th November, 1918, reviewed the political position in Iraq in the light of Wilson's telegrams. The Committee decided to authorize Wilson to put three questions to the people of Iraq:

> 1. Do they favour a single Arab state under British tutelage stretching from the Northern boundary of the Mosul wilayat to the Persian Gulf?
>
> 2. In this event, do they consider that a titular Arab head should be placed over this new State?
>
> 3. In that case, whom would they prefer as head?
>
> In our opinion it is of great importance to get a genuine expression of local opinion on these points, and one of such a kind that could be announced to the world as the unbiassed pronouncement of the population of Mesopotamia.[1]

These questions were intended to resolve the differing views of the Sharifian school, which as represented by Lawrence advocated the division of Iraq into two states with Sharifian rulers, and the Indian school, as represented by Wilson, which advocated a unified Iraq under direct British rule. There was, however, no difference about the necessity of British overlordship over Iraq, as the telegram of 30th November, 1918, made clear:

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1 F.O. 882/23. Arab Bureau Papers. Paper No. Mes/19/17. Enclosed telegram from Secretary of State for India to Political Officer, Baghdad, dated 28th November, 1918.
See also Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 110-111.

> It will doubtless be necessary to establish at first a large measure of supervision by the British and to retain the control of foreign relations entirely in British hands.... We do not, however, contemplate annexation, nor, as far as can be seen at the moment, to make a formal Declaration of Protectorate. An analogy might be made to the position of Egypt before the war, exclusive of the capitulations.[1]

The question, for the British government, was a matter of form, rather than a question of independence of or dependence on the British.

Originally the idea of a plebiscite was Wilson's, and the British government sanctioned it without any indication as to the methods of its implementation, except that it should elicit the "genuine expression of local opinion". The implications and effects of the plebiscite on the people are discussed elsewhere. However, Wilson in his instructions to his political officers about the methods of conducting the plebiscite precluded "genuine expression of local opinion".[2] On 30th November, 1918, Wilson communicated to his political officers his correspondence with the government that had led to the authorization of the plebiscite, cited the three questions, and proceeded:

> In connection of the first point mentioned you should ascertain whether the inhabitants of your area wish to form part of an Iraq State, stretching from Raqqah on the Euphrates and Jazir inb 'Umar on Tigris exclusive to Basrah and the headwaters of the Greater and Lower Zab. This question only arises in Kurdistan, Mosul Wilayat and Dair uz Zor. But it is of the highest importance. It should be understood by those whom you consult that the alternative is

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1 Ibid.
2 Ireland, Iraq, pp. 160-175. Criticism of the plebiscite and the manner in which it was conducted.

> the establishment of a separate State, including roughly the Mosul Wilayat, not under Turkish but probably not under British protection and deprived of free commercial intercourse with Mesopotamia and of the material benefits which the British in the East alone have the power to bring to these territories.[1]

Wilson said nothing about the desirability of British control over lower Iraq, nor were the people asked about it. As regards the last two questions, concerning the desirability of an Amir and who that Amir might be, Wilson referred them to the correspondence between the government and himself.

As to how the plebiscite should be carried, Wilson wrote:

> As soon as you conveniently can after the receipt of this letter, you should discuss the questions raised therein confidentially with the principal personalities in your area, and ascertain from them what the trend of public opinion is likely to be, and inform me accordingly. When public opinion appears likely, under the guidance of the persons you have consulted, to take a definitely satisfactory line, you are authorized to convene an assembly of all leading notables and shaikhs with a view to placing before them the above questions, informing them that their answers will be communicated to me for submission to Government. When public opinion appears likely to be sharply divided or in the unlikely event of its being unfavourable, you should defer holding a meeting and report to me for instructions.
>
> In such cases, it may be anticipated that the favourable verdict of neighbouring districts will tend to have a favourable effect in forming public opinion. When opinion is favourable, it is desirable it should be reduced to writing and signed by as many as possible.[2]

According to these instructions the plebiscite was to be held

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1 F.O. 882/13. Secret and Confidential. From the office of the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 30th November, 1918, to the Political Officers. See also Ireland, Iraq, pp. 161-162, cited the document but it differs slightly in wording, noticeably, the remission of the word "probably" before "not under British protection".

2 Ibid. F.O. 882/13.

among the "leading notables and shaikhs". It denied the masses, cultivators, petty traders, labourers, ex-officials and officers, who in fact constituted the larger part of the educated people, the right to give their views. Of the tribal people, it recognised only the leading shaykhs, who were in fact those in agreement with or who owed their position to the government. A further point in these instructions was that the political officers were to try to elicit a 'favourable' response rather than the genuine view of the people. Of course it must be asked what Wilson meant by a 'favourable' response, but government communications were silent on this point, as they were on the question of British control or independence. But on these points Wilson had expressed strong views in his correspondence with the government which was enclosed in his instructions to his political officers. It would be right to deduce, therefore, that the implication was whether the views expressed by the Arabs coincided with his own or not.

It is hardly surprising in the circumstances that the results of the plebiscite were in conformity with Wilson's views. The returns favoured a single state of Iraq including the three Wilayas, and though a large minority favoured an Arab Amir with British guidance, there was no consensus about the personality of the Amir.[1] Wilson's position was strengthened by these results vis-a-vis the pro-Sharifian line which was popular in Cairo. The British Government was pleased by the results, which resolved any possible conflict between the policy of effective British control and the terms of the 8th November, 1918, declaration. "H.M.

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, Appendix III. Self-Determination in Mesopotamia, by Miss G. L. Bell, February, 1919.

Government greatly appreciate care and thoroughness with which you have executed delicate task entrusted to you" wrote the Secretary of State for India [illegible] on 14th February, 1919, to Wilson, and went on to say:

> As you are deputing Miss Bell to make fuller statement of case H.M. Government will take no action if they can avoid it until she arrives. Meanwhile they will be glad if you will telegraph outline of constitution of the Arab State or group of States which you would propose on basis of wishes of inhabitants as disclosed in your telegrams and of necessity of effective and indisputable British control. By Anglo-French declaration we are committed to indigenous administration, and we must adhere to this in spirit as well as letter. Our objective should be a flexible constitution giving full play to the different elements of the population, and recognising and incorporating local peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, such as will provide for Arab participation in an increasing measure as time goes on in the actual government and administration of the country and prevent Arab Nationalism from being drawn into permanent opposition to British control.... [1]

It now appeared that the meaning of the Anglo-French declaration had been restricted to gradual Arab participation in an administration under effective British control. This was, no doubt, what Wilson was trying to achieve.

A few days later, on 20th February, 1919, Wilson drew up a draft reply to the India Office telegram of 14th February, 1919, and circulated it to the political officers in the divisions for comment. Wilson's draft began by stipulating four assumptions, that a new state of Iraq would comprise the three wilayas, including Dayr al-Zur, that there would be no Arab Amir, but administration by a British High Commissioner, that effective British control would be ensured by the retention of adequate

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1 F.O. 371/4148/27510. From Secretary of State to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 14th February, 1919.

military and air forces, and, lastly, that Britain would provide during the early stages of the new administration, a measure of financial support to Iraq. Having established these points he put his proposals:

> Iraq to be ruled by a High Commissioner, having under him four Commissioners controlling provinces as follows:-
>
> 1. Basrah, ...
> 2. Baghdad, ...
> 3. Euphrates, ...
> 4. Mosul, ...
>
> The grant of some autonomy to the Kurds of Kurdistan had better be left to our initiative and not laid down in the Peace Conference if this can be avoided. If, however, Kurdistan be given separate status there will be five provinces.

He proposed to establish Divisional and Provincial Councils as advisory and deliberative bodies. The former had already been suggested in his November 10th, 1918, telegram to the Government. The members of the Divisional Councils would be appointed and would in turn choose the member of the Provincial Councils. "Experience shows that elective bodies are unsuited to present conditions." Wilson's view about how the local population should participate in the administration was:

> I am of opinion that the legitimate demand for active participation in actual government and administration can best be met, not by creating central legislative or deliberative Councils, but by giving carefully selected Arabs of good birth and education belonging to Iraq by birth from the very outset positions of executive and administrative responsibility....
>
> In pursuance of this policy, I should be prepared to instal selected Arab officers as Governors of Baghdad, Basrah, and Amarah, with a specially chosen British official of ability and character as Municipal Commissioner and Adviser to the Governor, in which dual capacity he could control finances and mitigate inevitable

inefficiency in early stages.[1]

The replies of all the political officers were favourable to the creation of the Provinces and the Provincial and Divisional Councils. The Revenue and Financial Secretary, E. B. Howell, suggested that the provinces should be defined in more satisfactory geographical terms, and argued that a better division would be Basra, Baghdad, Tigris from 'Amara to Diyala mouth, Euphrates, Upper Euphrates. As regards Arab participation in the administration and the proposal to appoint an Arab governor, the replies varied from acceptance to strong objection. Howell, initially opposed the appointment of an Arab governor and preferred Bonham-Carter's proposal to set up an Arab council of ministers with British advisers responsible for a number of departments, but a few days later he changed his mind and came out in favour of British heads of departments with Arab advisers and agreed to the appointment of Arab governors but subject to limitations and conditions.[2] S. H. Longrigg, Political Officer, Kirkuk Division, was all in favour of Arab participation. "The Arab official may well be the gradual and unlimited sharer of our bureaucracy. And to this there is no limit."[3] F. C. C. Balfour, Military Governor and Political Officer, Baghdad, did not favour the idea of Arabs holding any high executive position.[4] R. E. Wingate, Political Officer, Najaf, was against the idea

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1 F. O. 371/4148/60942. Secret. Mesopotamia: Future Constitution. Draft reply to Secretary of State's telegram of 14th February, 1919.
2 F. O. 371/4148/60942. Secret. Mesopotamia: Future Constitution. Enclosure No. 5. Note by Revenue and Financial Secretary, Baghdad, 21st February, 1919. Also Enclosure No. 6, dated 27th February, 1919.
3 Ibid. Enclosure No. 12. Note by P. O., Kirkuk, 27th February, 1919.
4 Ibid. Enclosure No. 7. Note by Military Governor and P. O., Baghdad, 24th February, 1919.

of Arab governors, which "for the present", wrote Wingate, is "impossible owing to the backwardness of the Shiahs. They should not be given the opportunity of accepting a Sunni; it will create trouble later, if not now."[1] The comment of the Basra Political Officer was, "I do not agree as to Arab Governor for Basra on ground that people themselves desire a just and impartial head.... No man who could be appointed could give public satisfaction, could be free from intrigues and from nepotism."[2]

G. E. Leachman, another prominent officer as Political Officer for the Mosul Division, agreed with the draft.

> Presumably intentionally, but in our opinion certainly wisely, the policy you have outlined only commits Government to the inclusion of Arabs in civil administration to a small degree, and even then with practically no executive powers. A Divisional Council is to have advisory and deliberative powers only. A Provincial Council is to enjoy considerable powers, but not legislative.... Speaking from my own knowledge of Mesopotamia, I only know two Arabs fit to exert direct control, and neither of these are natives of Iraq. The officers I have consulted know of none.[3]

The political officer for Ramadi Division also doubted the existence of Arabs capable of undertaking any executive task.[4] The 'Amara Political Officer emphatically said "I totally disagree with Arab Governors, and with the designation 'Governor'."[5]

Apparently all agreed with Wilson's proposal about the Provincial

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1 Ibid. Enclosure No. 9. Note by P. O., Najaf, 24th February, 1919.
2 F. O. 361/4148/60942. Secret. Mesopotamia: Future Constitution. Enclosure No. 10. Telegram from Political Officer, Basra (Major A. S. Meek), 2nd March 1919.
3 Ibid. Enclosure No. 11. Note by Political Officer, Mosul, 26th February, 1919.
4 Ibid. Enclosure No. 13. Note by Political Officer, Ramadi, 3rd March, 1919.
5 Ibid. Enclosure No. 14. Note by Political Officer, 'Amara, March 1919.

and Divisional Councils, and with the minor role to be assigned to the Arabs. However, some were even less liberal than Wilson and envisaged no way for Arab participation in the near future and opposed the idea of Arab Governor. The only voice which called for greater Arab participation than Wilson proposed was that of the Judicial Secretary, Sir Edgar Bonham-Carter. He criticised Wilson's draft reply because it did not "go far enough, either to satisfy the declarations which had been made on behalf of the British Government nor to put the Arabs in a position to obtain a fair and increasing share in the administration." Bonham-Carter agreed with the proposal to create Provincial and Divisional Councils, but went much further than Wilson by suggesting the early appointment of Arabs as Assistant Political Officers and Deputy Assistant Political Officers. "I consider also that the positions of importance should be given to Arabs in the Civil Administration either as Ministers or as Assistant Secretaries and that a Legislative Council should be formed," argued Bonham-Carter.[1] These proposals did not involve the relinquishing of control by the British, but were rather designed as a safeguard against lowering the status of the Arabs and the solidification of the British bureaucracy against a future increase in Arab participation in the administration. With the exception of Carter, who was well acquainted with the Sudan and Egypt, the general attitude of the administration favoured a minimum of Arab participation, and it would be far from the truth to assume that this was merely a

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1 Ireland, Iraq, pp. 183-184. From Carter to Wilson, dated March 11, 1919.

reflection of Wilson's attitude.[1]

On 6th April, 1919, Wilson submitted to the India Office his draft reply of 20th February, 1919 and the notes of the Political Officers, with a covering letter modifying his draft at two points: first by adopting Howell's suggestion about the division of the Provinces; secondly by agreeing to the postponement of the appointment of Arab Governors, because of the general opposition from his political officers. Wilson pointed out that:

> In the existing circumstances it is not possible to submit more specific proposals than those contained in the enclosed correspondence. They have been framed on the most liberal basis compatible with the maintenance during the next few stormy years of public order....
>
> They represent in my view and in that of my staff the limit to which we can safely go at present, i.e. the maximum for which local opinion is prepared and of which local personnel is capable.

Wilson concluded his letter by recommending in case his proposals were accepted the appointment of Sir Percy Cox as High Commissioner, in September or October, 1919.[2]

Meanwhile Wilson was instructed to proceed to Paris for consultation with the British Delegation to the Peace Conference. From Paris he went on to London, where he attended in April 1919 the meetings of the Inter-departmental Committee for Eastern Affairs under the chairmanship of Lord Curzon. Curzon (an ex-Viceroy of India) proved sympathetic to

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1 Ibid. pp. 183-184. Ireland gave the impression that Wilson's proposals did not have the whole-hearted support of the Political Officers. He failed to see that Wilson's proposals of 20th February were a draft and were modified in his letter of April 6th, 1919, in accordance with the less liberal view of many of his Political Officers.

2 F.O. 371/4148/60942. Secret. Mesopotamia: Future Constitution. Letter from Lieut.-Colonel A. T. Wilson, Baghdad, 6th April, 1919.

Wilson's proposals, and with the array of notes by the Political Officers in Mesopotamia to back them, the Committee agreed to accept them, "almost without discussion" as Wilson put it later.[1] But in fact there were limits to that approval. The first was that "the time was not yet ripe for the appointment of a High Commissioner and of provincial commissioners"[2] as suggested. The second limit was the decision to leave Mosul under a separate administration. On May 9th, 1919, the Secretary of State telegraphed to Wilson, who had just returned to Baghdad, the government's acceptance:

> You are authorised to proceed with creation of five provinces for Iraq proper in general conformity with lines of division recommended by Howell in enclosures 5 and 6 of your letter. Also of Arab province of Mosul, bordered by fringe of autonomous Kurdish State under Kurdish chiefs with British political advisers. Provisional formation of provincial Councils, and development and consolidation of municipal and divisional Councils are also approved...[3]

Wilson was far from happy with this telegram, although he had agreed to its contents during his meeting with the Inter-Departmental Committee in April, and to the surprise of London he telegraphed on 7th June, 1919, to the India Office:

> Until further status of Mosul Vilayat vis-a-vis Mesopotamia has been decided in principle it is difficult, if not impossible, for me to proceed with measures of

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 122.
2 Young, Independent Arab, pp. 285-286. The author was the Secretary for the Committee and these decisions were taken during the meetings attended by Wilson himself.
3 F.O. 371/4149/72964. From Secretary of State to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, May 9th, 1919.
See also Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 123, failed to mention the word 'provisional' before "formation of provincial Councils..."

constitutional organisation proposed in my Despatch[1] of 6th April and approved in your telegram of 9th May.

What motivated Wilson to press for a declaration about Mosul, when a month earlier at the discussions in London he did not take a stand on the issue? Why according to his last telegram was it so vital a matter as to jeopardise the whole constitutional plan? Surely not fear of abandoning Mosul to the Turks or for that matter to the French, because as he revealed in his book, he was well aware of Britain's determination to retain it. In fact, it was because of the nationalist upsurge, Arab, Turkish and, to a lesser extent, Kurdish, which had begun to assert itself in opposition to the British domination. Wilson in his draft reply of 20th February had been aware of its existence, as he wrote, "Political discontent, always with us, will increase; the appetite of the Arab Nationalists will grow, and they will grudge if they be not satisfied." But Wilson then brushed the nationalists aside as inherent difficulties "in the otherwise favourable position which our armies have won for us in the East, and we must not be deterred thereby."[2] But when Wilson returned to Baghdad after nearly two months absence, his optimism gave way to a feeling of uneasiness about the rising trend of nationalism. Wilson's reaction to the advent of the International Commission to Iraq demonstrates that change. He wrote on 30th May, 1919:

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1 F.O. 371/4149/90611. From Political Officer, Baghdad, 7th June, 1919.
2 F.O. 371/4148/60942. Secret. Mesopotamia: Future Constitution. Enclosure No. 4. Annex. Draft reply to Secretary of State's telegram of 14th February, 1919. Third paragraph before last.

> When at Paris, I expressed the view that advent of Commission was politically highly inexpedient, but not dangerous. In present circumstances, with Kurdistan in state of ferment, I am obliged to modify this view. In Kurdistan and Mesopotamia alike the visit of the Commission is likely to undermine de facto position of European Powers in the Middle East, where our military position is not so strong that we can afford to neglect popular sentiment....[1]

Mosul Wilaya comprised a large part of southern Kurdistan, and the city of Mosul, because of the circumstance of its occupation and the French claim under the Sykes-Picot agreement, had been assigned a separate administration under British control, notwithstanding Wilson's requests to amalgamate it with the rest of Iraq. The British government was anxious to avoid giving rise to French suspicions.[2] The approximity of the city of Mosul to Turkey and Syria exposed it to outside influences more than the rest of Iraq, and consequently the nationalist trend, whether Arab or Turk, was in the ascendant. Wilson, who was now the prisoner of his recent judgement of the nationalist movement, sought to stem the rising trend against the British by eliciting a definite declaration from his government about Mosul which, presumably, would rally the "moderate" elements to his administration and against the nationalist.

The British Government was working under the impression, given by Wilson during his visit to London in April, 1919, that they had already approved of measures to increase Arab participation in the administration. Lord Curzon, who sponsored Wilson's proposals, could not see the logical

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1 F.O. 371/4181/86913. From Political Officer, Baghdad, dated 30th May, 1919.
2 F.O. 371/3384/180049. From Foreign Office, November 2nd, 1918, to India Office.

connection between setting up a provisional constitution and Wilson's insistence on a declaration of intent about Mosul. The British Government was also thinking in terms of France and the Peace Conference, and they did not want to arouse the suspicions of the members of the Peace Conference by giving the impression that the British Government had unilaterally decided the fate of Mosul and Iraq. So, to the disappointment of Wilson, the India Office on 5th July, 1919, passed on Lord Curzon's instructions "to refrain most scrupulously from giving rise to any impression in the Mosul Vilayet or elsewhere that the future political status of Mesopotamia has already been decided upon."[1]

British policy in Iraq was conducted in double harness by the Foreign Office and the India Office, with the Inter-Departmental Committee for Eastern Affairs in between to co-ordinate policies. The India Government, the War Office, and the Arab Bureau as an advisory body also maintained the right, to varying degrees, to advocate or criticize Government policy in that area. In addition to the complexity of the policy-making machinery, [illegible] personal differences made for complications. Curzon of the Foreign Office and Montagu of the India Office did not get on, and there were other differences lower down in the administration. Furthermore, after the beginning of the Peace Conference at Paris in January, 1919, the determination of the future of Iraq ceased

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1 F.O. 371/4149/92972. From Foreign Office, June 30th, 1919, to Under Secretary of State for India Office. And (F.O. 371/4149/9917, dated 5th July, 1919) Wilson was informed accordingly.

to be a British Imperial concern and became an international question, involving the other Allied Powers. On 30th January, 1919, the Council of Ten decided in Paris that Iraq and the other Arab territories were to be completely severed from the Ottoman Empire. Then there was a time lag of nearly six months, before the next decision by the Peace Conference that had direct bearing on the future of Iraq, namely the signature of the Treaty of Versailles on 28th June, 1919, which included the Covenant of the League of Nations. Article 22 of the Covenant dealt with mandates, under which Iraq was to be placed:

> To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late War have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.
>
> The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.
>
> Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.
>
> In every case of mandate, the Mandatory shall render to the Council an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge.
>
> The degree of authority, control, or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory shall, if not previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, be explicitly defined in each case by the Council.

> A permanent Commission shall be constituted to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the mandates.

Britain had no doubt about obtaining the mandate for Iraq,[1] but the snag was that Mosul, according to the Sykes-Picot agreement was to be under French control, and British de facto control of the district was not enough to ensure French consent to its transfer to British control. Lloyd George used the opportunity of Clemenceau's official visit to London in December 1918, to impress on him the need for changes in the Sykes-Picot agreement in regard to Mosul and Palestine, which were instantly accepted by the French Prime Minister and on the 15th of February, 1919, the French government officially recognized the modification.[2] But what had been established behind the scenes needed the formal recognition of the Peace Conference, which for reasons beyond the scope of this work, was delayed until April, 1920, when the San Remo Conference disposed of the mandate issue by assigning Iraq, including Mosul, to Britain. Until then, the British Government refrained from declaring any definite constitutional plans for the future of Iraq, for fear of arousing the suspicion of her Allies.

It was argued by many officials and others that the delay in the conclusion of the Peace Conference delayed the evolvement of the Iraqi

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1 Cab. 23/10. Secret. War Cabinet 567. Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, dated May 14, 1919. Curzon note.

2 H. H. Cumming, French-British Rivalry in the Post-War Near East, London, 1938, p. 59.
See also Temperley, History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. VI, pp. 141-142.

policy of the British Government. This was no doubt true as far as time was concerned, but, in fact, Britain as the power in occupation of Iraq, had unlimited freedom in the orientation of the future administration of Iraq. A comparison between developments in Iraq and Syria demonstrates the consequences of that freedom. While both countries were under British military control the people of Syria were allowed to proceed with the establishment of an Arab administration and government, yet Iraq remained under centralised British-Indian administration without the participation of the Arab. The apologists of the British administration in Iraq have argued that when Iraq was occupied the country was devoid of any local administrative machinery because of the withdrawal of the Turkish officials, the destruction of documents and the lack of Arab personnel capable of performing administrative tasks, and to a certain extent what they have said was true. But it does not explain the continuation and expansion of the British direct administration and the sudden establishment of an Arab government and administration in late 1920, which no doubt indicate the existence of a potential Arab administration, since it could have not been created overnight. In fact the discrepancy was due to the policy laid down by the India and British governments, which envisaged the annexation of part of Iraq, or at least its direct control by India or Britain, and the Sykes-Picot agreement had endorsed that ambition. On the other hand, Britain did not entertain such ambitions in Syria, but rather in contradictory agreements, the Sykes Picot and Husayn-MacMahon correspondence, freely assigned Syria to the Arabs and to the French, leaving it to British post-war diplomacy to reconcile the contradictory

claims of the Arabs and the French.

Besides the Peace Conference at Paris there were several factors outside London and Baghdad that influenced the evolution of British policy in Iraq, during 1919-1920. The attitude of France and the United States of America was first on the list. The French influence was of a negative character, and was dominated by the British reluctance to accept the French claim to Syria. Indeed, the French seem to have been ready to contemplate all sorts of changes in the Middle East, provided only that they got something out of it. "If the British would give up Mesopotamia" De Caix, a French official in the Foreign Office was reported to have said in September, 1919, "France would be only too glad to give up Syria, and thus leave intact the Turkish Empire."[1] Balfour, as British Foreign Secretary, was well aware of the difference between the British attitude towards Iraq and that towards Syria. In a memorandum dated September 9, 1919, "Some difficulties to be borne in mind in any Syrian negotiations", Balfour wrote:

> On whatever basis the arrangement with the French is arrived at - whether Sykes-Picot or League of Nations or any other - it will be difficult to shew reason why Feisal should have a larger measure of independence in Damascus and Eastern Syria than we are prepared to accord to him or other Arab rulers in Mesopotamia.[2]

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1 Cited Kedourie, England and the Middle East, p. 133. Yale Papers at the National Central Archives, Washington. Interview with de Caix, September 13, 1919.

2 Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, 1st Series, Volume IV, p. 373. No. 265.

Negotiations with the French tended, therefore, to make for a more liberal policy in Iraq, and, as Lawrence put it, "so long as we are more liberal we call the tune" because the French tended to argue "France in Syria as British in Mesopotamia".[1]

The United States posed another factor for the British to reckon with. After the entry of the United States into the War and the subsequent declaration of the right of national self-determination, the British government became well aware of the need to adjust its objectives in Iraq to those of American policy. It was, therefore, prepared to abandon the long-cherished hope of annexing Basra. When America became an influential member of the Peace Conference the need to gain its support became correspondingly more important.[2]

From Syria came other pressures, this time from an Arab government and from the Iraqi officers living in Syria. As has already been pointed out both the Iraqi officers who served in the Hijaz and Faysal himself, showered the British authorities with appeals and memoranda asking for a change in the British administration in Iraq in the direction of a wider Arab participation. These appeals carried a particular weight because they came from representatives of the more moderate elements in the nationalist movement and from those with a basically pro-British inclination.

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1 Ibid. Letter from Colonel Lawrence to Earl Curzon, September 25, 1919, pp. 422-424. No. 296.
Also see Young, Independent Arab, pp. 290-291.

2 F.O. 371/4148/13298. War Cabinet - Eastern Committee. Secret. 39th Meeting, dated November 27, 1918. During the discussion it was pointed out that to gain the American support the British needed the Arab support and that of King Husayn of Hijaz.

Their alternative to Wilson's direct British administration was a sort of a compromise between that and complete Arab independence, which would no doubt safeguard British interests without jeopardising Arab aspirations. General Clayton reported in June, 1919, that Faysal professed:

> As regards Mesopotamia, the Emir felt that an agreement should be made between Great Britain and the Arabs without recourse to the Peace Conference. He hoped that the Arabs would have a semblance of independence in that area, but realised that they must have some sort of control the details of which should be worked out between the two parties concerned. He was anxious that British officials in the Iraq should be answerable, not to India, but to London or, preferably, Egypt.[1]

The Iraqi officers and Faysal provided the British government with an alternative approach to the situation in Iraq. Wilson was indignant that this should be so, and strongly objected to any official communication with the officers, whom he described as small fry. However, as the gulf between the British government and Wilson's administration widened during the second half of 1919 and early 1920, the more the alternative provided by the Iraqi officers and Faysal appealed to the British government, until it became their last card in the summer of 1920 when an armed rising took place in Iraq against the British administration.

The pro-sharifian British officers and officials, sometimes referred to as the "Western school",[2] exerted a major influence against Wilson's administration. They were by no means advocates of the

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1 Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939. 1st Series, Vol. IV, p. 286, No. 199. General Clayton (Cairo) to Earl Curzon, dated June 23, 1919.

2 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 95, 12 July, 1917, from Mark Sykes' speech. Cd. 2192-2193.

abandonment of Iraq, nor were they less keen on the extension of British influence and control in the Middle East, encouraged as they were by their connections with the Arab leaders and people during the Hijaz war. Men like Clayton, Lawrence, Young and Joyce conceived that British interests would be best served by a form of indirect control, which allowed the Arabs a share in the management of their own affairs sufficient to secure the goodwill of the Arabs towards Britain. T. E. Lawrence, the most outspoken among the pro-sharifian officers, repeatedly criticized the British expedition in Iraq,[1] and, as has been seen, soon after the conclusion of the war he submitted a proposal for three Arab states under three sons of the King Husayn, which was promptly watered down by Wilson. In a letter to Curzon in September, 1919 he advocated a major change in policy in Iraq and the return of Cox:

> My own ambition is that the Arabs should be our first brown dominion, and not our last brown colony. Arabs react against you if you try to drive them, and they are as tenacious as Jews: but you can lead them without force anywhere, if nominally arm in arm. The future of Mesopotamia is so immense that if it is cordially ours we can swing the whole Middle East with it.[2]

Another British Officer, Major F. Brayne, serving in Syria at Aleppo, on June 27, 1919 reported a talk with Wilson and, after referring to Wilson's argument that the people of Iraq welcomed British rule and that only in Baghdad was there talk about self-government, added:

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1 T. E. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, Penguin Press, London, 1965, pp. 59-60.

2 Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939. 1st Series, Vol. IV, pp. 422-424, No. 296. From Colonel Lawrence to Earl Curzon, September 25, 1919.

> This can deceive no one. The people have taken the line of least resistance; they see immediate peace and prosperity under disinterested foreign rule; self-Government must at first be a bit of a rough and tumble, and having no other ideal before them, they embrace the present and let the future look after itself. To Englishmen with Egyptian or Indian experience, this appears to be a fool's paradise, when Martial law is removed and speech-writing and movement is free, Baghdad malcontents and talkers will find themselves in the same camp as the Arab who left his country to fight the Turks; ...[1]

While Lawrence and Brayne were outside the policy-making machinery in London, Young another British officer who had served in the Hijaz campaign and in Iraq, had become a high official in the Foreign Office, and for a time in 1919, he acted as secretary to the Inter-Departmental Committee for Eastern Affairs. He has described his own attitudes at the time. "I myself had no illusions about Arab efficiency, but I was in full sympathy with Arab aspirations." He at first felt doubts about Wilson's administration - "...it was difficult to imagine a country being regarded as provisionally independent so long as it possessed no native authority in either the legislative, executive, or judicial spheres, and it seemed to me obvious that something ought to be done at once in the direction of creating these authorities in Mesopotamia."[2] Later, in the autumn of 1919, after a discussion with a protagonist of the moderate nationalist, Nuri Sa'id, about the situation in Iraq, Young became definitely opposed to Wilson's administration. As he put it later "I came away from my interview with Nuri more than ever convinced that an immediate change was required in the

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1 F.O. 371/4237/137623. Communicated by Brayne, A.P.O. Aleppo, dated 27th June, 1919.
2 Young, Independent Arab, pp. 291-292.

spirit of our administration in Mesopotamia."[1] Wilson was well aware of the pro-sharifian officers' attitude and the influence that might be brought by them on the Government:

> The relative proximity of Cairo to Paris and London gave the exponents of the Hashimite policy, themselves for the most part untrammelled by office or by administrative responsibilities, an advantage over the accredited representatives of the British Government in Iraq and in the Persian Gulf.[2]

This comment, written twelve years later, exactly expresses Wilson's view at the time. He complained in the summer of 1919 to the India Office about nationalist activities in Iraq instigated by Iraqis in Syria and, more important, encouraged by British officers in Syria, and earnestly requested the government to restrain them.[3] The conversion of Gertrude Bell, the Oriental Secretary to the Civil Commissioner at Baghdad during late 1919, to belief in a Sharifian solution was no doubt a blow to Wilson. In late 1918, Miss Bell had apparently agreed with Wilson's policy and administration, since in a letter dated November 28, 1918, she adopted Wilson's line about the attitude of the people in Iraq. "On two points they are practically all agreed, they want us to control their affairs and they want Sir Percy as High Commissioner."[4] In November, 1919, however,

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1 Ibid., p. 298.
2 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 109.
3 Document on the British Foreign Policy, 1st Series, Vol. IV, pp. 296-297, Nos. 203, 204. Earl Curzon to General Clayton, dated June 24, 1919. Presumably the information about the Syrian and British officers was provided by Baghdad.
4 Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Vol. II, p. 463.

she wrote in a note about Syria, which she had visited, that an Arab state in Iraq was a possibility,[1] and in due course she became an ardent supporter of Faysal's candidature for the throne of Iraq in late 1920.

Events on the "Home front" also had their effect on British policy in Iraq. After the Armistice Lloyd George succeeded in forming another coalition government which had to cope with post-war difficulties; the rising labour movement with its strikes and threats of strikes; the increasing danger of civil war in Ireland and its strain on the coalition government; the deterioration of the financial position of the country which called for a curb on spending.[2] The financial crisis became crucial in determining British commitments in Iraq. Wilson's administration in Iraq was extensive and costly. A cheaper alternative was wanted by the public, the press and some members of Parliament. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, reported on 18th August, 1919, in reply to a parliamentary question that the average monthly expenses of the military forces were approximately £2,633,000, apart from the expenses of the civil administration which were approximately £278,000 as against receipts of £243,000, chiefly from the people of Iraq.[3] Churchill, then Secretary of

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1 Ireland, Iraq, p. 197. See also Marlowe, Late Victorian, pp. 160-2, 172. Gertrude Bell wrote in a letter dated October 10, 1920, "we had promised self-governing institution, and not only made no step towards them but were busily setting up something entirely different." Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Vol. II, p. 502.

2 Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, p. 119 at footnote. From the British Government White Paper of October 1919. "Revised Statement of Revenue and Expenditure" for the current year. Total deficit was £473,645,000.

3 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, dated 18.8.1919, vol. 119, col. 1925.

State for War, drew the attention of the Cabinet at a meeting on 14th August, 1919,

> to the very serious position in Turkey.... He would be glad to know how long it was proposed to keep an Army of Occupation in Turkey. The maintenance of that army was very costly, and it was difficult to induce our men to go there.... The situation, as he had said, was grave, and it reacted on Mesopotamia, where we had about 100,000 men including 20,000 white troops, and railways were being built there at great cost.[1]

The press, and particularly the Northcliffe press, which included the Times, Daily Mail, and Daily Mirror, was against any extension of British commitments in Iraq. This was no doubt partly because Northcliffe had his own personal grievances against the Prime Minister, but whatever the reason his papers helped to spread dissatisfaction with British policy in Iraq. Ironically they also encouraged the people of Iraq to oppose the civil administration. In a leading article on 14th August, 1919, the Times strongly condemned the continuous spending in Iraq:

> Most disturbing stories are reaching us in regard to the ways money is being s uandered in the regions of the Tigris and the Euphrates.... While the Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us that we are heading towards national bankruptcy, we seem to be planning to spend money on the development of Mesopotamia.... Meanwhile the Government of India - for in some mysterious way Simla still has a finger in the pie - are sending political officers t devise a "scientific frontier" for Mesopotamia far away to the north-west in the regions of the Anti-Taurus. Our correct "scientific frontier" at the head of the Persian Gulf was Kurna ...., and it is unfortunate that we ever went beyond that point.[2]

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1 Cab. 23/11. Secret. War Cabinet 615. Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet on August 14th, 1919.
2 The Times, 14th August, 1919.

In September, 1919, special articles appeared in the Times written by Sir G. C. Buchanan, a distinguished engineer who had served for eighteen months in the civil administration in Iraq. Buchanan in his first article of September 23, 1919, entitled "Exaggerated Hopes. An Orgy of Waste" criticised the lavish expenditure by the British in Iraq, particularly that of the War Office:

> I do not wish it to be understood that there is no future for Mesopotamia, but I do desire emphatically to point out that in the present financial and economic crisis there is no money to spend on visionary and philanthropic enterprises that cannot possibly show for generations to come an adequate return for the capital expended. We have already expended far too much money on Mesopotamia.[1]

Doubts were also cast on the future of British policy in Iraq. In two articles on 8th and 10th November, 1919, the Times correspondent argued against any permanent British administration in Iraq:

> I imagine that the view held by many English people about Mesopotamia is that the local inhabitants will welcome us because we have saved them from the Turks, and that the country only needs developing to repay a large expenditure of English lives and English money. Neither of these ideas will bear much examination....
>
> The Arab especially prefers complete freedom to the restraints that must accompany efficient Eastern administration, and under the Turks they enjoyed practically local autonomy both in the villages and in the larger tribes .... and the officials did little except collect taxes .... from the political point of view we are asking the Arab to exchange his pride and independence for a little Western civilization, the profits of which must be largely absorbed by the expenses of administration. From his point it is a poor bargain.

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1 The Times, 23rd September, 1919. Also the Foreign Office took note of the article for its importance, F.O. 371/4150/132484. Also see the Times dated 24th October, 1919.

After setting out arguments for doubting whether economic benefits would be secured by a permanent occupation he ended:

> No one doubts the patriotism of those who wish to extend our present possessions in the Middle East, but their enthusiasm, which is largely based on old-fashioned ideals, is not really shared by the modern Englishman, who has come to realize that colonies in which white man cannot settle permanently are a great responsibility but not a great asset to the Empire.[1]

Part 4

During the summer of 1919, the position of British plans for the future of Iraq was as follows: Iraq according to article 22 of the Treaty of Versailles which was signed on 28th June, 1919, was included in the mandated area; however the mandate was not yet assigned, although tacitly Britain was expected to be the mandatory power. In London the British government acknowledged the necessity of British political ascendency over Iraq, but before the conclusion of the peace treaty and the assignment of the mandate to Britain the British government refrained from preparing any final plans. Their latest measure was that taken in May, 1919, when A. T. Wilson was

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1 The Times, 8th and 10th November, 1919. "Britain In Mesopotamia". Marlowe, Late Victorian, p. 167. A. T. Wilson's response to these articles could be best judged from a letter to his parents dated 29th September, 1919, in which he wrote: "I hope that the frequent leaders and articles in the Times about Mesopotamia worry you as little as they do me;"

authorized to proceed with his proposals for the creation of provinces and the formation of provincial, divisional and municipal councils. This measure was, however, of a provisional character and was regarded as a stop-gap until the grant of the mandate. Meanwhile two opposing forces were at work. In Baghdad, A. T. Wilson was advocating and pursuing a policy of direct and extensive British rule in Iraq notwithstanding the Maude declaration and the Anglo-French declaration of 8th November, 1918. In Syria the Iraqi officers who constituted the backbone of the Arab administration, with the backing of Amir Faysal, urged the British to fulfil the promises of Arab independence in Iraq. Their case was listened to sympathetically by the British officials in Cairo and Syria and even by some Foreign Office officials, such as Hubert Young. In Britain itself war-weary public opinion with the support of some members of Parliament, appeared to be unfavourable towards a policy of extensive British commitments in Iraq because of the cost involved.

In London, the attitude of the people of Iraq was assumed to be much as A. T. Wilson reported it, namely favourable to the British administration in Iraq. But the news that began to reach London during the second half of 1919, about actual conditions in Iraq, began to shatter this illusion. Late in May, 1919, Kurdish tribes under the leadership of Shaykh Maḥmud revolted against the British and captured the city of Sulaymanya. Only after the despatch of a punitive column and severe fighting were the British able to regain control of the Kurdish districts. News of restiveness among the Arab population reached the Foreign Office in August 1919, from a police report of widespread anti-British secret

organizations.[1] The mood of official opinion in London began to change, and the change was frankly reported to Wilson in a private letter dated 16th July, 1919, from [2] Hirzel of the India Office.

> As regards Arab nationalism, I think you will find yourself in pretty deep water, and, to be frank, I do not feel that you are going the right way to work with it.... You appear to be trying, impossibly, to stem the tide instead of guiding it into the channel that would suit you best. You are going to have an Arab state whether you like it or not, whether Mesopotamia wants it or not; and the constitution (which is not really a constitution at all, because the vital part - the Central Government - is omitted) accepted when you were over here can only be a very temporary affair for the duration of the British occupation...[3] Moreover, you are also going to have a lot of people in Mesopotamia whose heads will be full of absurd ideas from Syria and heaven knows where; and a room and a use must be found for them, and when you have got them in you must not let them resign.[4] Otherwise we shall have another Egypt on our hands. All these things are going to be contrary to our most cherished hopes, and nothing that you or I can say will alter them. I hoped that you would have realised all that when you were over here - that the idea of Mesopotamia as the model of an efficiently administered British dependency or protectorate is dead (the same idea is dying in India, and is decomposing in Egypt), and that an entirely new order of ideas reigns. No doubt we must do what we can to put on the brakes.... But it is of no use to shut one's eyes to the main facts. We must adapt ourselves and our methods to the new order of ideas and find a different way of getting what we want.

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1 Young, The Independent Arab, p. 294.
2 Sir Arnold Wilson Papers, Vol. I, Add. Ms. No. 52455.
3 Reference to the Government authorization to Wilson on 9 May, 1919, to proceed with the establishment of the Provinces and provincial and divisional, etc. councils.
4 Reference to Naji Swaydi's resignation from the British administration in June, 1919.

Hirtzel knew Wilson and was aware of Wilson's imperialistic ambitions (which Hirtzel, as a matter of fact, shared) but his attitude was much more pragmatic than Wilson's. In another private letter dated 17th September, 1919, he wrote to Wilson:

> Granted that the majority of Mesopotamians would now prefer to be ruled by Great Britain, it is not a very noble desire, and how long would it last after they have been annexed? We must swim with the new tide which is set towards the education and not towards the government of what used to be called subject peoples. They won't have good drains of course, but the drains in India are nothing to boast of.

In the same letter Hirtzel warned Wilson of the critical attitude of Lord Curzon and advised him, "Be content to keep the pot quietly boiling."[1]

The dissatisfaction of the Foreign Office with the course of events in Iraq was even stronger than that of the India Office, and although Hirtzel tried to patch up the differences between Wilson and the government, Young of the Foreign Office became totally committed against Wilson. In his book Independent Arab, Young revealed his rule during 1919-1920, in mobilizing the Foreign Office against Wilson. When Young received the Baghdad police report of 7th July, 1919, reporting the existence of a widespread anti-British movement, "It was clear that events were moving very fast in the Middle East, and I warned Lord Curzon on 23rd August that we should certainly have trouble in Mesopotamia if we were not very careful."[2] Further reports from Baghdad gave an impetus to criticism of the administration in Baghdad. The first report showed that

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1 Marlowe, Late Victorian, p. 166.
2 Young, Independent Arab, p. 294.

the administration in Iraq was manned by young and relatively inexperienced officials. A despatch from Baghdad dated 6th August, calculated the average age of the Assistant Political officers and Assistants in Departments as 30.30, that of the heads of Departments, including Political officers in the Divisions, as 35.44; and shewed that out of a total of 233 officials 122 were 30 and under, and only 4 were 45 or over.[1] The second source of criticism was Wilson's reply on 29th October to the India Office concerning the progress made in the establishment of provincial and divisional councils. Wilson telegraphed:

> Divisional council at Basrah has been in full swing for last three months and is doing good work...
>
> Divisional councils have been successfully started at Kirkuk ... Diwaniyah and Amara.
>
> Formation of divisional council at Baghdad has been actively discussed with local notables, but formation has, by general consent, been deferred, pending institution of municipal council.... The institution of a divisional council at Mosul has been deferred pending decision as to its future status.
>
> No steps have been taken at Dair-ez-zor ... nor at Sulaimaniyah....
>
> The position in the divisions of Hillah, Najaf, Kut and Nasiriyah is that harvest operations and payment and collection of revenue have absorbed whole energies alike of notables and officials, and it has not been possible to get Sheikhs and notables to leave their lands....
>
> In Ramadi and Samarra divisions we have not yet attempted to establish formal councils...
>
> No action has been taken in Bakubah or Khanikin division owing to the fact that nearly all the principal landowners are resident in Baghdad... Provincial councils have not yet been formed, nor do I contemplate moving in the matter this year.[2]

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1 F.O. 371/4150/139762. From A. T. Wilson, Acting Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to the Under Secretary of State for India, London, dated 6th August, 1919.

2 F.O. 371/4152/148636.

Young's comment on the telegram was that "Lord Curzon was by now seriously alarmed.... He called a meeting of the Interdepartmental Conference, which sat on the 10th November and discussed the whole question at great length."[1] Although the situation was considered alarming the conference failed to take any definite step, apart from agreeing to the early return of Sir Percy Cox to Iraq. This amounted to a vote of no confidence in Wilson but Cox had still to be asked to go. It was left to Curzon to sound Cox privately, although Young actually drafted Curzon's message of 14th November, 1919. The telegram was couched in strong terms:

> Present situation in Mesopotamia is causing us considerable anxiety. The existing military administration .... is rigid, costly, and hampering to development either of civil administration or of whatever form of native Government is decided in future. It is for the most part in the hands of young officers necessarily lacking in age and experience. We are endeavouring as quickly as possible to transfer departments from military to civil side, but this process is slow and does not meet needs of case. Meanwhile the system of civil administration which is in course of being set up appears neither to fulfil joint declaration of November 1918, nor to satisfy local aspirations, nor to proceed with sufficient rapidity. It is a system of British Government advised by Arabs (and this only to a small extent) rather than of Arab Government advised by British; it appears in certain respects to be developing upon familiar Indian lines....
>
> Every one agrees that the first condition of recovered confidence and of future settlement is your return as High Commissioner....[2]

The telegram to Cox went on to explain the difficulties in the way of Cox's immediate return to Iraq as High Commissioner, and the need for interim

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1 Young, Independent Arab, p. 298.
2 F.O. 371/4185/152286.

measures.

Cox in his reply, and probably to the Foreign Office's surprise, came to the defence of the British administration in Iraq.

> I have been kept in touch with the progress of the Baghdad administration ... I derived the impression that the general public and settled tribes were well content with their lot and I have heard nothing calculated to cause anxiety to H.M.G. .... Criticisms are mainly from outside and are connected with relations between Mesopotamia and neighbouring states rather than with the internal situation.[1]

Furthermore, Cox made it plain that he would return to Iraq only as High Commissioner with authority vested in himself rather than the military command. The fact that such a step could not be taken before the grant of the mandate as well as Cox's lukewarm reaction to Curzon's telegram of 14th November, led to the failure of the first attempt by the inter-departmental conference to bring about a change in Baghdad.

A. T. Wilson, unswayed by the pressure from London, on 15th November, 1919 wrote a very strongly-worded covering letter to a memorandum by Gertrude Bell, entitled "Syria in October". Wilson wrote:

> The fundamental assumption throughout this note is that an Arab state in Mesopotamia and elsewhere within a short period of years is a possibility and that the recognition or creation of a logical scheme of government on these lines, in supersession of those on which we are now working in Mesopotamia, would be practicable and popular.... My observations in this country and elsewhere have forced me to the conclusion that this assumption is erroneous,... and I venture, probably for the last time in my present capacity, to lay before His Majesty's Government the considerations which have led me to this conclusion .... I believe it to be impossible in these days to create a new

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1 Marlowe, Late Victorian, pp. 158-159.

> sovereign Mohammedan state by diplomatic or administrative means out of the remnants of the Turkish Empire.... If an Arab Government were constituted by decree of the League of Nations, or by any other extraneous authority, and maintained for a period by our arms and our money, it is my belief that the Arab public at large would, after a very few years, actively favour the return of the Turks to the continuance of an amateur Arab Government.... For some time to come the appointment of Arab Governors or high officials, except in an advisory capacity, would involve the rapid decay of authority, law, and order, followed by anarchy and disorder, and the movement, once started, would not be checked; fanaticism, not nationalism, would become the ruling motive. We must therefore go slowly. Effective British administration is vital to the continued existence of Mesopotamia as an independent state or administrative entity.[1]

John Marlowe the biographer of A. T. Wilson, commented on the above despatch that it "can only plausibly be explained by his belief that he was on the way out and was determined to go with his colours nailed to the mast and with all his guns firing."[2]

Wilson's despatch of 15th November, 1919, reached the Foreign Office late in January, 1920,[3] by which time the political situation in Iraq had taken a further change for the worse with troubles in Kurdistan and clashes in Dayr al-Zur and an increase in the activities of the independence movement inside Iraq. All these events magnified the divergence between the Government and A. T. Wilson, and the need for action. Nevertheless the British Government failed to take any immediate steps and the policy-making machine, the interdepartmental conference, did

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1 Young, Independent Arab, pp. 302-303; see also Marlowe, Late Victorian, pp. 170-171.
2 Marlowe, Late Victorian, p. 171.
3 Young, Independent Arab, p. 301.

not meet again until April, 1920, simply because its members were heavily engaged in handling other urgent problems.[1] Meanwhile, the departments in London were uneasily aware that things were going badly wrong. In a most interesting private letter dated 3rd February, 1920, [illegible] Hirtzel wrote to A. T. Wilson.

> Unfortunately your policy is inconsistent with the policy laid down by H. M. G. in March 1917, from which they have never departed, nor given any indication of departing... The intention has always been the same, to set up an Arab Administration with British advisers. What is new is the discovery of Lord Curzon (which we have done nothing to hasten because we wanted to give you every chance of doing things in your own way) that the tendency of local policy was in the opposite direction, ...
>
> I should like to put to you. Have you ever considered the possibility of having to clear out? It is a possibility which is slowly becoming a probability. Our military weakness is such that we may no longer be able to maintain the army of occupation; our financial difficulties are such that I do not think any Government will contemplate with equanimity having to pay for it ... ; lastly the coalition is (thank heaven) on its last legs, and will almost certainly be succeeded by a Labour Government.... There will be a demand for withdrawal, even if the coalition survives, and I know that the P. M. was thinking about it not long ago. What we want to have in existence - what we ought to have been creating in this time - is some administration of Arab institutions which we can safely leave while pulling the strings ourselves: something which won't cost very much, which Labour can swallow consistently with its principles, but under which our influence and economic and politic interests will be secure. Don't tell me that it is not what the people want, that it will reduce the administration chaos, etc. etc. I know all that. But put it to yourself that it may be that or nothing.
>
> I referred just now to our military weakness, and it is well that you realise it. We have no army now either at home or in India.... But there is more than this. The political-industrial situation in this country is now very bad, and it is confidently expected that there will be an attempt at revolution

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1 Ibid., p. 304.

> in March. There are only 38 battns at home (including the Guards) and these are composed of boys whom the W.O. declare useless for any military purpose. It was accordingly decided to bring home every available man, including the troops from the plebiscite area, in spite of the loss of prestige etc. which that involves.... Therefore it is a time for cutting down all ambitions, and for reducing all responsibilities within the narrowest limits.[1]

Though Hirtzel might have exaggerated the situation so as to impress Wilson, still what he said sets the background for a whole series of events. First, the War Office came out strongly in favour of a drastic reduction in the garrison of Iraq as a means of curbing expenditure. The Secretary of State for War, Winston S. Churchill, said in the debate on the Army Estimate for 1920-1921, in the House of Commons on 23rd February, 1920, that they were now considering a possible alternative to the military garrison in Iraq "the cost of which will crush the country", namely, the transfer of control to the Air Force.[2] In a debate which took place a month later Churchill said:

> I am not prepared to admit that 20,000-30,000 white troops and 30,000-40,000 Indian troops will be necessary to hold every little village and post in Mesopotamia. I do not see why statecraft should be so bankrupt in Mesopotamia when it is so successful in other parts.[3]

Bonar Law speaking for the Government on 23rd February, replied in the affirmative to a question in the House of Commons as to whether the Government still upheld the Maude proclamation and the Anglo-French declaration of 8th November, 1918.[4]

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1 Sir Arnold Wilson Papers, Vol. I, Add. Ms. No. 52455. Marlowe cited the same letter but with slight variation, Late Victorian, pp. 182-183.
2 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 125, Col. 1354.
3 Ibid., Vol. 129, Col. 187, dated 22nd March, 1920.
4 Ibid., Vol. 125, Col. 1278, dated 23rd February, 1920.

The Cabinet in anticipation of the Parliamentary debate, discussed on 23rd March, 1920, the basis for any statement the Prime Minister might make on the future of Iraq. The Cabinet agreed on the following points, first that if Britain were offered the mandate over Iraq it would accept it. Secondly, Mosul should be included in the mandated territory, because it was argued:

> The mandate territory must include Mosul, since there is no suitable physical boundary for Mesopotamia in the plains between Mosul and the Persian Gulf; since the inhabitants object to the partition of their country; and since the oil-bearing regions of Mosul are essential to the revenue on which the future development of the whole country will depend.

Lastly, the Cabinet agreed that a large reduction in the size of the British garrison of Iraq was urgently necessary.[1]

Two days later in the House of Commons Lloyd George, in reply to Asquith's suggestion that Britain should withdraw from Iraq and retain only the province of Basra, said:

> You might abandon the country altogether - that I could understand. But I cannot understand withdrawing partly and withdrawing from the more important and the more promising part of Mesopotamia. Mosul is a country with great possibilities. It has rich oil deposits.

And when a voice of dissent was raised, Lloyd George added:

> And if you are going to undertake the expense of administering Mesopotamia it is right, at any rate, that the country should bear that expense. It is for the good of the people.... Is it not for the benefit of the people of that country that it should be governed so as to enable them to develop this land which has been withered and shrivelled up by oppression? What would happen if we

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1 F.O. 371/5071/E 2167. The future of Mesopotamia, Draft Conclusion of a Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday, March 23, 1920.

withdrew? Does anyone imagine that, if we withdrew, there would be any improvement at all? If we did not undertake the task probably some other country would, and unless some country were to undertake the task, Mesopotamia would be exactly where she is to-day, or probably much worse. I say that, after incurring the enormous expenditure which we have incurred in freeing this country from the withering despotism of the Turk, to hand it back to anarchy and confusion, ... What would happen? You have not at present got there the material for forming a cohesive government. You have got a considerable number of tribes there which own no allegiance to each other or to anybody else, except the Turk, and if the Turk disappears the country would, unless you constitute some central government, be in a state of civil war and strife and confusion.... They have been consulted about their wishes in this respect, and, I think almost without exception, they are anxious that the British Government should stay there. They are very divided as to the kind of independent government they would like. It is not proposed that we should govern this country as if it were an essential part of the British Empire, making its laws.... Our point of view is that they should govern themselves and that we should be responsible as the mandatory for advising, for counselling, for assisting, but that the government must be Arab. That is a condition of the League of Nations, ... We will respect the solemn undertaking which we gave to the Allies in November, 1918, ... [1]

The tone of this speech was too philanthropic to carry conviction. That Britain was taking so much trouble in Iraq simply for Iraq's sake was too much to swallow. The British forces had not been invited by the Arabs in Iraq to help fight for Arab freedom, nor had the Arabs offered the British forces their support during the fighting with the Turks: on the contrary they had been a menace to the British. As to the wishes of the people of Iraq, it seems that Lloyd George's argument was based solely on A. T. Wilson's plebiscite of early 1919, and did not reflect the trend of

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1 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 127, Cols. 662-664, dated 25th March, 1920.

opinion in Whitehall. Certainly there was a failure to take into account the rise of the independence and pro-Turkish movements in Iraq.

Though Lloyd George said nothing about British interests, he reached the same conclusion as Hirtzel, namely the need for a cheap alternative system of government for Iraq, in the nature of a puppet Arab government with British hands in control from behind the curtain. Such a scheme would accord well with British pledges to the Arabs and the League of Nations, would help to abate nationalist suspicions, and would leave the financial burden of garrisoning and administering Iraq to the people of Iraq. Lloyd-George, like Hirtzel and the inter-departmental conference, said nothing about how such a scheme could be put into effect. As a result, A. T. Wilson, who now saw the need either to accommodate himself to Whitehall policy or else to resign, did what he had done so often in the past and took the initiative in starting a dialogue with London on the future of Iraq.

In a letter to his parents dated 19th March, 1920, Wilson wrote anxiously about his difficulties:

> On the whole events have defeated me. Our failure to make good in Constantinople, Syria and Egypt makes it impossible to produce as good an administration here as I could have wished, but my attitude has, I think, encouraged Government to maintain a resolute attitude at home with regard to this country.[1]

Wilson strongly believed that local political agitation originated outside Iraq, and failed to appreciate the local element in Arab nationalism. On the same date as he wrote to his parents he telegraphed

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1 Marlowe, Late Victorian, p. 184.

to the India Office the following:

> When I wrote my dispatch 34436 of 15 November I had reason to hope that peace would shortly be concluded with Turkey and that my place here would have been taken by a senior officer empowered to give effect to the final decisions of His Majesty's Government and of the Peace Conference regarding these territories.... Your telegram of 2 March reporting re-affirmation by Prime Minister on 23 February of Anglo-French Declaration[1] must presumably be regarded as a definite indication that the views expressed in my a/q dispatch have found no degree of acceptance. These facts, combined with trend of events in Syria and elsewhere, and the probable outcome of the announcement of peace terms with Turkey have led me to review the situation afresh and I propose to make fresh proposals for the constitutional fabric of this country as soon as I have learnt the details of our peace terms with Turkey.[2]

The nature of these proposals was set out in another semi-official telegram of the same date, to Hirtzel.

> I have come to the conclusion that I should either ask to be relieved at once ... or else endeavour to adjust myself to new conditions. I should be glad of a rest and a change but I do not want to appear to be leaving a sinking ship and, if I have the confidence of Government, I am prepared to carry on for another six months and endeavour to devise something constitutional to meet present exigencies, probably on the lines of limited Legislative Council with the High Commissioner as President, with native members in charge of Departments and British secretaries.[3]

Hirtzel, not sure of Wilson's conversion, replied on 6th April, 1920.

> H.M.G. are irrevocably committed to an Arab Government and intend that it shall be a reality and not a sham .... few here are interested in Mesopotamia for its own sake.

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1 The statement was made by Bonar-Law.
2 Marlowe, Late Victorian, pp. 184-185.
3 Ibid., p. 185.

> The supreme aim now is economy and Parliament will not sanction any expenditure except for very definite and short periods, after which an Arab state must fend for itself.[1]

On the same date of 19th March 1920, Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, wrote to Wilson suggesting the recognition of the Amir Faysal, who had just been proclaimed by the Syrian Congress as King of Syria, as sovereign over Syria, Palestine and Iraq, with Syria under French indirect control and Palestine and Iraq under British influence.[2] This was meant to provide a solution acceptable to all parties concerned, but Wilson replied on the following day objecting that "There is every indication that a son of the Shereef or a Government centred in Syria, or owing its inception to the initiative of the group of so-called Baghdadis at Damascus would be unpopular, ..."[3] and submitting his previous suggestion to Hirtzel as a workable alternative. Without waiting for the authorization of his government he thereupon set about forming a constitutional committee to prepare a future constitution for Iraq, probably to prevent any move by London to impose a sharifian settlement.

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1 Marlowe, Late Victorian, p. 186.

2 Cited, Kedourie, England and the Middle East, p. 178. "Wilson's Correspondence" at the British Museum.

3 F.O. 371/5071/E 2169. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 20th March, 1920.
F.O. 371/5033/E 2060. From Civil Commissioner, 21st March, 1920
"recognition of Faisal as King of Mesopotamia can only be regarded in this country as a betrayal of its interests and we shall alienate the best elements here."
Also see Young, Independent Arab, p. 308. Montagu commented on Wilson's new development as "his tardy conversion to the idea of an Arab Government."

The period between April and June, 1920 brought to an end the long-standing struggle between A. T. Wilson and the British government. Instead of Wilson's policy of direct rule, Whitehall chose to adopt a policy of indirect rule for Iraq. But the change came too late to prevent the outbreak of a widespread armed rising in Iraq. The story of these three months has been told with different interpretations by four able writers, A. T. Wilson, H. Young, P. Ireland and, most recently, by John Marlowe. The first two were personally involved in events, whereas Ireland and Marlowe were outsiders, Ireland hostile to Wilson and Marlowe favourable towards him. Here I am not concerned to pass judgment on Wilson or his opponents, but simply to bring to a conclusion the story of British policy in Iraq.

The creation in Baghdad of a constitutional committee was readily accepted in London because there seemed to be no harm in it.[1] The committee consisted of the following persons: Sir E. Bonham-Carter (Chairman of the Committee), Lieut.-Col. E. Howell, Major H. Tyler, Lieut.-Col. F. Balfour, and Major R. W. Bullard. On 27th April, 1920, Wilson telegraphed to the India Office a summary of the committee's draft proposals for Iraq's future constitution. These included government by a High Commissioner with an executive body, the Council of State, consisting of a British majority working under an Arab president, all of them appointed by the British High Commissioner, who would have the power to overrule the decision of the Council. The legislative body would consist

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1 Young, Independent Arab, p. 308.

of an elected assembly of some fifty members presided over by an Arab president who would be nominated by the Council of State and who would not necessarily be a member of the elected assembly. The members of the Council of State would be ex-officio members of the legislative assembly, but the British members would not have the right to vote. The Council of State was to have the right, after twice submitting proposals to the assembly, to pass a law without the assembly's consent. The annual budget was to be issued by decree of the Council of State. The mandatory Power was also to retain a wide range of powers, including control of external affairs and defence, and, most important, a general power to issue orders to the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly for the "well being and development of the people".[1]

Meanwhile in London the Inter-departmental Conference at a meeting on 13th April, 1920, decided that an immediate announcement about British policy should be made in Iraq. That announcement was never made. Wilson asked the conference to defer publication until they had seen the report of his Constitutional Committee, which was due to reach them on 27th April. And Montagu and Curzon, the leading members of the conference, failed to agree about the nature of the announcement. Montagu advocated reference to the creation of a representative national government which Curzon opposed,[2] and discussion between the two was interrupted by Curzon's departure to San Remo where, on April 25, the mandate for Iraq was

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1 F.O. 371/5227/E 8267. "Mesopotamian Constitution. Bonham-Carter Committee: Summary of Proposals." See Index.
2 Young, Independent Arab, p. 309.

granted to Britain. When A. T. Wilson heard in early May that Britain had accepted the Mandate he at once published the fact, without reference to London. There was not much in the announcement, as Wilson admitted, and as to the future administration Wilson announced:

> The establishment of Civil Administration will give an ever widening field to native energies, while the diffusion of education will enable the inhabitants of 'Iraq to profit by the opportunities which the future holds in store. And as the guardian rejoices over the growth of his ward into sane and independent manhood, so will the guardian Power see with satisfaction the development of political institutions which shall be sound and free.[1]

Meanwhile in London, Curzon and Montagu at last agreed on the draft of an announcement which was communicated on 4th May, to Wilson for immediate publication. It went much further than Wilson's announcement and declared that:

> His Majesty's Government have on more than one occasion declared their firm intention to promote the creation therein of a form of civil administration based upon representative indigenous institutions which would prepare the way for creation of an independent Arab State of 'Iraq....
>
> The time has now arrived for 'Iraq to reap the fruits of this course, and for a further forward step to be taken in the development of national life of the people. His Majesty's Government have accordingly directed the Civil Commissioner to take immediate measures in consultation with the Councils and with approval of local opinion in all parts of the country to frame definite proposals with above named object.[2]

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 248-249.

2 Ibid., p. 249.
See also F.O. 371/5226/E 4315. From Secretary of State for India to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 4th May 1920.

The telegram ended by reminding Wilson that the proposals of his constitutional committee were still under study.

It is important to notice that by the time the London announcement reached Iraq local opinion had been electrified by the announcement of the British mandate over Iraq, and anti-British activities had already become more open. Wilson was, no doubt, concerned and was trying to contain the independence movement before it got out of control, and he was particularly disturbed by his government's request for further consultation of local opinion. As a result he held up the London announcement and on 8th May, 1920, sent a long telegram to London:

> The second portion of your telegram apparently commits us here to further specific consultation and discussion with the people of this country with the object of reaching conclusions in time to be of assistance to the Peace Conference....
>
> I submit that it is for H.M.G. as Mandatory Power to prescribe what form of Government shall be set up in the immediate future. To refer the question afresh to Divisional Councils and to "local opinion" can have but one result. The extremists who following the example of their colleagues in Syria are demanding absolute independence for 'Iraq with or without 'Abdullah will by threats and by appeals during the coming month of Ramadhan to religious fanaticism win over moderate men who have hitherto looked to Government for a scheme offering a reasonable chance of success and which they can support. The moderates cannot afford to oppose extremists unless they know that Government is prepared to give them active support. Similar sentiments have been repeatedly expressed to me by other leading Arabs.[1]

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1 F.O. 371/5071/E 2169. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 20th March, 1920. "Arab head of Baghdad municipality in discussion urged that we should not repeat the mistake of asking people their wishes again, as people do not know what they want and it destroys their confidence that we should ask them. Whatever Government we set up should derive its authority from our own initiative."

In the same telegram Wilson submitted his alternative, namely that within the next seven days the government should sanction his constitutional proposals which would rally the Iraqi moderate elements against the extremists ("Once this is done we shall be in a position to deal with extremists"). In addition Wilson recommended an early announcement of Cox's return to Iraq as High Commissioner.[1]

Wilson's reaction to developments in London shows that he had abandoned the view of local opinion reflected in the handling of the plebiscite of early 1919, and that he now accepted that Iraq opinion had turned definitely against the British administration, leaving the pro-British members of the Iraq communities on the defensive. Wilson was not, however, prepared to change his view of what the people of Iraq needed - a paternal British administration. The British government was no doubt willing to help Wilson to contain "extremists", but they differed from Wilson as to the means of effecting that result. Wilson insisted on the acceptance of the Bonham-Carter constitutional proposals as the right means. But the Inter-departmental Conference, when it examined the constitutional proposals in a meeting held on May 17, 1920, were almost unanimously against them because they envisaged something very like direct British rule rather than the indirect rule favoured by the conference. H. Young, a member of the Conference, later commented on the 17th of May meeting of the Inter-departmental Conference:

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 250.

> I had always held the view that the constitution should be worked out on lines which would eventually develop into an indigenous Government, and felt that the British Government could control and direct by virtue of their position as advising and protecting Power just as effectively as they could by assuming direct executive functions. The Conference took the same view, Lord Curzon pointing out that the proposed constitution was not an Arab Government inspired and helped by British advice, but a British Government infused with Arab elements to a gradually increasing extent, ... [1]

Hirtzel, another member of the inter-departmental conference wrote a private letter to Wilson on 23rd May, explaining the conference's attitude:

> I am very sorry it has not been possible to send you instructions to go ahead with the constitution. It is becoming increasingly difficult to do business with the Eastern Committee, especially as Lord Curzon invariably falls ill at critical moments.[1] Lord Curzon wants to put in Abdullah; we don't and favour a temporary President who might be one of the sons of the Naqib of Baghdad.[2] I don't think that your views about sovereignty are likely to be accepted. Mr. Montagu won't look at them and is insistent that sovereignty should be vested in the President as soon as the military occupation ends.[3] Both Lord Curzon and Mr. Montagu feel very strongly that Bonham-Carter's Council of eleven with a British majority is not possible, even provisionally. We have suggested a Council of six, of which two should be British... For the rest the general situation fills me with anxiety....[2]

Nevertheless Wilson did not give up hope of securing support for the Bonham-Carter constitutional proposals. When he met a delegation of fifteen representing the independence movements, on 2nd June, 1920, he revealed to them the outline of the Bonham-Carter constitutional proposals. In an attempt to strengthen the moderate and the pro-British

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1 Young, Independent Arab, pp. 312-313.
2 Sir Arnold Wilson Papers, Vol. I, Add. Ms. No. 52455. Also see Marlowe, Late Victorian, pp. 191-192.

elements in Iraq and to waterdown the nationalist claims, Wilson invited another forty community leaders including Jews and Christians, representing different shades of moderate and pro-British opinion, to attend this meeting with the nationalist delegates. The meeting was, however, a failure. Both the nationalists and some of the forty members invited by Wilson demanded the immediate election of a national assembly with power to prescribe the nature of the future national government of Iraq promised by the Anglo-French declaration of 8th November, 1918. In reporting the meeting with the nationalist delegates Wilson wrote on 2nd June, 1920.

> It is unnecessary for me to emphasise that had I been permitted to make the announcement asked for in my telegram of 8th May, before the beginning of Ramadhan, namely the 19th, we should not now be faced with a movement in its present uncompromising form, backed as it is by skilfully fomented public excitement.
>
> It is probable that in the present temper a proposal that the country should submit even for a limited period to a provisional Constitution as to which they had not been consulted would be met on the part of Nationalists by a Declaration of Independence. Such proposals would be represented as contrary to the Anglo-French Declaration, the real meaning of which is little understood and widely misrepresented, and would harden public opinion against us, while if the present temper continues the proposed Legislative Assembly would on being summoned convert itself into a Constituent Assembly though not so authorised.
>
> Having regard to the Anglo-French Declaration I therefore see no other course open to us but to issue an announcement that when the Mandate is granted steps will be taken to summon a Constituent Assembly to consult on the future form of Government.

Wilson ended his telegram by suggesting that Cox should visit Baghdad on his way to London as a means of building up confidence in the administration.[1]

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 257-258.

Wilson claimed afterwards that events might have developed more satisfactorily if he had been allowed to announce his constitutional proposals by mid May. This was much too optimistic a view of events. As it was he was allowed on June 7th, to announce his constitutional proposals with minor reservations;[1] and he had already revealed them during his meeting with the local leaders on 2nd June. The independence movement had been gradually developing for more than eighteen months, and it is unlikely that a delay of two or three weeks would have made a significant difference. Furthermore, judging from Wilson's telegram of 2nd June, 1920, he was convinced that the independence movement was already almost irreconcilable and unwilling to accept anything less than absolute independence. Indeed, Wilson himself was in the end driven to announce the calling of a constituent assembly once the mandate was granted, to advise on the future form of government, which meant quietly burying the constitutional proposals.

The situation was already threatening when on 7 June there was a surprise move from London. The Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, telegraphed Wilson saying:

> I am glad to say that I am now in a position to furnish you with authority for which you asked to announce impending return of Sir Percy Cox .... subject reservation on points of detail your recommendations are accepted in principle as furnishing a generally suitable basis on which to construct provisional institutions such as are postulated by Mandate.[2]

The inter-departmental conference had disagreed with Wilson's constitutional proposals on fundamental issues, rather than on mere points of detail.

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 260.
2 Ibid.

But the India Office was also aware of Wilson's difficulties and clearly hoped to strengthen his hand at a peculiarly trying time. Wilson, however, thought that it was now too late to press on with his ideas simply because the independence movement would not settle for anything less than complete independence.

Wilson on 9th June telegraphed to the India Office reporting his manoeuvres to win the battle against the nationalists.

> Announcement on lines ordered in your telegrams of June 7th, will be made at end of Ramadhan, about June 18th.
>
> It will evoke lively protests from extremists who demand complete independence, and further demonstrations may be engineered.
>
> I propose to meet situation by suggesting that a deputation from 'Iraq of not more than eight persons in all from various parts of the country should proceed to England to lay their views before you. There is reason to think that this proposal will be favourably received.
>
> As soon as the deputation has started or been decided on, I consider that we shall have gone as far as we can in the direction of conciliation, and I shall feel myself strong enough to take drastic action against the irreconcilables, whose increasing influence constitutes a public danger and whose suppression is urged on me almost daily by leading men all over country.
>
> This will put heart into the moderates and facilitate the formation of a centre party, which does not at present exist, with the result that the extremists have the stage to themselves.[1]

Even so late as 9 June Wilson was thus clearly still trying to accommodate himself to the London policy of indirect rule. But later on the same day he made it clear that he did not believe in the policy. In another telegram to the India Office he put point-blank the alternatives of effectively British control or evacuation.

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 262.

> Recent developments have caused me to review the whole situation in Mesopotamia arising out of the grant of the Mandate.

The reduction of the garrison, the incident at Dayr al-Zur, and the attack in early June, 1920 on Tal 'Afar by an Arab force led by a sharifian officer had cumulatively had a very bad effect.

> Last February I warned H.M.G. that we must hold what we have with the troops in the country or clear out, and that there was no middle course. Events have shown that this was not an overstatement. The garrison has been further reduced ... we have to abandon areas which were holding.... We cannot give effect to the Mandate without risk of disaster unless we are prepared to maintain for the next two years at least as many troops in the country as we have now and in a considerably more efficient state.... We cannot maintain our position as Mandatory by a policy of conciliation of extremists. Having set our hand to the task of regenerating Mesopotamia, we must be prepared to furnish men and money and to maintain continuity of control for many years to come. We must be prepared ... to go very slowly with constitutional and democratic institutions. If H.M.G. regard such a policy as impracticable or beyond our strength, as well they may, I submit that they would do better to face the alternative, and evacuate Mesopotamia.[1]

Clearly the days of direct British rule were numbered. It was already clear that the independence movement was unwilling to accept either the Mandate or the British policy of indirect rule. In the circumstances Wilson was clearly right to argue that Britain must either give up its ambitions for influence in Iraq or crush the independence movement by force. Wilson himself had made the choice. But in London there was less realism, and the government persisted in advocating indirect rule[2] until, early in

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1 F.O. 371/5227/E 6509. Also see Marlowe, Late Victorian, pp. 194-195.
2 Young, Independent Arab, pp. 316-318.

July, 1920, when the armed uprising began to spread in Iraq. Only then was it decided that the rising should be crushed and with it the independence movement. Indirect rule still remained the objective, but it was now realised that the necessary machinery must be provided by importing a new system of administration from outside Iraq.

Chapter 6

The British Administration and the Local Population

During the war an Anglo-Indian administration was established and gradually extended its responsibilities to cover all the occupied area of the country. The administration consisted of a British Civil Commissioner assisted by secretaries responsible for the Revenue, Judicial, Medical, Education, Finance, and Public Work Departments. Iraq was divided into sixteen divisions roughly corresponding to the Turkish administrative unit the "Qadha", with a British political officer in place of the Turkish Qaymmaqam responsible for its administration, assisted by a number of assistant political officers in control of the subdivisions. The administration was highly centralised with the political officers and secretaries of the departments directly responsible to the Civil Commissioner. The primary role of the civil administration was to aid the Army in achieving its objectives by, first, maintaining peace and order in the occupied territory, and secondly, by replacing the defunct Turkish administration which had withered away as the British forces advanced. By the end of the war a completely new and alien administration existed in Iraq, basically manned by British and, to a lesser extent, by Indian officials.

Table

Officers and Personnel Employed by the Civil Administration, August 1st, 1920.[1]

[For table see next page]

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1 Ireland, Iraq, p. 148. Based on Review of Civil Administration 1914-1920, p. 122, and on monthly lists of Officers (Parts I and II) Serving under the Civil Commissioner. See also F.O. 371/5078/11769. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to India Office. No. 9804, dated 14/8/1920.
See also F.O. 371/5226/E6055. From Baghdad, dated May, 1920. The total of British employed by the Civil and Quasi Civil administration was 1,190. The total of Indians employed in the same administration was 2,266.

Table

Officers and Personnel Employed by the Civil Administration, August 1st, 1920.

	British	Indian	Inhabitants' Occupied Territory
Officers and Personnel drawing over Rs. 600 per month			
Central Administration	5	-	-
Divisional	106	-	4
Other Branches	396	7	16
Total	507	7	20
Officers drawing less than Rs. 600 per month			
Central Administration	55	62	123
Divisional	28	316	862
Other Branches	432	1,831	2,167
Total	515	2,209	3,152
Grand Total	1,022	2,216	3,172

The total of 3,172 did not include those employed in the Police and Levy force, which would bring the number to a total of 8566, excluding railway workers.

From this table it will be seen that in August 1920 the Arab population had a trivial role in the higher administration. This was partly due to Arab reluctance, but largely to the attitude of the administration, which had no faith in the natives' ability to perform an executive task and so did not seek Arab co-operation.[1] Those responsible for the administration

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1 Thomas Lyell, The Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia, p. 107.
Also see J. B. Glubb, Britain and the Arabs, London, 1959, pp. 99-100.

had a preconceived idea that the future of the occupied territory would be annexation or at least direct control by the India Government and as many of them belonged to the Indian services, there was from the beginning a predisposition to rely on India for men and ideas. In August, 1915, the Ottoman Penal Code and the Ottoman Criminal Procedure Code were replaced by the Iraq Occupied Territories Code which was drawn from the Indian Civil and Criminal Codes and powers were obtained to enforce any Indian law deemed necessary.[1] Similarly, in February, 1916, the tribes were subjected to another law, called the "Tribal Disputes' Regulation", drawn up by Mr. Dobbs on the lines of the Indian Frontier Crimes' Regulation. It authorized the political officers to deal with cases in which one party or both were tribesmen, according to the tribal tradition whereby the political officer could refer the case to tribal "Majlis" for arbitration. Alternatively the political officer could try the case in accordance with the magisterial power invested in him. The implications behind the law were many, but the most important was that it legalized the schism between the urban societies and the tribal societies, by treating the tribes as if they were frontier tribes in India.

The trend towards the indianization of the administration did not pass without a certain amount of unfavourable comment from British officials in Cairo and London. Mark Sykes, for instance commented on the Tribal Disputes' Regulation.

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1 Cmd. 1061. Review of Civil Administration, p. 11.

> The administration, it is to be assumed, is of a temporary nature, and as long as it is applied to such wild and chaotic country as now occupied by us, there is little to be concerned about, one way of keeping order being as good as another; however, it is my opinion that Indian Law and Indian method cannot be adopted in areas which may presently come under our control. Baghdad has been under a regime of a continental European kind for many years, and the upper and middle classes have lived on terms of social equality with the ruling race, and have had opportunities of holding the highest executive offices in the capital of the Empire.[1]

The whole tendency of the government's instructions during the early days of the military occupation pointed to its emergency character. The object was to secure the minimum of administrative efficiency required for the maintenance of order and the basic needs of the populace. It was proposed in 1917 to find the necessary civilian officers by recruiting them from the Sudan and the Levant services,[2] but both attempts failed. A. T. Wilson complained after the war of the difficulty of retaining many senior and capable officers and of the failure to induce others of the same calibre to join the administration. As a result as the administration grew older so its officials grew younger and less experienced. The inexperience of the political officers was a constant source of complaint, and led to a good deal of maltreatment of individuals.[3]

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1 F.O. 371/2779/173242, Secret, Arabian Report, New Series, No. VII. August 30, 1916. Appreciation of Attached Report, No. VII, New Series, by Mark Sykes.

2 Moberly, The Campaign In Mesopotamia, Vol. IV, p. 27. See also Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 264.

3 Haldane, The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, p. 21.

Table[1]

	Between 21-30	31-40	41-44	45+ over	Average
Age in Years of Assistant Political Officer and Assistants in Departments.	117	80	6	3	30.30
Heads of Departments (including Political Officers in Divisions).	5	18	5	1	35.44

Wilson was aware of the shortcomings of his staff but, as he saw things, what mattered was that the administration worked at all.

> The outstanding feature of these years is not that mistakes were made, nor that the administration was composed of officers some of whom had comparatively little experience, but that it was possible to create, in the main from the material available in an Expeditionary Force, without any certainty or even fair prospects of permanency, any sort of Civil Administration.[2]

Naturally, if there had been more reliance on the local inhabitants the picture might have been rather different, and this brings us to another aspect of the administration, namely the kind of relations established with the inhabitants.

The military command simply declared its hostility to the Turks and professed friendship towards the Arabs, but did not offer any promise of future independence or self-government. British officials, as well as others, attributed the aloofness and even the hostility of the Arab population

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1 F.O. 371/4150/139762. From Wilson, Acting Civil Commissioner, Baghdad to India Office, dated August 6th, 1919.
2 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 160.

to the British army and administration to the failure on the part of the latter to give any assurance that Turkish rule would not be restored.[1] This may well have mattered to the neutral and passive elements of the Arab communities, but for the politically minded, an assurance that the Turks would not return would have been quite inadequate. They were just as interested in obtaining from the British administration a declaration that the ousting of the Turks did not mean the replacement of Turkish by British rule. Such a declaration was, however, impossible at the time because the intentions of the British and India governments were not clear, and British annexation was a distinct possibility. Any declaration to the effect that Britain had territorial ambitions would of course have increased the hostility of the local inhabitants since there was no desire on the part of the Arabs to exchange Turkish for British rule. The India government and the local administration in Iraq frustrated several attempts emanating from Cairo and the Arab leaders to encourage a local rising against the Turks parallel to the Hijaz revolt.[2] The difficulties faced by the British army, the trying weather, the terrain, the diseases,[3] and, most important, the bitter

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1 Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia 1914-1917, pp. 16-17.

2 Temperley, A History of Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. VI, pp. 122-123. Also details of several attempts were discussed in other chapter.

3 Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, p. 297. General Nixon reported in a despatch dated July, 1915, "Seldom, if ever, have our troops been called upon to campaign in more trying heat than they have experienced this summer in the marshy plains of Mesopotamia..." Also on page 8, Moberly wrote, "Mesopotamia is a hot-bed of ravaging diseases. Plague, small-pox, cholera, malaria, dysentery and typhus, if not actually endemic, are all prevalent." and in the same volume page 10, wrote about the difficulty of nature.
Also Cd. 8610. Mesopotamia Commission, 1917, pl 9.
Also Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, Vol. II, p. 82. "The total

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experience of not knowing on whose side the tribesmen were, all contributed towards the creation in the military mind of a distinctively hostile attitude towards the inhabitants. Philip Graves, the biographer of Sir Percy Cox, wrote, "It is no exaggeration to say that the Arabs were loathed by the greatest part of the Army, whether British, Indian-Moslem or Hindus."[1] The hostile attitude towards the Arabs was shared by the generals at the top. General Maude, the Commander in Chief, who was ironically hailed as the friend of the Arabs and their liberator was sceptical of the possibility of any active co-operation with the natives. Maude wrote in strong terms against a proposal to enlist Arab armed support:

> ... our policy should be to keep tribesmen quiet, to be friendly to them, to enlist their sympathies, to trade with them and to pay them reasonable prices for what they bring to us. Also where it is possible, without interfering with military operations to develop among them some system of government and so aid insettling country. Anything such as uncontrolled guerilla warfare or raising of levies only awakens the latent fighting instinct of Arabs, and unsettles the country. The results achieved by tribesmen so employed though tiresome (sic) are negligible.... Our primary aim should in fact be to pacify country and its inhabitants though dealing decisively and instantly with them if they interfere with us or our operations.[2]

Sir Percy Cox adopted a more sophisticated attitude towards co-operation with the tribes. After a long experience in the Gulf as a

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numbers employed in the Mesopotamia Campaign amounted to about 400,000 combatants and 490,000 non-combatants. The casualties sustained were 31,758 killed, 15,350 missing and prisoners, and 51,156 wounded, besides a very heavy wastage due to sickness."

1 Graves, The Life of Sir Percy Cox, p. 193.
Also Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia 1914-1917, p. 144.

2 F.O. 371/3056/126945. Secret. From G.O.C., Mesopotamia, to C.I.G.S., dated 24th June, 1917.
Also Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia, Vol. IV, p. 10.

Political Resident he was well acquainted with tribal conditions, and advocated the enlisting of the support of the tribes against the Turks in protecting the British lines of communication and tightening the blockade against the Turks, and when the tribes turned out to be disposed to favour the Turks he sought to buy their support with money. Fahad Bey, paramount Shaykh of the strong Beduin tribe of 'Aniza in the Western desert, provides a case in point. Cox urged that for the sake of establishing satisfactory relations with him, the British administration should pay him a subsidy of £100 because he had received from the Turks T£ 90 per month. As a further inducement, his son was to be paid £50 per month. In return, 'Aniza support, under the supervision of British officers, would be sufficient to prevent the passage of supplies to the Turks across the desert. As for the Kurds, Cox suggested the establishment of a Kurd Bureau in Baghdad to try to induce the Kurdish Shaykh to support the British.[1] It was in accordance with this policy that the support of many tribal shaykhs was secured. Sir Reader Bullard, who served in Iraq during the war, wrote of the activities of Col. Leachman, a British Political Officer in Iraq, during the war:

> Before the capture of Baghdad, and after too, he had been the buttress of the army's left flank, where, with the aid of small subsidies which would have seemed contemptible to Lawrence, he kept the tribes quiet and even friendly.[2]

The sphere of the civil administration gradually but steadily expanded, as it became clear that it was there to stay and not a temporary outcome of war conditions. The Army, however, continued during the four

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1 Ibid.
2 Reader Bullard, The Camels Must Go, London, 1961, p. 103.

years of the war to be directly responsible for the departments of Irrigation, Agriculture, Transport, Telegraphs and Posts. The reason, except in the case of irrigation and agriculture was the day-to-day needs of the expeditionary force, and in the case of transport military responsibility led to permanent benefits, notably by the creation of railways, the improvement of the port of Basra, and the building of bridges.[1] After the war most of the services and development projects were transferred to the civil administration.

An examination of the civil administration budgets from 1915 to 1920,[2] sheds some light on the character of government expenditure. In 1915, the Revenue Commissioner prepared a rough budged in which it was estimated that income in the near future would be £452,000 and expenditure £306,000, "leaving the small sum of £146,000 to pay the cost of any troops required." Further estimates for the remoter future were for receipts of £1,388,000 and expenditure of £602,000.[3] These estimates proved accurate as far as the immediate plans were concerned, notably in the prediction of a surplus, but were badly out for the future. The main item of expenditure was on the political administration, including the political officers and the revenue

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1 Sir John P. Hewett, Report for the Army Council on Mesopotamia, London, 1919, pp. 26-27.
"My instruction directed me to report to the Army Council whether, in matters other than the development of irrigation and agriculture, expenditure in Mesopotamia ... was being duly confined to such services as were presently necessary for the prosecution of the war.... We are unanimously and emphatically of opinion that there is no ground for the suggestion that the expenditure of Army funds has been prompted by the desire to provide for after peace developments, and we consider that they have been uniformly expended with the primary object of securing the efficiency and comfort of the force."

2 See Appendix II.

3 F.O. 371/2476/136843. Enclosure No. 2. General Headquarters, I.E.F. "D", Basra, the 6th August, 1915. Copy of a Memorandum from the Revenue Commissioner, Basra.

establishment, as was natural since, as the War Office put it, the duty of the Civil Commissioner was:

> In addition to furthering to the best of his ability British military policy in Arabia, it should be Sir Percy Cox's primary duty to safe guard General Maude's communications by the use of his political influence with the Arab tribes through whose territories they run, and to facilitate in every way the collection of supplies.... Thus, in spite of our success in Mesopotamia, our political officers have much to do to keep the Arabs from being not openly hostile, and this work is far more important than that of planning out little niceties of civil administration.[1]

In the attempt to secure the support of the leading shaykhs and others, money was lavishly spent after 1915-16, while education and medical services, which were probably included among the 'niceties' had a meagre share. Headquarters administrative expenditure, including the salaries of gazetted officers, secret service, subsistence allowances, and the expenses of the political officers, and the revenue establishment jumped from Rs. 11.09.622 in 1915-1916, to Rs. 76.07.486 in 1917-1918.[2] The expenditure on education and health in 1915-1916 was Rs. 61.345 (all the money was in fact spent on the medical services) and rose in 1917-1918 to only Rs. 1.75.387. The end of the war did not bring a change in the pattern of spending as might perhaps have

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1 Cab. 21/60. Mesopotamia Administration Committee. Minute by the Director of Military Intelligence on Maude-Cox question. War Office, dated August 10, 1917.

2 F.O. 371/3042/228554. India Office, Whitehall, 30th November, 1917. To the Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office. In requesting the appointment of Mr. H. Bowman of the Egyptian Ministry of Education, the despatch argued, "It will be remembered that the desirability, in the future economic interests of the country, of an active educational policy was emphasised by the Trade Commissioners who visited Mesopotamia in the early part of 1917.... Moreover, in the event of this Territory subsequently becoming a British Sphere, it is undesirable that education should be too much in the hands of foreign Missionaries."

been expected. The administration paid for its expenditure primarily from land revenue and general taxes on agricultural produce, and customs. Until 1919, the administration was able to maintain a surplus, but in 1919-1920 the administration was in the red for the first time.

The social and economic effects of the war and of British administration on the urban centres:

The population of the urban centres in 1920 was roughly half a million, including 86,000 Jews and 78,000 Christians. The existence of a large British army of occupation and of a civil administration in Iraq had a profound influence on the economic and social pattern of the urban population, especially in the cities of Basra and Baghdad.

Economically, the war created unprecedented food shortages and price increases, and the blockade imposed by the warring armies on the territories held by the other side aggravated the situation. The city of Mosul was in a state of famine when it fell to the British army in November, 1918; thousands died of hunger,[1] and the people were relieved to see an end to the struggle because they hoped that the end of the war would bring them food from the southern districts under British control. The occupied territories were saved from famine by strict measures of rationing. The Kadhimayn district of

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1 Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration 1914-26, p. 53. Nearly 10,000 died of starvation in Mosul during the war.
Also 'Umari, History of the Iraq War, Vol. III, p. 96.

Baghdad city, was put on full rationing in late 1917,[1] while the sale of meat and the slaughter of cattle was prohibited for three days of every week in Baghdad city.[2] However, the decisive factor in saving Baghdad from famine was the securing of supplies from the tribal agricultural lands of the Tigris and Euphrates districts. This, however, caused shortages and price increases in the smaller towns of the Tigris and Euphrates, whose supplies were drawn from the agricultural produce of the neighbouring tribes. In November, 1918, the towns of Samawa, Rumaytha and Diwaniya had supplies enough for not more than four months; and the towns of Ḥilla, Musayb and Hindiya had supplies for only six months.[3] A shortage of grain in Najaf was a major factor behind the trouble there in 1918. Prices rose to fantastic heights. In 1917-18 the price of a taghar of wheat in Ḥilla jumped from the normal T£ 8 to T£ 10 to T£ 100;[4] in 'Amara town the price of rice in 1918 was between 500 and 600 Rs. per ton; yet in Baghdad the price had been reduced to 300 Rs., the relief of Baghdad being secured at the cost of the smaller towns.[5]

Foreign trade during the five years of British administration greatly increased. There was a big increase in imports and a change in the direction of trade, as a result of which the British Empire became the

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1 C.O. 696/Vol. I. Iraq, Baghdad Wilaya, Administration Report, 1917. Administration Report of the Kadhimayn District, from 11th March, to December 31st, 1917, p. 50.

2 C.O. 696/Vol. I. Iraq, 1917-1918. Baghdad Wilaya, 1917, Military Governor of Baghdad, March 1917 - March 1918.

3 F.O. 371/3397/165202. Collection of Fortnightly Reports to Secretary of State for India by the Civil Commissioner. Report No. 2. November 15th to December 1st, 1918. See section headed "Supplies".

4 C.O. 696/Vol. I. Iraq, 1917-1918. Baghdad Wilaya, Ḥilla District, 1917, p. 106.

5 Iraq, Ministry of Interior File No. 125/45. Telegram, February 1st, 1918, from Revenue Secretary to Political Officer, Baghdad.

principal source of imports. There was also a big trade with Persia, and it was estimated that between one half and three quarters of the imports by sea eventually found their way to Persia. The main items of import were timber, tobacco, textiles and piece goods, grain, flour and pulse, sugar and tea, coffee and cigarettes.

Table

Value of trade to and from Basra before and after the war.[1]

	Imports (00.000 omitted) Rs.	Exports
1910	395	250
1911	428	379
1912	398	487
1917	625	123
1918	1.110	135
1919	1.399	361

Sources of Imports to Basra[2]

1918	India 58%	England 21%	Persia 16.7%
1919	" 63%	" 21.9%	" 9.9%

Places of Exports from Basra

1918	India 29.1%	England 18.5%	Persia 20.5%
1919	" 20.5%	" 34.4%	" 14.1%

Behind this development there was a deliberate policy:

> We have to pay local labour and to buy all the wheat, cattle, wool, etc., that the country can provide, and we can

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1 F.O. 371/5080/E13115. Report on the Conditions of Trade in Mesopotamia. Prepared in the Office of Civil Commissioner, Baghdad. Government Press, 1920.
See also Hewett, Some Impressions of Mesopotamia, 1919, H.M.S.O., London, 1920, p. 13.

2 Ghanima, Past and Present Trade of Iraq, pp. 128-134.

> do so, ultimately, only by giving the local population the imported goods they require. Failure to do this involves depreciation alike of our rupee currency and of our note circulation, up n the stability of which in large measure the military supply departments depend.[1]

The administration took a further measure to encourage trade by reducing the import duty which had been raised from 11% to 15% just before the war, to 10% ad valorem on all goods. No doubt the increased spending power of the inhabitants, resulting from the presence of the British army and administration, coupled with the depletion of stocks due to war conditions, increased the demand for imported goods. However, there was one other important factor at work: because of the cessation of imports to Persia via the Caucasus during the war, the amount of transit imports through Iraq to Persia, had greatly increased.

An unjustified optimism, a sort of "super-boom after a super-war",[2] prevailed both among the mercantile class and among British officials, who were eager to establish for Britain a commercial lead in Iraq before the conclusion of a peace settlement and the opening of the country to world competition.[3] In 1920 the happy dreams of many merchants faded into

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1 C.O. 696/Vol. I. Iraq. Administration Reports, 1917-18. Baghdad Wilaya. Administration Report, 1917. Commerce, pp. 3-4.

2 Cited Issawi, Economics of the Middle East, p. 152. Extract from an article "The Story of the Euphrates Company" in the Near East and India, XLI, 1935, pp. 948-954.

3 371/4147/6766. "Memorandum regarding pre-war conditions affecting British trade in Mesopotamia and recommendations as to conditions which should be established if it is desired to encourage a free and large development of British trade in said country." by L. C. Cree, 10th January, 1919. Also see a confidential report, The Prospects of British Trade in Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf, Delhi, Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1917. An interesting report by a joint trade commissioner, dated June, 1917. Discussed the means of strengthening British trade in Iraq.

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bankruptcy because of the over-saturation of the market with imported goods and the depreciation of the rupee. An official report for 1920 commented:

> Their failing is largely, due to placing large orders for goods when the rupee exchange was favourable and not paying for the goods at the time of ordering. When the goods arrived and they had to meet their bills the exchange was against them ... but the one hopes that the lesson will be learnt, and that over trading, which was so successful during the war, will now cease for a time.[1]

The overflow of imported goods dealt a great blow to local handicrafts and artisans who had already suffered from increasing competition during the later years of Turkish rule and conscription during the war.

The greater security enjoyed by the Jewish and Christian communities under British rule opened new horizons for them. For the first time the two communities felt secure enough to embark on substantial land purchases. The following table gives an assessment of the value of property sold in Basra Division, where the British administration and influence was strongest.

I. Agricultural land sold in	1917	1918
to Muslims	26.92.509 5/4	15.27.899/3/-
to Jews	1.07.561 1/4	7.63.525/7/-
to Christians	1.31.659	6.67.176/8/-
II. Buildings		
to Muslims	3.69.883	11.03.275
to Jews	3.41.980	12.80.014
to Christians	39.781½	2.59.300[2]

Also see Annual Report of the Basra Division for the year 1920. Section, Commerce, p. 38. Marked increase in the European and British firms established in Basra.
Also see chapter on British Policy, the notes by Hirtzel and Cox in 1918.

1 Annual Report of the Basra Division for the year 1920. Section, Commerce, p. 38.

2 Administration Reports for 1918, Vol. I, pp. 241-242. Basra Division.

Land speculation was to a great extent behind this trend, and land prices as with all other things was rising; rents which for the duration of the war had been controlled by restrictive measures, suddenly rose to four and five times their previous figures when the restrictions were lifted in 1919.[1]

A flourishing social group emerged consisting of contractors and tax farmers, particularly farmers of the municipality and Koda tax. Before the war the Turkish administration had for a long time ceased farming the above taxes and collected them directly, but for the already over-stretched British administration a middle man was a necessity. In small towns as well as big ones local merchants were given the farms and as a result developed a vested interest in the continuation of British rule. It is scarcely surprising that the mercantile class, dominated by the foreign and Jewish communities should have become ardent adherents.[2]

The British command of the occupation force was naturally concerned primarily with winning the war. Local interests and convenience were subordinated to that purpose. Freedom of travel from and to Baghdad was restricted, likewise travel through the occupied territories.[3] Even after

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1 Iraq, M.I., Monthly Report of the Military Governor and Political Officer Basra for the month of August, 1919. Signed A. G. Walker.

2 Iraq, Ministry of Interior, Administration Reports for 1919, Basra, p. 26. "I do not think we are as popular in some ways, especially among certain classes, as were our Turkish predecessors. On the other hand the land-owning and the commercial classes want us to stay and fell that British rule alone will help them."

3 Compilation of Proclamations, Notices, etc., relating to the Civil Administration and Inhabitants of the Baghdad Wilaya issued from 22nd December, 1916, to December 31st, 1918. Proclamation No. 2, dated 1st March, 1917. This restriction was maintained until the end of the war when it was eased but not abolished.

the end of the war the Army maintained a rule that no sale or purchase of grain or local produce could be made without official authorization.[1] In July 1918, another proclamation was issued imposing a forced sale of barley at 100 Rs. per ton to the Army regardless of the market price, which was higher.[2] All native river craft were formally requisitioned by the Army and at the time of the fall of Baghdad there were some 2,000 native rivercraft worked by a total of 10,000 men controlled by the Army. In July 1918 and June 1919 some of the rivercraft were released, on condition that they might be again requisitioned by the Army (failure to supply a boat was to be punishable by a fine not exceeding Rs. 5,000).[3] This measure was detrimental to the interests of the local merchants in Basra as well as Baghdad and was partly responsible for the great increase in freight rates, from the pre-war average of 30s., to £40 per ton in certain cases.[4] Last, but not least, there was requisitioning of most of the best houses in the cities for the military and civil administrations.[5]

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1 Ibid. Proclamation No. 17, dated 14 March, 1918.
2 Ibid. Proclamation No. 23, dated 13 July, 1918.
3 Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia, 1914-1917, p. 145.
See also Compilation of Proclamations, Notices, etc.... From October 31st, 1914 to August 31st, 1919. Notification No. 24, dated 30 July, 1918. Also Notification No. 51, dated 1st June, 1919.
4 Cited Issawi, Economic History of the Middle East, p. 152. Extract from an article "The Story of the Euphrates Company," in the Near East and India, XLI, 1935, pp. 948-954.
5 Annual Report of Baghdad Division for the Year 1919, p. 5. Number of billets in Baghdad on 1st January 1919 was 554. Also in F.O. 371/5071/E2857. Copy of a confidential memorandum No. A. 6501 of 9.1.1920, from D.A. and Q.M.G., G.H.Q., to the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad. The General Officer Commander-in-Chief in reply to a request to consider reduction of billets, expressed the view that
"The inhabitants of Mesopotamia have suffered so little from the effects of this war, that they can well endure inconvenience a little longer for the better convenience of the Army."

The British army and civil administrations were the largest employers of labour in Iraq. The main types of work were porterage, road works, railway construction and irrigation. During the earlier years of the war the British forces had introduced, because of lack of supply, imported Indian labourers. Indian gaol labour and porter corps were sent to Iraq during 1916-17: the former were convicted criminals who had been exempted from the remainder of their sentences on the condition that they would work in Iraq, and numbered some eight thousand.[1] The following is a table showing the amount of Arab labour at its highest and lowest as well as at March, 1919, compared with other labour,[2] working for the military and civil administrations.

Date	Indians	Turks	Refugees	Persians (including Kurds)	Arabs
April, 1918	32.553	...	...	12.571	45.058
July, 1918	36.640	...	...	13.410	32.226
March, 1919	32.381	17.899	2.818	21.369	39.415

Arab labour was organized in labour corps and was chiefly recruited from the rural and tribal areas, either through the local headman, "Mukhtar", or Sarkals and Shaykhs, or through special contractors and agents. In fact many of the Arab labourers were forced to work either directly by the administration, or by the Shaykhs. After the conclusion of the Armistice the Indian imported

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 46-47.
Also Iraq. Ministry of Interior. "A Summary of the History, with suggestions, and recommendations of the Seven Gaol Labour and Porter Corps, employed in Mesopotamia from October 1916 to July 1919." P. 2. Baghdad 1920. Gaol corps were not welcomed in Mesopotamia and fears were expressed at introduction of bad characters.

2 Hewett, Some Impressions of Mesopotamia in 1919, p. 18. Appendix "A".

labour was gradually sent back to India and greater reliance was placed on workers drawn from the Persian and Kurdish communities, as well as from the increasing number of Christian refugees from the north of Iraq. The formation of the Arab Labour Corps had a bad effect on the worker as well as on agriculture. The Arab labourer was dragged from his fields to undertake unskilled labour in a place usually far away from his home and family; he was poorly paid, as wages averaged between 4 and 5 rupees a day (the cost of the Indian Labour Corps, 1500 strong, was £188,011. 6s. per day, and which amounted to an average of 4-5 rupees a day if we take the rate of exchange as 14 rupees a £).[1] This though prices were continuously rising and wages in the Corps remained fixed at the level of 1917.[2] The creation of the Labour Corps had a bad effect on agriculture, as was pointed out in a memorandum, "Arab Labour in Occupied Territories", by the Chief Political Officer's office on 6th December, 1917,

> The inevitable draw in on labour necessitated by war condition cannot, however, be other than detrimental to agricultural interests. In the Aziziyah and Bughailah districts, which are so thinly populated that whole tracts which could be turned into crop bearing areas are lying deserted, the demand for labour for the railway and roads, as well as for coolie work in the camps, prevent the extension of cultivation and is a strain on that which exists.[3]

The projects and works in which the Labour Corps were engaged were needed for

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior, File No. 21/16 Headquarters, Labour Directorate, Baghdad, 6th January, 1920, to the Revenue Secretary, Baghdad.

2 Ibid.

3 F.O. 371/3401/46114. Memorandum, Arab Labour in Occupied Territories from Chief Political Officer's office to the Officer-in-Charge, Arab Bureau. 6th December, 1917.

temporary military and administrative purposes and were not necessarily of benefit to the inhabitants or those engaged in them:

> Beyond the daily wages earned, little of the work undertaken had been directly profitable to the people of the country.... Road and rail will indeed be regarded as beneficial by those through whose districts they pass, but the creation of bounds between Basra, Shaibah and Zubair, far from being welcomed, is alleged (and sometimes undoubtedly with truth) to be harmful to local interests.[1]

Nevertheless projects such as the development of the port of Basra and railway construction were of benefit to the country as a whole.

Arab labourers in the organized Labour Corps were not permanently detached from their fields, as many of them were released after a period of service in exchange for new recruits. Work in the Corps compared unfavourably with casual labour in the big cities, since wages there in 1920 were three times greater those paid the Labour Corps. There was an increasing demand for labour in Baghdad.[2] As a result there was an increasing flow of agricultural tribesmen into Baghdad seeking work. In November 1919, for instance, the number of fellahs from Dulaym Division working in Baghdad was estimated at 2,000.[3] But the workers, skilled or otherwise, were restricted by new regulations, particularly one of June 20th, 1917, under which all workers had to register their names with the local headman (Mukhtar) and obey the latter's directions as to where they might work. Furthermore they were prohibited from crossing from east Baghdad to

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1 Cab. 17/Vol. 178. Secret. Arab Bulletin No. 18. September 5, 1916. Note on the Supply of Labour in the Occupied Territories (compiled from records in the C.P.O.'s office).
2 Iraq, Ministry of Interior, File No. 21/16 Headquarters, Labour Directorate, to Revenue Secretary, Baghdad, 6th January, 1920.
3 Iraq, Ministry of Interior, File No. 21/16. Memo. from Political Officer, Dulamin Division, Ramadi, to the Revenue Secretary, Baghdad, 12th November, 1919.

the west for work on the opposite bank, unless the Mukhtar or the Assistant Controller of Labour gave his permission.[1] Thus for both kinds of workers there was reason for complaint, especially in the case of those who had to compete with imported labour and Indian workers in the cities.

The Shi'i holy cities under British control

Najaf and Karbala overthrew the Turkish authority in 1915 and 1916, respectively; after that the two cities were self-governing. At Najaf the powerful leaders of the four quarters, Sayid Mahdi ibn Sayid Salman, Haji 'Atiya Abu Qulal and Kadhum Subi of the Zugurt, together with Haji Sa'ad ibn Haji Radhi of the Shummrt, were responsible for local administration. In Karbala the Kamuna family and other leading families took control. During the war some of the local leaders, mainly Abu Qulal and Kamuna, came into contact with the British forces advancing on Baghdad and secured de facto recognition, money and arms.[2] When Baghdad fell to the British in March 1917,

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1 F.O. 371/3393/93233. "Compilation Proclamations ... issued during 1917." Registration of Labour (No. 20, June 20th, 1917).

2 In August, 1915, Abu Qulal wrote to the British Political Officers and his correspondence with them was discussed earlier. From F.O. 882/Vol. 26. Arab Bureau Papers. Arab Bulletin No. 69. Nov. 14th, 1917.
Mohammad 'Ali Kamuna entered during October, 1915, into communications with Cox, then at Kut, "after a preliminary exchange of letter, proposed that we should undertake to make him hereditary and autonomous ruler of a sacred province extending from Samarra to Nejf.... The C.P.O. sent Mohammed Ali a friendly but colourless answer together with a small present of money for our withdrawal from Ctesiphon having changed the political outlook. We remained, however, in communication with Mohammad Ali and from time to time sent money to assist him in retaining his adherents and maintaining his position at Kerkuk.
Also F.O. 371/4148/34797. "Review of the Civil Administration of the Territories of Al-Iraq.", dated Nov. 1918. Compiled in the Office of the Civil Commissioner. It mentioned that money as well as "when possible a small dole of arms" were sent to Kamuna brothers.

the Karbala and Najaf leaders visited Baghdad to congratulate the visitors as well as to discuss their future. The British Chief Political Officer, Sir Percy Cox, thought that there was no question of allowing the local leaders to continue to enjoy virtual autonomy. Their visit to Baghdad was interpreted as a sign of submission, and Cox wrote on 29th March, 1917, to the India Office:

> By time Proclamation of H.M. Government had been published, the notable Qaziman (Qazwini, Muhamad Ali) and leading Sheikhs (of) town of Kerbela and Nejef who have for long time been in our pay, had already come in to pay their respects.[1]

However, the British were not then, as they put it, "in a position to substitute any other authority for that which they enjoyed",[2] so the local leaders were received respectfully in Baghdad and as Gertrude Bell wrote, "They were assigned allowances, and returned home with a mandate to maintain order until it was possible for us to deal directly with the affairs of the two cities."[3] But no hint of the intention to make a subsequent change in the Najaf and Karbala leaders' position was given to the leaders at the time. It was thus rather a shock to them to find, a few months later, that the British administration had decided to take over direct control of the cities. The British decision to assume effective control of the two Shi'i holy cities came sooner than expected for two reasons in addition to the usual one of the need to consolidate British rule. The first was the urgent need of the

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1 F.O. 371/3051/68306. From Sir Percy Cox to India Office, 29th March 1917.
2 F.O. 371/3397/165202. Collection of Fortnightly Reports to Secretary of State for India. By Civil Commissioner. Report No. 5. January 1-15, 1918.
3 Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration 1914-20, pp. 32-33.

British forces and the areas under their occupation for the grain supplies which existed in the Middle Euphrates area. The second reason was that any delay in imposing direct British administration would mean a substantial loss of taxes on the 1917 summer crop. With British forces in the Middle Euphrates effective military control of the holy cities was feasible,[1] and in August, 1917, a British agent called Hamid Khan was appointed to Najaf; and in September, 1917, Karbala was placed under the supervision of a British political officer. Furthermore, administrative changes were made by which Najaf became a district in the Shamiya Division and Karbala became a district in the Hilla Division. This meant a marked downgrading of the status of the two cities, because under Ottoman rule Karbala was the centre of a Mutasrifiya, with Najaf as a Qaymmaqamiya and Kufa a Nahiya, with a Mudir responsible to the Mutasrif of Karbala. Thus the new arrangements meant both the division of the holy places as a unit and a lowering of their status to districts from that of a Division (Mutasrifiya).

The British administration was cautious about the religious feelings of the holy cities and repeatedly assured the Shi'i, 'Ulama and Mujtahids of their religious freedom and the sanctity of the holy places. But they would not tolerate an autonomous enclave within the occupied territories under the control of either religious or secular leaders. On the other hand, the local leaders had not overthrown the Turks just in order to see them replaced by the British, who from a religious point of view were even worse than the Turks.

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1 F.O. 371/3397/165202. Collection of Fortnightly Reports to Secretary of State for India. By Civil Commissioner. Report No. 5. January 1-15, 1918.

Nor was the ending of local autonomy the only change made by the British administration. Further changes were made which affected the whole populace of the holy cities.

1. Their position as a trading post for the middle Euphrates and the western desert was maintained, though to a lesser extent during the war and before the establishment of effective British control in summer 1917, but under British rule trading with areas under Turkish control was banned.

2. The utilization of the Euphrates districts as a food supplier for the British forces and areas under their control led to a scarcity of food and consequently to a rise in prices.

3. During the period of self-rule the holy cities were freed from taxes, except to the amount that the leaders in power exacted from the rich for the maintenance of the administration. The British administration reintroduced the taxes and prompt payment of taxes became a criterion of obedience and order; the following were some of the reimposed taxes:[1]
a house tax, a water tax, a building tax, a slaughter-house tax, a wardiya tax (which was a monthly tax on all draft and pack animals that plied for hire), a Maydaniya tax levied on each shop (and called in Najaf Paswaniya), a similar tax levied on each house (called Baytiya), plus other less important taxes. The brunt of these taxes as well as of increasing prices fell on the poorer classes.

These factors led to the union in Najaf of the discontented masses

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1 Reports of Administration for 1918 of Divisions and Districts of the Occupied Territories in Mesopotamia. Vol. I, pp. 88-91.

and the leaders of the four quarters, many of whom were men of humble origin.[1] The first overt opposition to the British administration came in early November, 1917, in Najaf, where, although the town was suffering from shortages of supplies, the British political officer allowed a Shaykh of the Beduin tribe of 'Aniza to obtain a considerable amount of grain. This was followed by another attempt by Shaykh Fahad ibn Hadhal of the Beduin tribe of 'Amarat to obtain a greater amount of grain from Najaf. Fahad was in the pay of the British and held a nominal official position as Qaymmaqam of Razaza on the desert fringe; he despatched 1200 camels to load the purchased grain from Najaf, and it was at that juncture that the masses broke into riots against the Beduin, attacking and looting their camps. The political officer at Najaf ordered the return of the loot within 15 days and held the four leaders of the quarters responsible. Abu Qulal defied the P.O.'s orders, refrained from collecting his share, incited further riots against the British administration, and, in January, 1918, attacked the newly-arrived Indian force at Kufa, causing the death of one Indian and the wounding of another. The British reacted firmly by imposing a fine of 500 rifles and Rs. 50,000 on the whole town and held the leaders of the quarters responsible for its collection. 'Atiyya Abu Qulal and Karim the son of Ḥaji Sa'ad ibn Ḥaji Radhi were declared outlaws for refusal to surrender. Furthermore, the allowances which had formerly been given to the leaders of the quarters were stopped and as a means of tightening British control an assistant political officer

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1 Kadhum Subi one of the leaders worked as coffee maker; Ḥaji Sa'ad another leader worked as butcher; and Abu Qulal though influential was never a rich man.

was appointed to Najaf, responsible directly to the central administration.[1]

The policy of collective punishment and the rather high-handed dealing with the Najafi and those in opposition, instead of ending the troubles as the British administration expected, led to an extension of the opposition and aroused the latent Najafi solidarity against outsiders.[2] A society called Jam'iyat al Nahadha al Islamiya (the Islamic Upheaval Society) was formed late in 1917, with Sayid Muḥammad 'Ali Baḥar al 'Ulum[3] and Shaykh Muḥammad Jawad al Jaza'iri, from the 'Ulama class and of Arab origin, as its leading members. Kadhum Subi and other members of the families of the leaders of the Najaf' quarters joined the society.[4] In March, 1918, some member of the society, under the leadership of Ḥaji Najm al Baqal (grocer) planned the murder of the assistant political officer at Najaf as a prelude to

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1 F.O. 371/3397/165202. Collection of Fortnightly Reports to Secretary of State for India, by Civil Commissioner. Report 6. January 15-31, 1918. Also see Reports of Administration for 1918, Vol. I, p. 69.

2 Reports of Administration for 1918, Vol. I, p. 88. "An attitude of unswerving firmness is required from the officer controlling the internal destinies of Najaf. As long as this is preserved order and contentment will prevail. Any relaxation in the nature of compromise or remission will inevitably be followed by an alarming puff of smoke.... Forgiveness is a hopeless anachronism. Punishment must follow crime and disobedience as surely as night follows day."

3 M. A. Baḥar al 'Ulum an Arab man of religion preached Jihad against the British. During the war in March 1916 when he was in Basra and Pusht-i-kuh, the British offered him £500 if he would cease his activity against them and retire to Persia where they would give him another £500. But al 'Ulum refused their offer and remained consistently against the British. F.O. 371/3049/126993. Confidential. Personalities - Iraq. Arab Bureau, Basra Branch.

4 Al-Ḥassani, Iraq During Occupation and Mandate, p. 36. Among the other members were 'Abas Ramaḥi, 'Abd al Ruzaq 'Adwa, 'Abas Khalili. Also see Maḥbuba, Past and Present of Najaf, pp. 344-345.

driving the British out of the holy places. On 19th March, 1918, a party of men disguised in Shabana (local levy) dress entered the A.P.O.'s residence and killed the political officer, and the town thereupon fell into the hands of the rebels, who evicted the small British force and the few British officials. The British administration suspected that the murder was planned from outside with the aim of forcing the British into active retaliation against the town, which could then be utilized as material for anti-British propaganda among the Shi'i in Iraq. As a result the British forces established a blockade of the town, preventing the supply of food and water, rather than launching a direct attack. The fact that the town completely depended on water and food supplies from outside made the siege peculiarly effective, and avoided both a direct clash and the accusation that the British had molested the Shi'i holy places.[1] The British conditions for lifting the siege were as follows:

1. The unconditional surrender of the murderers and others concerned in the plot.
2. A fine of 1,000 rifles and Rs. 50.000 to be paid, as far as possible, by the rebellious quarters.
3. The delivery from those quarters of 100 men to be deported as prisoners of war.

The British move upset the plotters' hopes of getting away with the murder, because, although the men involved could easily be smuggled out of the town, the whole town was to be made to suffer. They therefore decided to accept the British challenge and to resist the siege. They hoped to enlist the help of the neighbouring tribes in breaking the siege and letters were accordingly

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1 F.O. 371/3397/165202. Fortnightly Report No. 10. March 15 to April 1, 1918.

smuggled out to the Shamiya tribes for that purpose.[1] Among the Shamiya tribal leaders, Marzuq al 'Awad of the 'Awabid tribe and Jawad al Munsir of the Kurd tribe, helped to raise £T 900 for the support of the rebellion, and a few tribes from the Ḥawatim and Fatla succeeded in entering the town of Najaf to support the resistance.[2] Otherwise the tribes remained passive. Two main reasons explain this passivity. First, the appeal for support was not backed by the leading Mujtahids of Najaf, who might have called for a Jihad, but consisted rather of a request by some of the Mujtahids and 'Ulama for help in inducing the British to raise the siege.[3] The second reason was that many of the tribes were not yet discontented with the newly-introduced British administration, and some of the Shaykhs were in the pay of the British in return for either protecting the roads or representing the British in their districts. Indeed, Shaykh 'Umran al Sa'dun of the Bani Ḥasan and Shaykh Mutak of the Fatla in the Hindiya district offered their help in suppressing the rising in Najaf,[4] and the British made it clear to the tribes that they meant business by bombing the Ḥuwaysh mound which overlooks the town.[5]

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1 Maḥbuba, Past and Present of Najaf, pp. 346-348.

2 F.O. 371/3397/165202. Fortnightly Report No. 10. March 15 to April 1, 1918.

3 Ibid. "On the 25th, nineteen leading 'Ulama despatched a message to the G.O.C.-in-Chief begging him to relieve the innocent inhabitants of the town, especially the women and children, by granting a general amnesty." But the Commander refused, and "On the 27th a meeting was held at Karbala under Mirza Muḥammad Taqi, whose reputation as a man of religion is second only to that of S. Muḥammad Kadhim Yazdi. A protest was made against the blockade, chiefly on the ground that while the innocent suffered under it, the guilty would not by this means be captured." And that too was of no avail.

4 Fortnightly Reports of Political Officers. Political Diary, Hindiya District. December 17th to March 31st, 1918.

5 Ibid: for period from 1st to 15th April, 1918. The British brought a party of Shaykhs to witness the bombing of the Ḥuwaysh mound.

In the town of Najaf resistance waned when no support came from outside and the situation inside began to deteriorate as a result of the scarcity of food and of great increases in prices, which hit the poor very hard. Finally on May 4th, the rebels accepted the British terms.

The failure of the rebellion led to the execution of eleven men, who were accused of plotting the murder, among them 'Atiyya Abu Qulal, three sons of Ḥaji Sa'ad, one of the four leaders of the quarters, and also Kadhum Subi. A hundred and five Najafi were sentenced to prison and deportation to India, among them the two leading 'Ulama of the Islamic society, Sayid Muḥammad 'Ali Baḥr al 'Ulum and Shaykh Muḥammad Jawad al Jaza'iri, several members of Abu Qulal family and Ḥaji Sa'ad Ḥaji Radhi.[1] Though it could be argued that the leaders of the quarters incited the rebellion in an attempt to regain their lost power, they were able to carry with them the majority of the populace in a fight against the Christian invader. The punishment inflicted upon them created deep resentment at British cruelty and a wide gulf between the populace and the British authorities, with no love lost between the two. However, there were some people who rejoiced at the way the rebellion had ended, and in particular at the rolling of its leaders' heads. On 30th May, 1918, the day on which the execution was carried out, a meeting was held in the Killidar's house attended

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1 F.O. 371/3403/161752. From Political Officer, Najaf to Captain Balfour, dated 16th June, 1918.
Also see Al-Ḥassani, Iraq During Occupation and Mandate, pp. 39-40.
Shaykh Khaz'al of Muḥammara interceded on behalf of the two 'Ulama and they were interned in Muḥammara instead of India.

by the British political officer and a number of notables and merchants and 'Ulama who had an axe to grind. During the meeting Muḥsin Shilash, one of the richest financiers and merchants, presented Captain Balfour with a sword of honour and said in a speech:

> ... The sinful actors played their tragedy of sorrow at Najaf and took the life of Captain Marshall, kind, gentle straight forward in every post he held. A mind evil and misdirected may be turned to no greater sin than this....
>
> We particularly wish to-day to express our gratitude to our British Government and its officials for the tact and forbearance they have shown during this horrible trouble....[1]

For many of the notables, such as the Killidar, Sayid 'Abas, and his uncle the Naqib al Ashraf, felt that their position had been challenged by the power of the four leaders of the quarters;[2] and the 'Ulama who rallied to the British were mainly those of Indian origin and the recipients of the 'Audha Bequest.[3] But the greatest asset for the British, was the attitude of Sayid Kadhum Yazdi, the leading Mujtahid, whose decisions were the equivalent to religious orders. He abstained from supporting the rebellion, and shut himself up in his house.

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1 F.O. 371/3397/165202. Collection of Fortnightly Reports. Report No. 14. May 15th to June 1st, 1918.
Also see Reports of Administration for 1918, Vol. I, p. 108. The following was the British view of Shilash: "The richest financier and merchant in Najaf. He did invaluable work during the Blockade.... He is the manager of the tramway company, and has his finger in every pie. In political matters he is, however, as also, very naturally, in matters which may affect his own pocket, one way or the other...."

2 Reports of Administration for 1918, Vol. I, p. 108. "Both he and the Kilidar must be strongly backed by Government to be of any use at all." They belonged to the Rafai'i family and owned extensive land in the tribal area of Shamiya.

3 Ibid. Among the 'Ulama who supported the British measures were the following: Ḥaji Agha Maḥmud al Hindi, 'Audha Bequest distributor and related by marriage to Yazdi and acts as Yazdi's secretary in correspondence with the British administration; Shaykh Mukdi a Shaykh Asadulla, also an 'Audha Bequest Mujtahid distributor; Shaykh Mahdi Kashmiri, 'Audha Bequest Mujtahid distributor who was described as "Pro-British, but of no influence whatever".

Though he defended his position with the argument that he was a man of religion and had nothing to do with politics, he nonetheless repeatedly told British officials that he opposed rebellion and he showed his satisfaction at the crushing of the leaders of the quarters. In an administrative report it was said:

> The Political Officer, Shamiyah, visited Saiyid Muhammad Kadhim Yazdi in his house in Najaf on April 17, April 20 and April 28. On each occasion the interview was of a most cordial character. After the first Saiyid Muhammad Kadhim volunteered in a private message the advice that this opportunity should be seized to clean Najaf of all ill-disposed persons, whether they wore the turban or the 'aqal, i.e. whether men of religion or laymen. On the third visit he complained bitterly of attempts made by some of the Ulama to draw him into an anti-British attitude....

And the report ended by saying that:

> It is difficult to overestimate the value to us of Saiyid Muhammad Kadhim's unbroken support. Provided his name is never quoted officially, we can invariably count upon him for help.[1]

Karbala was spared a similar experience, but again there was disappointment for those who had hopefully offered their co-operation to the British in 1916, notably the Kamuna brothers, Fakhri and Muḥammad 'Ali. Like Abu Qulal the Kamuna brothers retained their positions until more effective British control became feasible. In May, 1917, the Kamuna were appointed agents on behalf of the administration in Karbala and in return for collecting the taxes Muḥammad 'Ali was promised 10 per cent of the amount collected.[2]

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1 F.O. 371/3397/165202. Collection of Fortnightly Reports, by the Civil Commissioner. Report No. 12. April 15th to May 1st, 1918.

2 F.O. 371/3406/110668. Revenue Note on Karbala, by C. C. Garbett, First Revenue Officer, dated 21st March, 1918.

The Kamuna made use of their position, sponsored a secret trade with areas under Turkish control and levied a commission on each pack animal leaving the town for Turkish controlled areas.[1] This aroused the anger of the British as well as of other rival families, particularly the al 'Awad, with the result that the Kamuna brothers were ousted from Karbala. On 7th September, 1917, the Civil Commissioner asked Fukhri to come to Baghdad, whereupon he was deported to India as a prisoner of war. The following day his brother was also called to Baghdad, but though he was reluctant to go, he went and was thereupon ordered to stay in Baghdad and not to interfere in Karbala affairs.[2] It was ironic that those who had first volunteered to co-operate with the British were the first casualties of the British administration.

The Arab tribes under British administration

The study of the British administration in the Arab tribal areas during the war and up to 1920 is important because to some extent it explains the tribal outburst of 1920. In a previous section I have studied the attitude of the tribes to the British invasion of Iraq, which could be summed up as generally hostile to the British, although where the latter were in effective control the tribes tended to adopt a passive and sometimes a co-operative attitude. British policy during the early years of the war was a matter of expediency, aimed at winning over or at least neutralising the

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1 Al Wahab, Karbala in History, pp. 19-21.
2 F.O. 882/26. Arab Bureau Papers. Arab Bulletin No. 69, dated November 14, 1917. Affairs at Kerbela.

military potentialities of the tribes during their fight with the Turks. The natural channels through which the British could reach the tribes were the tribal Shaykhs. They were not offered political inducements to support the British, as was the case with the Shaykhs of Kuwait and Muhammara, who were actually promised self-rule in their districts under the supervision and protection of the British Government. Such inducements were ruled out because they were incompatible with the designs of the British and India Governments in the area, which pointed towards annexation or at least direct British rule. The alternative approach was to gain the support of the tribal leaders by financial inducements in the form of tax concessions and monthly allowances, plus official support for the Shaykhs against minor or rival Shaykhs and against their own tribesmen. The premise of this approach was that the Turks for many decades had aimed at the destruction of the tribal Shaykhs by force and by alienating the Shaykh from his tribesmen who had been turned into farmers directly responsible to the Government, and that as a consequence the Shaykhs would welcome British support against rival contenders and rebellious tribesmen as well as against the new class of absentee landlords. But the British authorities once they were militarily secure, became dissatisfied with the minimum control which they had come to exercise over the tribes and began to extend their control over the tribes which for many years had enjoyed de facto freedom and independence from any sort of Government. This development was motivated by, on the one hand the desire to collect the land revenue, which, as the civil administration grew, became the main source of income, and on the other hand by the shortage of grain for the occupying army and the civil population. At first agricultural produce from the tribal

lands was the primary target, but soon revenue collection became the main consideration, as it was considered the criterion of tribal submission to the new order. The change in emphasis was accompanied by a change in policy from neutralising the military potentialities of the tribes and establishing a minimum control over them to the exploitation of the economic potentialities of the tribal lands. The Shaykhs were called upon to play the role of the Government agent, not out of expediency, as in the early years, but rather as part of a deliberate scheme of government. Amiable shaykhs were appointed paramount shaykhs of their tribes, and the other shaykhs were required to obey the recognised shaykhs or face punishment. The recognised Shaykhs were then required to collect the revenue, of which a percentage was remitted to them as a reward, and the remaining shaykhs and the tribesmen were required to use the recognised Shaykhs as their channel of communication with the British authorities. This meant a great change in the role of the Shaykhs as between the first phase of the British occupation and the second. During the earlier phase the Shaykhs were not necessarily in conflict with their tribesmen, but in the later phase the Shaykh was liable to become alienated from his tribesmen by becoming the instrument of revenue collection and of government authority, because his power now stemmed from the Government rather than from the traditional source, the tribe.

British policy towards the tribes followed that of the Turks in that it aimed to make the authority of the government paramount in the tribal district, but the two policies differed in methods and priorities. The British adopted the Shaykh as the government instrument while the Turks had aimed at his destruction. In the long run both policies had similar

consequences - a schism in tribal institutions - but they arose from different sources: the British alienated the Shaykh from his tribe, while the Turks multiplied the number of Shaykhs to the detriment of tribal unity and solidarity. There was also a significant difference in priorities: the Turks, at least in theory, tried to alleviate the position of the tribesmen as against that of the Shaykhs, but the British reversed the emphasis by upholding the Shaykh's interests against those of the tribesmen. Two instruments of British policy were the introduction in February, 1916, of a separate tribal law called the Tribal Disputes Regulation drawn upon the lines of the Indian North Western Frontier Crimes Regulation. The new law gave the political officers the power to deal with tribal disputes by referring the case to a tribal Majlis (court), established according to tribal tradition, for arbitration. The political officers retained the power to overrule the decision of the tribal Majlis and pass his own judgement. According to this system the tribal society was severed, legally, from the legal civil courts; secondly, the officially recognised Shaykhs were the decisive factor in the tribal Majlis and thus indirectly their hands were strengthened, but subject to the greatly enhanced influence of the political officers. The second instrument of British policy, but less effective, was the creation of the Shabana force, a tribal levy. They were controlled and recruited by the British political officers through the Shaykhs of their districts, who were required to provide a certain number of their tribe for the Shabana force. The task of the Shabana was primarily to protect river and rail communications. The total number of the Shabana force at the end of 1917 was about 1,500, of whom 1,000 were in Baghdad; the number by April 1920 was

increased to nearly 4,800, but then of these there were about 8,000 Kurds and a small proportion of Persians.[1]

In practice British policy was not as clear cut as the British administration would have liked it to be. The British political officers, once faced by the reality of the highly-diversified conditions in the different tribal areas, began to particularise the general principles which they were endeavouring to apply to such an extent that in some districts there was a significant reinterpretation of the general principles of the British administration. Until 1919-1920 when the administration became convinced that "break-up of the tribal system was essential to orderly progress under whatever form of organized government might be constituted in the future."[2] In the following section I intend to assess the particularisation of British policy and the diversified tribal reaction to it. In this pursuit I am limiting my analysis to the tribes of the Tigris and the Euphrates south of Baghdad, partly because of the longer lapse of time between its occupation by the British and the 1920 rising, and partly because it was the scene of the 1920 rising.

The Tigris Tribes:

The tribal districts in southern Iraq varied markedly in tribal solidarity, land tenure, and the effectiveness of government control. The Tigris tribes were more than other tribes exposed to the control of the central authorities in Baghdad or Basra because of the good communications

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 70.
2 Ibid., p. 78.

provided by the river Tigris. Like the Turks the British had to protect the life stream of southern Iraq by establishing effective control of the Tigris river banks and the tribes that lived there. The fact that the Tigris was the British route of advance on Baghdad brought the Tigris tribes into quick and direct contact with British officials. Inevitably the war did them a good deal of damage, with the result that the experience of the Tigris tribes was quite different from that of the Euphrates tribes, except those between Qurna and Nasiriya, which escaped most of the fighting. As the British forces advanced up stream more tribal land came under their control and more tribes switched their adherence to them, as a tribute to British power. After 1915, the British were the effective rulers of most of the Tigris tribes, while the Euphrates tribes remained in a state of isolation and independence for nearly another three years. British policy during the early stages of the war was described by a British officer who later served as a political officer on the lower Euphrates:

> Our supreme need in a country predominantly tribal was tranquility, in order that our military forces might devote themselves with a single mind to their main objective of destroying the Turk.
>
> This condition we believed to be best achieved by a veiled rule the natural chiefs whom the native soil had evolved, the tribal shaikhs.[1]

The problem of how to win over the shaykhs was tackled by offering them improvements in their financial position and changes of land tenure.

The Tigris tribes were socially in a state of flux moving from a

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1 Bertram Thomas, Alarm and Excursions in Arabia, London, 1931, p. 24.

communal society based on a shaykh-tribesman relationship to one based on a landlord-peasant relationship. In function there was also a transition from pastoral nomadism to sedentary agriculture. The form of land tenure greatly facilitated the application of the British policy, because, with few exceptions, the land from Kut al-'Amara to Qurna in the south, was Miri (state-owned) land or had been Saniya and was now Mudawara. This gave the state a free hand in the allotment of the Muqata'as (estates) and was thus a major source of influence. The land to the north of Kut al-'Amara as far as the vicinity of Baghdad included many Tapu holdings, but it could be effectively controlled by government because of its proximinity to the centre of government in Baghdad. In the 'Amara Division, the largest on the Tigris with an estimated population of 200,000,[1] the land was roughly divided into 28 Muqata'as, each, according to the Turkish practice, let by auction to the highest bidder normally for a period of five years. The farmers were usually Shaykhs from the neighbouring areas, though sometimes a town merchant succeeded in obtaining a farm. The Shaykh-farmer in his turn sublet the greater part of his Muqata'a to Sarkals, who were usually heads of the smaller tribal sections, but were sometimes influential townsmen. The Sarkals were responsible for the management of their lease of the Muqata'a and the supply of cultivators. The cultivators were labourers who were free to leave the Muqata'a once the season ended. The Sarkals were not bound to employ the tribesmen with an hereditary association with the land, but because there was a shortage of cultivators, the Shaykhs and Sarkals in fact

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1 F.O. 371/3407/89788. Year 1918.

tried to keep together a body of cultivators, many of whom were local tribesmen.

The Government share of the produce was taken in the form of rent, as provided for in the lease, and the Shaykh-farmer was bound to pay the rent regardless of the success or failure of the crop. The Shaykh-farmer when he sublet his Muqata'a to Sarkals passed on this obligation to the Sarkals: the Sarkal had to pay an agreed amount of rent in cash or kind regardless of the results of the harvest. Naturally, the Shaykh-farmer sublet his Muqata'a at a profit, which might well be excessive. The Sarkal employed tribesmen as labourers on a share basis. In the case of all crops except rice, the produce was equally divided between the Sarkal and the cultivator, the cultivator providing the seed, either from his own resources or on loan from the Sarkal, who charged interest on the loan. In the case of rice, which was extensively cultivated, the cultivator's share was one-third of the gross produce, if he supplied the seed, or a quarter if he did not. The Shaykh-farmer usually maintained part of the land for direct cultivation by his tribesmen, and would also allot another part of the Muqata'a for the benefit of his "Ḥushiya" or body guards, in return for their services to him. Most of the Ḥushiya were of Negro and slave origin with no tribal connections, and their numbers depended on the wealth and influence of the Shaykhs, the range being between 50 and 500 men. The Ḥushiya's role, was a threefold one: to guard the Shaykh, to keep the Sarkals and cultivators in order, and to act as the vanguard in inter-tribal wars. The Shaykh's reliance on the Ḥushiya increased as his relationship with his tribesmen became more and more of an economic nature and the tribesmen became reluctant to support the Shaykhs.

A Shaykh without a farm, not only lacked money: he lost influence among the tribesmen: hence the bitter strife among the Shaykhs to gain farms from the authorities, even if it meant forcing up rents to an unrealistic level.

The need of the Shaykhs to secure farms of Muqata'a gave the British a powerful weapon to use against them. Muqata'as were granted only to Shaykhs who professed loyalty to the new regime, while those who had opposed the British when they first occupied the division were deposed in favour of friendly Shaykhs, regardless of their legal rights. Thus Shaykh Zubun al-Yasir, farmer of one of the three Muqata'as in the Qal'at Salih district of the 'Amara Division, was evicted in 1916 because of his unfriendliness to the British and Shaykh 'Usman al-Yasir, who already had a Muqata'a, was granted the vacant farm at a lower rent, simply because he adhered to the British.[1] Naturally, Zubun turned to the Turks, but when he realised that he had backed the wrong horse he regretfully approached the British authorities in March, 1917, expressing repentance.[2] A reduction of rent was another means of winning the support of the Shaykhs, which also served as useful propaganda.[3] The policy of consolidating the position of friendly tribal Shaykhs took other forms. First, Shaykhs were encouraged to build up very big holdings, so big in the case of Shaykh Falih Sayhud's Muqata'a in Qal'at Salih, that thirty miles of railway and road ran through it.

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1 Administration Report of the Qal'at Salih District for the Year, 1916-1917. Signed by M. Hiles, Lieutenant, Assistant Political Officer.

2 Ibid.

3 F.O. 371/2771/17361. From General Lake, dated May 18th, 1916. For purpose of propaganda among the Muslim opinion he advised the publication of a draft showing the reduction of revenue made at the time.

Secondly, the British political officers substituted, wherever it was possible, tribal Shaykhs for non-tribal farmers.[1] Thirdly, but not the least important, the British upheld the Shaykhs in disputes with their Sarkals or tribesmen, even when the British political officers were aware that the Sarkals or tribesmen had grievances. A political officer in 'Amara Division commented on such occurrences as follows:

> It is a delicate matter dealing with complaints of sarkars against their Shaikhs. To support the sarkars is to undermine the power of the Shaikh and cause disturbances in other tribes as well. To refuse to listen to their complaint gives the appearance of callousness to the welfare of sarkars and fellahs and of fear of the Shaikhs....
>
> I have much sympathy with the fellahs and sarkars of Iraq. Their Shaikhs lease them sufficient profit out of their iltizams wherewith to eke out a bare living and no more .... meanwhile, the Amarah Shaikhs are rolling in wealth owing to the quite absurdly cheap rentals of their maqat'ahs. They have the whip-hand of everyone. If we raised their fees they could raise the sarkars' fees. If we encourage the sarkars the district would lose its present peaceful state...

The political officer argued, however, that the authorities could not risk supporting the sarkals and fallahs against the Shaykhs.[2]

The Sarkals, when they became aware that the real authority was the P. O. and not the Shaykhs, tried to outbid the Shaykhs in their offers of loyalty. An interesting example comes from an 'Amara Monthly Report, in which the P. O. wrote:

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1 F. O. 371/3407/189788. Revenue Report.
2 Monthly Diary of the Political Officer, 'Amara Division, for Month of February, 1919. Also pointed out in Revenue Report, F. O. 371/4307/189788, p. 9.

> I believe, I could obtain with no great difficulty a roundrobin from the majority of sarkars in the Amarah District to the effect that they would gladly be rid of Shaikhs.

and that a Sarkal called Muhammad ʿAli Basrawi, of considerable prestige

> offered to produce such a madhbatah for me and made as its first condition, the clause that there should be an English Sultan of Iraq.[1]

In 'Amara Division the policy of consolidating the Shaykhs' position proved to be rewarding for the British administration. A. T. Wilson's comment on the 'Amara Shaykhs was that

> The shaikhs of the Liwa were for the most part reasonable men, ... They were in most cases directly dependent on the Civil Administration for the position they held; realizing that their position entailed corresponding obligations, they co-operated actively with the political officers in suppressing offences against public order.[2]

If the British administration was lucky in having "an unusually reasonable lot"[3] of shaykhs, among the Tigris tribes, they were unlucky with the Euphrates Shaykhs.

The Lower Euphrates Tribes

The area from Qurna to Nasiriya came under the British occupation as early as mid 1915, but the Gharaf district and the tribal area north of Nasiriya remained until late 1917 independent of all government authority. The tribes of the Lower Euphrates had a long history of rebellion against the

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1 Monthly Diary of the Political Officer, 'Amara Division, Month of February, 1919.
2 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 96.
3 Reports of Administration for 1918, Vol. I, 'Amara Division, p. 314.

Turkish administration and it would have been a surprise if they had accepted the British administration without resistance. The tribes at the conjunction of the Tigris and Euphrates at Qurna and along Shat al-'Arab had settled into villages and were no problem to the British to administer. But things were different with the tribes north of Qurna. In the marsh district covering the triangle between Qurna-Suq al-Shiyukh and Garmat 'Ali, lived primitive tribes, isolated from any outside authority by the nature of the marshes. Their main occupation was animal breeding, particularly the breeding of buffaloes, and they were scattered over a large area of marshes. The tribes from Madina on the Euphrates to Nasiriya and along the Gharaf river belonged to the once very strong Muntafiq confederation. In the late fifteenth century the Sa'dun family, of Najdi origin, had established its overlordship over the tribes of the area, which became known as the Muntafik, from the Arabic word Itifaq, agreement. The land remained in the hands of the tribes, cultivated according to communal tradition, and only a small percentage was paid to the ruling Sa'dun family as a tribute similar to that paid to paramount shaykhs in other tribes. A radical change occurred late in the nineteenth century with the introduction of the Tapu system. The Turkish authorities conferred on the Sa'duns Tapu deeds at nominal prices. According to these deeds many Sa'duns became the private owners of traditionally tribal land, and the tribesmen became liable to pay over a substantial part of their produce to the Tapu holder as the right of Mallakiya, or ownership. The government's share of the produce of Miri land was theoretically 40% of the gross produce, and 20% on Tapu land, but in fact the government rarely collected more than a fraction of the amount owed. Besides the government's share of one-fifth of

crops irrigated by flow and one-tenth of crops irrigated by lift, the Tapu deed gave its holder the right to half of the remaining four-fifths of the crops, the remaining two-fifths being allocated to the cultivators. The shaykh or Sarkal received one-quarter of the Tapu holder's share as his fee for collecting the revenue. The tribesmen and their shaykhs struggled against their degradation into mere labourers and revenue collectors and against the alienation of their land. The fact that the shaykhs and tribesmen were united in a common cause strengthened tribal solidarity, and effectively prevented the full implementation of the change since shaykhs and tribesmen refused payment of revenue. Many of the Tapu owners became owners in theory only, hoping that the central authority would at some future time enforce their legal rights: others accepted a nominal rent from the occupants of their land. A comparison with 'Amara Division, was made by H. C. Dobbs, the British revenue commissioner, in a report dated September, 1915.

> As to the State-Lands, their pozition is quite different from that of the State-lands of Amara, where the new farmer brings in an entirely new set of head-tenants and tenants. In Nasiriyah all that the farmer of State-property can do is to collect what cash he can get from the recognised tribal occupiers, who, so far as the Shaikhs or headmen at all events are concerned, do not change. In fact in the case of State-lands also the tribesmen are in the position of inferior proprietors under the overlordship of the State, and are not temporary tenants.[1]

Another element of complication was the chaotic conditions of the Tapu system, which led to endless disputes. A. C. Gordon Walker, who was

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1 Notes on Nasiriya Revenues, Confidential, by H. C. Dobbs, Revenue Commissioner, Basra. 28th September, 1915.

concerned about the issue in 1917, wrote:

> ... The present Tapu Sanad or Title-deed is an absurdity; a fraud and a delusion. In many cases the sanad is ridiculously out of date; it does not give the area and its boundaries are so vague as to turn the thing into a farce; and lastly the prices stated to be paid for immoveable property sold are notoriously fictitious. One can not hope for any thing better when one knows that these sanads are not based on accurate survey but are dependent on the vagaries of a subordinate official who uses a piece of rope to measure the lands concerned and works out the area in a rough and ready way; that these sanads are not kept up to date but are relics of a time when the Government of Iraq was not as perfect as it might have been.[1]

When Nasiriya first came under British control in July, 1915, the British officials on the spot were content to establish a minimum of administrative control, and when their advance along the Gharraf river was repulsed by tribal forces in 1916, the British army avoided making another advance because it would have had little effect on the major war along the Tigris. The tribes were left to manage their affairs with little interference as long as they did not endanger the safety of the British forces. However, in those areas where the British enjoyed effective military supremacy, as in Qurna, the policy of consolidating the position of the tribal shaykhs in return for their co-operation was implemented. Shaykhs like Qubashi of Qurna and Ḥamid in Madina were installed as government representatives, responsible for the order and revenue collection, for which they were paid. In Nasiriya Division no land revenue was demanded from the tribes lest it should lead to a rebellion, and until 1918, the only revenue

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior Files. Despatch No. 24, dated 4th April, 1917, from A. C. Gordon Walker, Legal Remembrancer, Basra, to Chief Political Officer.

collected was from date gardens and from townsmen (e.g. fish tax, liquor tax, tobacco vendors', licences, etc.).[1]

The successive British victories, the reoccupation of Kut al-'Amara, and the fall of Baghdad, opened the way for the British civil administration to tighten its hold over the area occupied. The number of political officers and assistant political officers was rapidly increased in 1918. Areas like the Gharaf, where no P.O. had been appointed, were now given A.P.O.'s (at Shatra and Qal'at Sukar). Measures were taken to concentrate tribal authority in the hands of a few shaykhs, and in distant areas shaykhs were granted the official title of Mudir or manager of Nahiyas (subdistricts). Farhud al-Mughashghash of Bani Khayqan, for instance, was made Mudir of all the Hamar lake, and extended his authority over independent tribes of the Hamar. But the policy of consolidating the shaykhs' position met with obstacles on a scale not met with in 'Amara. The tribes were divided into numerous and independent sections, each with its own shaykhly family, so that there were always several shaykhs in a district, none of whom could claim supremacy. The result was that the British political officers had to make a choice, which inevitably angered those shaykhs not chosen, who became potential enemies.

> It has been my endeavour during my last 3½ years in the Muntafiq to get the power in each tribe in the hands of one man.

wrote the political officer for Nasiriya Division in 1918, and went on to say:

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1 F.O. 371/3406/102207. Administration Report for Nasiriya, for year ending March 31st, 1918.
See also Reports of Administration for 1918, Vol. I, p. 352. In 1916-1917, the G.O.C. Euphrates Command, gave orders not to collect revenue from tribes.

This person is the Shaikh, and he is selected by Government in each case. This policy has surpassed all expectations, and whereas one found six or seven Shaikhs in each tribe all of equal standing (to say nothing of a host of pretenders) when first occupied Nasiriyah and Suq, now we find one strong man, who, as a general rule, gets a subsidy from Government and knows it worth his while to play straight. The responsibilities of the Shaikh are:-

1. Collection of Revenue after the demand has been put on the tribe by the A. P. O.
2. The maintenance of law and order in the tribe.
3. Settling the smaller disputes among his tribesmen, and the larger ones that may be referred to him by his A. P. O.
4. Providing labour (not casual but by tribe) when a demand is made on him.
5. The collection and handing over to the landlord of the annual rental, where such is possible.[1]

The shaykhs who accepted the British appointment as Mudirs, or as the recognised shaykh of a tribe, hoped to secure, in addition to prestige, the political officer's support both against the Mallaks, who held the Tapu deeds and against their enemies in the tribe and in other tribes, in addition to a monthly allowance. The snag for them was the need to collect revenue from their tribesmen, who for many years had fought against its payment under the leadership of the shaykhs who now sought to collect it. This faced the recognised shaykhs with a dilemma: if they failed in revenue collection the British might depose them in favour of more reliable shaykhs, especially where there were many rivals for the shaykhship, yet if they collected the revenue, they would lose their hold on the tribesmen.

Knowing the warlike character of the tribesmen and the possibility

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1 Reports of Administration for 1918, of Divisions and Districts of the Occupied Territories in Mesopotamia, Vol. I, Nasiriya Division, p. 351.

of rebellion against the new order, the British administration, logically, thought of disarming the tribesmen and prohibiting the use of "Qalá", the tower buildings used for defence in war. Shaykhs were asked to surrender the tribe's rifles, and fines were made payable in rifles. The new tribal law introduced by the British administration in 1915 contained a clause preventing the building of towers without the P.O.'s consent. Another ingenious measure was introduced in the form of a "Sanad" or contract, under which the local heads of the tribe were to agree to maintain order and obey government orders in their tribal districts and failure to fulfil these obligations was to expose the shaykhs to penalties.

The improvement of communications, first the completion of the railway line from Basra to Nasiriya by 1917, then the dredging of the Hamar Lake which made it navigable by steam boats, had a considerable effect on the surrounding tribes whose isolated lands now became accessible to the British forces. Once the political officer felt militarily as well as politically secure, he embarked on the formidable task of revenue collection and the settlement of the claims of the Tapu deed holders. "Circumstances and the particular conditions of the Muntafik have in the past forced us to be content with a modicum of income" reported the P.O. of Nasiriya Division in 1918: "This state of affairs, I have every hope, will largely be put right by the end of 1919."[1] Judging by results, the political officers and their assistants proved efficient in revenue collection, and were no doubt proud of

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1 Reports of Administration for 1918, Vol. I, Nasiriya Division, 1918, p. 353.

their skill. The following table gives a comparative statement of revenue collections in the Nasiriya Division from 1915 to year 1919-1920, in Rs.[1]

District	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	Total
Qalat Sikar	...	...	...	...	2.76.794	2.76.794
Shattrah	...	...	...	38.624	3.61.910	4.00.534
Nasiriyeh	11.341	15.403	70.395	1.01.127	2.45.044	4.43.310
Suq-Shuyukh	22.216	37.061	64.744	3.26.219	4.17.791	8.68.031
Total for Division	33.557	52.464	1.35.139	4.65.970	13.01.539	19.88.669

From this table it will be seen that the increase in revenue collected before 1918 was gradual. After that a sudden increase occurred, partly because of the opening of the Gharaf district, and partly because of increased demands. (Until 1918 the government share of the gross winter produce of flow land, in Suq and Nasiriya districts was only one-tenth, but in 1919 it became one-fifth on State-land and 15% on Tapu land.) Though the political officers were aware that the tribes of the Division had paid nothing or very little for more than ten years, they were persistent in their demands and even force was used for the purpose of collecting revenue.[2]

The consequences of the Tapu system were regarded by the political officers with considerable apprehension.

> This is the burning question of the hour with the tribes round Suq and Hamar. It is the one difficult but not

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1 F.O. 371/5079/E12851. Administration Report of the Muntafiq Division for the year 1919, by Captain A. H. Ditchburn, Officiating P.O., Nasiriya, Appendix "G". Names are spelled as in source.

2 F.O. 371/3397/169228. Secret. From the Officiating Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department. Simla. Fortnightly Report No. 15, for 1 June - 15 June, and No. 16 for 15 June - 1st July, 1918.

> insurmountable problem that faces us.... Both tribesmen and landlord appear to have their grouse. The latter in particular thinks himself to be suffering under a sense of injustice.
>
> The point I think boils itself down to this. Are we going to accept all Turkish title deeds and enforce the rights of the owners of such deeds, or are we going to step into things as we found them and not help landlords to recover their lost property? It should be realized that throughout the entire Muntafik country there has been a sort of miniature French Revolution taking place stretching over the last ten years or so. It has been nothing more or less than a revolt of the serf population against the landed classes and the parallel is even closer in the landed classes having been the aristocrates of the land, and absentee landlords of the worst type and have in the past bled their serfs in the most unmerciful manner. We British step in at the close of this revolution, ...[1]

As to method of settlement, the author of the above report envisaged three alternatives. The first was to support the tribes irrespective of the legal rights of the landlords, a policy which would no doubt have won over all the tribes. The second alternative was to support the Sa'duns by enforcing their legal rights and thus allying the landed classes with the administration. The third alternative would have been a sort of hybrid, a temporary compromise, by which the landlord would be acknowledged as the legal owner, but forbidden to interfere in day to day matters, the administration assuming the responsibility of collecting his rents, after which the Tapu deeds might be examined and only those with accurate boundaries and acreages would be accepted. Where Tapu deeds were invalidated the administration would step in and arbitrarily divide the land.[2]

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/47. Administration Report of Suq al-Shuyukh and district for year, 1916-1917.
2 Ibid.

In July, 1919, the Revenue Commissioner held a meeting in Nasiriya, attended by shaykhs and landlords, at which a compromise was adopted. Existing agreements between landlords and tenants were to be maintained and were in future to be modified only with the consent of the political officer. More important the theoretical liability to pay over 40% of gross produce of Tapu land (half to the government and half to the Mallak) was considered too high, and a reduction of 10% was made. Where landlord and tenant were unable to reach an agreement, and the latter had previously accepted the position of the former as legal owner, the administration would assume responsibility and collect the owner's share, on condition that he should not interfere with the details of cultivation. These measures were regarded as a temporary settlement pending further consideration by the administration.[1] On the basis of this compromise the Revenue Commissioner late in 1919, issued a guide for the settlement of Tapu disputes:

> The Tapu Sanad is to be the standard, where it is not supported by tribal admission and former possession of the land, it is to be construed quite literally.
>
> Sadun and other Mallaks' claims will thus fall into three categories, viz., those in which
>
> (i) a. a document not open to prima facie objection exists,
> b. the tribes admit that the claimant is the Mallak of their lands and,
> c. the claimant can prove that he did once hold possession;
>
> (ii) those in which the claimant is deficient in respect of either b or c;
>
> (iii) those in which the claimant has not a prima facie valid Tapu Sanad.
>
> Class (i) may be paid half the sum realised from the area to

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1 Iraq. File No. 48/48. Administration Reports ... for 1919. Diary of Political Officer, Muntafik Division, Month July, 1919.

> which their claim is allowed as good class; Class (ii) should stand or fall by their deeds and only get half the proceeds from the area described in those deeds and Class (iii) should get nothing.[1]

It was left to the judgment of the political officers and their assistants to decide the merit of each Sanad and to make arrangements for the payment of revenue.[2] Thus an additional power was given to the P.O. and he became the man to whom the tribes and the landlords looked to for aid. The new arrangement accepted the legal rights of the landlord against the traditional tribal right to a separate "Dira", and to some extent perpetuated the injustices done by the Turkish regime to the tribes. The landlords, particularly the Sa'duns, rejoiced and were described as "flocking like wolves these days and are displaying an unenviably rapacious spirit."[3] The British administration hoped to please both sides, the Mallaks and the tribesmen, but failed to realise the inherent conflict between the two. The tribes were not in reality contesting the legality of the Sanads, although they sometimes professed to do so when it served their purpose. What the tribes wanted was emancipation from the control of the landlords and the state. The British administration missed the heart of the problem, when it began to busy itself and the tribesmen with the authenticity and wording of the Sanads, since it acknowledged the Mallaks' rights over tribal land. The fact that the Mallaks were mainly of the Sa'dun family partly explains why the British

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1 Ibid. Diary of the Political Officer, Muntafik Division, Month November, 1919.

2 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 30/J-1, No. 14012, Revenue Secretary Office, Baghdad, dated 24th December, 1919, to P.O., Qurna.

3 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File 48/48. Monthly Reports of P.O., September, 1919. Suq al-Shuyukh and Hammar Political Diary, p. 97.

did not want to antigonise them. The Sa'dun, unlike other Mallaks, had considerable influence and prestige, as was demonstrated by 'Ajimi's attitude during the years of the war. Even before the temporary Tapu settlement had been agreed many of the leading Sa'duns living in Nasiriya and Suq had been given monthly allowances[1] and their social position as dignitaries had been maintained.

The Muntafik tribes, which had enjoyed for more than a decade freedom from government control found themselves by the end of the war under a new authority which was not only alien in race and religion, but was increasingly submitting them to firmer discipline. Though the British administration attempted as far as conditions of war permitted to improve irrigation and land conditions, the good intentions behind these attempts were overshadowed by the adverse effects of the new policy adopted by the British regime. First, the elimination of the plurality of shaykhs in favour of a single shaykh was a gross interference with tribal institutions, and the shaykhs now held their position by consent of the P.O. rather than by that of the tribesmen, notably where the shaykh recognised by the British was not the shaykh most popular or respected by the tribesmen.[2] When persuasion failed the P.O. sometimes reverted to force in imposing a particular shaykh

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File 48/47. Administration Reports ... , Suq al-Shuyukh and District Report for the Year 1916-1917, p. 41.
See also Report of Administration for 1918, Vol. I, Nasiriya District, Appendix "C".
F.O. 371/5079/E12859. Administration Report of the Muntafiq Division for Year 1919. Appendix "C".

Sa'dun Cash Allowances	Rs. per Mensem
in Nasiriya	1.520
in Suq al-Shuyukh	800
Total per Annem	27.840

2 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/48. Monthly Report for Nasiriya

Contd

on a tribe,[1] and frequently the British political officer for one reason or another became dissatisfied with the shaykh and replaced him by another.[2] Sometimes, however, the P.O. had to appoint a strong shaykh who was very well entrenched in his tribe, such as Shaykh Khayun al-'Ubayd of the 'Ubuda tribe of Shatra, and Shaykh Badr al-Rumaydh of the Albu Salih tribe of Suq, who after a long struggle with the British was pardoned and acknowledged as the paramount shaykh of his tribe. And sometimes an unpopular shaykh was removed to make way for several lesser shaykhs from different tribal sections, as happened in the case of the Al-Juwabir tribe of Suq al-Shiyukh district.[3]

Secondly, there was a continuous increase in the government's demands for taxation, which, added to the payment for the Mallakiya disenchanted the tribes with the British, especially in those areas where the tribesmen were threatened with famine. One such case occurred in the area immediately north of Nasiriya district where famine followed the diversion of the river Gharaf into a new bed and it was common knowledge that the cultivators' share of the produce was barely sufficient to provide for a bare subsistence. Some shaykhs and Sarkals (the Sarkals role in Nasiriya differed from that in 'Amara) who usually maintained a "Tal'a" (a small tract

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District for January, 1919. According to the P.O. that Salih al-Daghir was appointed Shaykh of the al-Ibrahim tribe because he first supported the British, while in fact Shaykh Chayd al-Tahir was the most powerful and influential.

1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/47. Diary of Assistant Political Officer, Qal'at Sukar, for October, 1918.

2 In Madina and Chabaysh frequent changing of shaykhs occurred.

3 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/48. Political Diary of Suq al-Shiyukh and Hamar Districts for Month of August, 1919.

of the Tapu land free of taxation in return for their services) were asked to pay taxes out of its produce.[1] When the tribal leaders came to the P.O. complaining about the tax demands, the general attitude of the P.O. was to brush aside their protests as mere excuses. The A.P.O. for Suq and Ḥamar district wrote in his report for January, 1919, "Tribal Shaikhs have come in from far and wide, all with same excuse ready to try and evade the payment of Miri."[2] Naturally the tribesmen tried to avoid paying taxes, because "once he had settled ... he has still to square up with the Mallak, which sum, in most cases, is equivalent in total to the revenue."[3] When petitions failed, the tribesmen resorted to force, shooting tax collectors, with the result that the P.O. inflicted severe punishments and fines.[4] However, some tribes, such as the Albu Salih of the Muntafik, were able to avoid paying taxes for a long time to come.

That the tribes were uneasy and rebellious had been noticed as early as 1916, when the younger generation of tribesmen in the Suq district were reported to be against the establishment of any government. Their argument was reported to be that with no government there would be no tax collection, and the land would remain free from the Mallaks. The tribesmen also thought that they were heavily enough armed to be able to resist the

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1 Ibid. Monthly Report on Nasiriya District for Month of October, 1919.
2 Ibid. Suq al-Shiyukh and Ḥamar Political Diary for Month of January, 1919.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid. Qal'at Sukar Political Diary for Month of January, 1919.
See also from Shatra Political Diary, March, 1919. Twelve Shaykhs of Bani Sa'id were fined Rs. 1,000 each and demolition of their towers because they defied the P.O. order because of revenue.

imposition of government authority. But the P.O. disregarded this attitude as talk of "young braves", which did not meet the approval of the "wiser and older heads".[1] But things did not develop the way the P.O. wished them to do. In the political diary for Qal'at Sukar for the month of September, 1918, the situation of the tribes was described "generally as one of fear, or perhaps suspicion ... " and the problem as conceived by the A.P.O. of Qal'at Sukar was "to convert this fear and suspicion into respect".[2] In Shatra district in 1919, it was reported that "There is a spirit of unrest abroad in the tribes."[3] But these passing remarks by British officials were not much noticed, because they were offset by more optimistic reports, such as that of A. H. Ditchburn, A.P.O. for Suq al-Shiyukh, who in his annual report for 1918 wrote:

> The position to-day is that, firstly, tribesmen are being made to pay revenue on all crops, ... Secondly, the claims of Sa'dun landlords are now looked into, and each case is being settled in amicable compromise. Thirdly, in spite of the fact that the tribes have not been disarmed and that probably 50 per cent of each tribe could muster rifles, law and order prevails.[4]

It is curious that Ditchburn did not make the point that tax and land questions had led to a sense of uneasiness and suspicion developing, as was the case in other districts. He seems to have overlooked the Albu Salih

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/47. Administration Report of Suq al-Shiyukh and District for year 1916-1917.
2 Ibid. Qal'at Sukar Political Diary, September, 1918.
3 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/48. Shatra Political Diary, February, 1919.
4 Ibid. Administration Report of Suq al-Shiyukh and Hamar District for year 1918, p. 361.

rebellion in Suq district, whose shaykh, Badr al-Rumaydh, was described by Ditchburn as a "perpetual thorn in the side of the A.P.O. of this district". Badr, who was then in his sixties, refused to pay taxes or recognise the P.O.'s authority and led his tribe of 4,000 men to fight against the British. The British authorities at first tried to control his tribe by deposing Badr and appointing a pro-British shaykh, Sulayman al-Nasrulla, in his place, but the tribe refused to recognise the new shaykh. Force was used - in June 1918 a gunboat was sent to Albu Salih to shell the land and tents - but without success, since the tribe and Badr remained defiant. In early 1919, the A.P.O. suggested an aircraft attack on the tribe, but when the attack took place on 14 February 1919, it failed. A combined attack by air and by gunboat was made on 26 February 1919, but the tribe simply dispersed into the Jazira and the marshes beyond the reach of the British forces, from whence they carried out surprise attacks on the British forces and local levies. The frustrated P.O., H. Dickson of Nasiriya Division, wrote in his monthly diary:

> Two courses are open to us to really make an effort, and finally capture or kill Badr or make peace with him. The latter course is practically impossible to carry out, as Badr's terms are entirely one-sided. He refuses to surrender in Nasiriyah, Baghdad or Basrah to a properly accredited representative. He demands that he or one of his sons should be Shaikh, he demands that no fine, imprisonment or detention shall be inflicted on him for past deeds committed.... Such course would result in terrible loss of prestige to us among our friends .... Badr must be killed or captured, and a relentless pursuit of the man till this object is attained should be carried out... As a preliminary to any action that may be taken, I have collected the Shaikhs of the leading sections of Albu Saleh and have them all locked up in Nasiriyah. My reason for this course is that not a single of the Albu Saleh are to be trusted. There is every reason to believe they are all against

> Government and will combine to resist an attack on Badr made by us.[1]

Later in May, 1919, another campaign was launched to crush the Albu Salih tribesmen. This time a British force was able to dislodge them, and a subservient shaykh called Muwannis was made the paramount shaykh of the Albu Salih. Soon, however, the long and bitter hostility between Badr and the British ended with the opening of negotiations between the two, which culminated in the conditional submission of Badr, whose son was made shaykh of the tribe. The A. P. O. who contacted him in October when Badr's submission was made, commented:

> I cannot believe him to be the megalomaniac, he is stated to be. That he is powerful morally and physically is, to my mind, no delusion.

and the A. P. O., A. Platts, went on to comment on the British approach:

> In his case, we have always had the one side to the question, and, as ever with Arab affairs, the contortion of the whole facts is always alarming. The intermediaries who have from time to time been used have apparently aggravated rather than relieved the situation .... but I cannot help stating that the past policy adopted of force has been wrong.[2]

The Middle Euphrates

Geographically the Middle Euphrates comprises the land watered by

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. Diary of political officer for Muntafik Division, Nasiriya, April and May, 1919.

2 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/48. Suq al-Shiyukh and Hamar, Political Diary for the Month of October, 1919. References to Badr's hostility were made in the political officer's diaries for the same district for the months of January, February, April, March, May, June, July, 1919.

the two branches of the Euphrates river, the Hindiya and Hilla channels, roughly from the town of Musayb in the north to the town of Samawa in the south, a few miles beyond the meeting point of the two channels. Socially, the Middle Euphrates populace represented a mosaic of varying stages of social transformation from pure nomad in the western desert to settled villagers in the vicinity of Hilla town. There was a two-way movement of population: nomads were moving towards a settled life and settled tribes were moving towards semi-nomadism by abandoning cultivation for flock and sheep rearing, primarily because of land conditions. Large areas of the Middle Euphrates suffered tremendously from land deterioration caused by the silting of canals and the diversion of river courses which shut off the water supply. Many tribes sank into poverty or were driven to move to better lands, where there were usually inter-tribal wars over land and water, reverted to nomadism. As a result the tribes were very conscious of the reality of the struggle for the land, and were very much alive to questions of land tenure and revenue collection. The warlike characteristics of the tribes of this region can, indeed, be attributed almost entirely to the land question.

The extent of Tapu ownership varied from one district to another in the Middle Euphrates. It was a rarity in Shamiya district, but it was widespread in the Hilla district and in Karbala. Tapu owners were primarily rich townsmen with no tribal connections, some of them Turks, others Jews. The large tribal confederations such as the Khaza'il, Bani Hasan, and Bani Hacham had been hammered down by the oppressive Turkish policy into several independent tribal sections, land deterioration enhancing the process, because of the movement of part of the confederation to a remote district, which

reduced its ties with the confederation to nominal affiliation. The multiplicity of the tribes, unlike 'Amara Division, added to the difficulty of government. During the war the Turkish administration gradually lost control over the whole area except for the town centres, leaving the region under tribal supremacy, which meant that each tribe became the law in its district and was freed from tax payment as well as from the absentee landlords.

By contrast with the tribes of the Tigris and Lower Euphrates, the Middle Euphrates tribes did not come into direct contact with the British until quite late, save for a short visit by a British gunboat to Samawa in October, 1915, and a limited correspondence with a few shaykhs of the Albu Sultan and the Khaza'il.[1] The fall of Baghdad was the turning point in the attitude of the British administration towards the Middle Euphrates. The British civil administration became eager to establish effective control over the area, partly because it was conceived that "the tribes have had a taste of independence, and the longer they are left to enjoy it the more difficult it will be to control them later",[2] but chiefly because it needed the revenue and grain from the area, "The collection of the Government share on the crop was considered important for two reasons". Miss Bell wrote in the official

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1 'Adai al-Jaryan visited the C.P.O. before the battle of Ctesiphon and offered his co-operation, also letters were exchanged between the shaykhs of Khaza'il and Bani Ḥasan on the one hand and the British on the other.

2 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 24/2. Captain Young's Reports. Copy of Memorandum No. 9, dated Baghdad, 21st April, 1917. To C.P.O., Baghdad.

report on the administration of Mesopotamia:

> In the first place the provision of foodstuff locally would lessen the tonnage required at a time when freight was particularly precious; and secondly, payment of revenue would have a moral effect in so much as it was the outward and visible sign of the Arabs' alleged submission. Payment of revenue is considered the measure of allegiance.[1]

Two means were adopted for the achievement of the economic aims of the administration: the first was the creation of an effective machinery for revenue collection, the second a programme of agricultural development aimed to increase production. Unfortunately, revenue collection was more vigorously pursued than agricultural development, and even the agricultural plans had two serious side effects, an increase in interference in the pattern of tribal cultivation and land holding, and a growing awareness among the tribes of the ambitions of the British administration.

By 1918, the Middle Euphrates had been divided into three administrative divisions, Samawa, Hilla and Shamiya, with a political officer in each division assisted by assistant political officers and irrigation officers in certain areas. Initially the tribes and their shaykhs adopted an attitude of wait-and-see, but opposition to the new regime soon developed.

Samawa Division comprised three districts, Rumaytha, Samawa and Shanafiya. Most of the tribes of the division belonged to the loose Hacham confederation which extended further south into Nasiriya Division. The

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1 Cmd. 1061. A Review of the Civil Administration, p. 76.
See also Tennant, In the Clouds Above Baghdad, p. 230. "British influence had gradually penetrated south into the dark and little-known country between Hilla and Nasiriyeh, they were the rich lands of Mesopotamia, and every acre opened up meant so much more grain for the Expeditionary Force."

leading tribal sections in Samawa were al-Dhawalim, Albu Jayash, al-'Ajib, Bani Zurayj, al-Sufran, Jawabir, Khafaja, each of them [illegible] with its own shaykh or several shaykhs of almost equal standing. The tribal lands, once rich, suffered greatly from lack of water and canal silting, notably from the silting of the Saqalawiya canal, which watered the Zayad tribe's land, and from a fall in the water level in the Shinafiya district. Changes in land conditions led to a change in the tribesmens' occupations, from the cultivation of the land to the tending of flocks and sheep breeding, or a combination of the two. There was a gradual reversion to nomadism which removed the tribesmen very largely from government control. The first political officer was appointed to the division in November 1917. He began by granting monthly allowances to all the leading shaykhs as a means of securing their adherence. This was in accordance with the policy of consolidating the shaykhs' position and transforming them into government agents. Crystallization of this policy was curtailed by the prompt introduction of revenue demands and of the widely-detested forced labour for the construction of railway lines between Nasiriya and Samawa. The political officer advocated caution and compromise with the Samawa tribes, which had paid little in the way of taxes except under duress,[1] but what the P.O. considered leniency, the tribes rejected as unfair demands. They quickly took up a hostile attitude. The Jarib tribe in May, 1918, refused to have its crops inspected for revenue purposes and was as a result bombed from the

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/47. Samawa Report No. 6, for the period 1-15 April, 1918.

air.[1] Similarly the Sufran under their Shaykh Majun defied orders for tax payment. The political officer commented on the tribal situation in July, 1918.

> There seems to be a general feeling of unrest amongst the tribes, and also a tendency not to obey orders issued by the Political Officers.... I met most of the tribes in Rumaithah who seem a thoroughly mean, cunning lot. With the exception of Buraid ibn Jahil of the Zaiyad they are not worth mentioning and could easily be tamed. I hope as soon as the scheme for a military detachment has been developed and a straight road has been made from the detachment to Rumaithah, that permission will be given to teach three or at least one of these tribes a lesson that the remainder will bear in mind for a few months to come.[2]

Force was too familiar to the Samawa Division to have much immediate effect, and the P.O.'s optimism proved to be ill judged.

Labour was needed for railway construction and the tribes were forced to provide a quota based on an estimate of the number of tribesmen available. During late 1918, the average number of labourers working daily on the project included 1000 tribesmen from the Rumaytha district alone.[3] Many of the tribesmen taken for the work were needed for cultivation or grazing their sheep, working conditions were very hard, no accommodation was provided, wages were low (4 annas a day) and the tribesmen resented being taken away from their families.[4] "There is no doubt that this labour question has been a great cause of dissatisfaction amongst the tribes"

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. Telegram from P.O., Samawa to P.O., Baghdad, No. S.617, dated May 25, 1918; and the reply of the Civil Commissioner on May 29, 1918.
2 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/47. Samawa Report No. 11, for the period 1st-31st July, 1918.
3 Iraq, Ministry of Interior, File No. 48/47. A.P.O. Rumaytha Report for October, 1918.
4 Ibid. Samawa Divisional Report for October, 1918.

commented Captain Nelson Lulin, P.O. Samawa Division, in October, 1918. "It has caused discontent at a time when we particularly want to allay such a feeling, ..."[1] In early 1919, the British administration decided to merge Samawa Division with a severed part of Hilla Division, the Diwaniya district so as to form a new division called Diwaniya. It is interesting to find that the main reason behind this merger was to bring Samawa under the tighter control which was already practised in Diwaniya.[2]

The shaykhs of the new division were in March, 1919, summoned by the political officer to a meeting in Diwaniya town. At the meeting the P.O. impressed upon them the necessity to disarm their tribesmen and demolish their "Muftuls" (military forts). The meeting, according to the P.O., came to a happy end and "The Diwaniyah and Afek Shaikhs gave excellent advice to their brethren from down-stream, who have professed their willingness to follow in their footsteps in such matters as destruction of forts and surrendering of arms."[3] But the Samawa Division's shaykhs had no real intention of disarming, once they were safe among their tribes: indeed they took an oath to unite in resisting any attempt to disarm them. The Hachem shaykhs first defied the

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1 Report of Administration for 1918, Vol. I. Samawa Division Report, p. 58.

2 F.O. 371/5082/ Administration Report of Diwaniya Political Division, for the year 1919.
"Practically every Shaikh in Samawah Division was in receipt of a monthly allowance. Diwaniyah District had been occupied later, and it was not desirable to extend the system; .... Similarly in 1918, Diwaniyah District had paid a considerable Revenue, whereas the Rumaithah District had enjoyed comparatively extremely light taxation. With a view to adjusting these differences and to the introduction of a more uniform policy on the Lower Euphrates, it was decided ..." Creation of Div.

3 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/48. Diwaniya Divisional Political Diary, for the months of February and March, 1919.

P.O. by withdrawing their tribesmen from the railway work. When the P.O. replied by arresting a number of Hachem shaykhs the other shaykhs launched an open revolt and attempted an attack on Rumaytha town, which only the efforts of the R.A.F. saved from falling into rebel hands. (It should be mentioned that fifteen months later a similar incident triggered the Rumaytha tribes into rebellion: they freed their shaykh, the whole town fell into their hands, and so began the 1920 rising in the Middle Euphrates.) Strained relations continued during the whole of the period of British administration. The Sufran tribe of Samawa district was bombed in October, 1919, and Majun, shaykh of the Sufran, was deposed in favour of a pro-British shaykh, a brother of Majun, known as Nahi. Although a number of levies were attached to Nahi he proved to be a "broken reed".[1] He elicited no respect from the Sufran tribesmen who remained loyal to Majun. As a result of tribal unrest a large proportion of the tax demands for Samawa Division for 1919 remained unpaid.[2]

Hilla Division came into existence during 1918. It comprised the districts of Hilla, Musayb, Hindiya, Diwaniya, which was detached in February, 1919, and Karbala, which was added to the Division in June 1918. Under Turkish rule Hilla Division, except for Diwaniya district was comparatively quiet, partly because of its proximity to Baghdad and partly because the Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid owned large tracts of cultivated land in the area. The existence of a comparatively strong administration encouraged the spread of

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1 Ibid. Diwaniya Divisional Political Diary for October and November, 1919.
2 Ibid. Diwaniya Divisional Political Diary for December, 1919.

Tapu ownership in the Hilla region. The Tapu holders, unlike the Sa'duns, were on the whole townsmen, some of them Turks and Jews. The habit was for the absentee landlord to lease his land to a shaykh or Sarkal by contract; the Sarkal usually employed cultivators from tribes with an hereditary association with the land, so that the attachment of the tribesmen to the land was maintained. The Tapu holder, when his land was not leased, took two-fifths of the gross produce, whereas on the Tigris and Lower Euphrates the customary share was one-fifth only. The Mallak was expected to clear and maintain the canals on which cultivation relied; the sarkal would deduct 5% or $\frac{1}{8}$ of the Mallak share as a Sarkala or fee. The economic relations introduced by the Tapu system were bound to influence the social institutions of the tribes. The sarkals or minor shaykhs developed into middlemen between the Mallak and the tribesmen. Their office became their source of wealth and they strongly opposed any extension of the authority of the paramount shaykh over their land and cultivators. During the war the sarkals were able to deny both the Mallak and the government shares of the produce of the land and were able to tighten their hold on their tribesmen and to establish their position as independent shaykhs.[1] The implementation of British tribal policy in this district, therefore provoked opposition from the sarkals or minor shaykhs, who were according to the principle of British administration subordinated to the recognized and paramount shaykhs.[2]

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1 Shaykh Yusuf Karkush, History of the Hilla, Najaf, 1965, Vol. I, p. 163.

2 Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration, p. 80. Jubur tribe was divided into sections which refused to recognize a paramount shaykh. But still Murad al-Khalil was imposed on them.
Also see Diary of Political Officer for Hindiya district, November, 1918. Sarkals of Fatla tribes on the right bank of the Hindiya channel resented payment of shaykh's share of their crop to the British recognised shaykh, Mutlib Sultan.

The British administration was more successful in Hilla than in other regions of the Middle Euphrates, and the policy of the stick and the carrot proved an efficient one when dealing with the shaykhs. The shaykhs were rewarded generously for their support by being allocated a percentage of all revenue collected and paid over by them. Some shaykhs were also appointed members of tribal councils with a monthly allowance. Furthermore, as part of the agricultural development policy large amounts of cash or seed were advanced to them. For most shaykhs this was a big carrot, but the stick was also effective, at least in the short term, as the British prevented widespread rebellions, frequently imposed fines in cash and kind and in emergencies made air raids against dissident tribesmen. The British were also able to conciliate some of the tribesmen. The agricultural development schemes had a settling effect in certain parts, and the clearance of two canals, the Bani Hasan and Jorjiya, encouraged the return of the tribes which had deserted their land. Irrigation schemes also increased the direct influence of the P.O. in the tribal areas. The P.O. also gained in status as a result of rivalry between tribes who tended to turn to him for help, as in the case of the rivalry between the Bani Hasan and al-Fatla in Hindiya district. Lastly, the British were lucky in having established strong links with some of the leading personalities of the region even before the introduction of direct British administration. Men like Muhammad 'Ali Qazwini and 'Adai al-Jaryan were of great help to the British and were subsequently given government support. In August, 1919, when an ordinary case of murder occurred in one of the Albu Sultan sections, the reaction of the British authorities was not the usual one, which involved the payment of Fasil, blood money, because "in this

case the murder involved contempt of the authority of Adda' al-Jaryan", the paramount shaykh of the Albu Sultan tribe. In accordance with 'Adai al-Jaryan's request for assistance "Captain Thomson promptly marched out with some 50 men of the Arab Levies under Captain McMhinnie, burned the village of the guilty party, and carried off their cattle - a most salutary example."[1]

In this district hostility between the townsmen and tribesmen was an asset to the British administration, since the merchants and town notables rallied behind the British, hoping for support against the surrounding tribes.[2] Also the townsmen Tapu holders hoped to be able to enforce their rights in the tribal areas. However, the political officers did not readily commit themselves in favour of the Mallaks, but tried to keep a balance between the Mallaks on the one hand and the shaykhs or sarkals on the other. The Mallak was forbidden to evict the sarkals and the sarkals were forbidden to leave the land without the P.O.'s consent. This measure, by a stroke of the pen, made the P.O. the ultimate authority to whom both the Mallaks and the tribesmen had to turn before any change could take place in land management.

The British administration, unlike that of the Turks, realised the importance of good communications in spreading its authority. In a

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1 Political Diary of Hilla Division for August, 1919.

2 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 24/2. Captain Young's Reports. Report dated Musayb, 6th April, 1917. "All merchants are emphatic in asking for some permanent sign that the Euphrates is again under settled Government. They consider that our visit will have, in fact has already had, an excellent effect, but they earnestly hope that it is only the precursor to the establishment of some recognized occupation, whether in force or not."

remarkably short time it managed to construct by November, 1918, railway lines from Baghdad and Hilla, with an extension from Hilla to the town of Kifl, and from Nasiriya to Samawa. Roads which were only suitable for pack animals were improved to enable mechanical vehicles to use them.

Political and economic leverages, as well as communication improvement, facilitated revenue collection in Hilla Division, but not without serious difficulties arising. The government share of the Miri land varied from one district to another: in Hilla district it was between 50 and 60% (or in the case of Midawara land 36%) of the gross produce; in Hindiya district 33⅓%; in Diwaniya 40%. Such differences were bound to lead to objections, especially where under Turkish rule, they had been merely theoretical demands, hardly ever enforced. One of the British administration's first actions was to announce the abolition of the cesses, such as the special public work tax, the education tax, and other surtaxes, which amounted to 4% of the gross produce. The P.O. realised that the rates of levy were excessive and any application would lead to wide resentment. As a result further reductions were made in the government share of between 5 and 15%.[1] Unfortunately, for the tribesmen, these were reductions in name only, since they had hardly ever paid more than a fraction of the theoretical demand during the previous regime, and what was actually to be collected by the British administration was in absolute terms much more than they had ever paid. In Diwaniya district the collection of the new rate of 25% caused

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1 See Appendix.

dismay among the tribesmen who were used to paying not more than 2%.[1] In 1919, the British political officers became more efficient in their assessment of the crops and the collection of revenue, and the 'Afaj tribes, which were reasonably quiet in 1918, began in mid 1919 to complain of the increase in the amount of revenue collected and passively began to resist revenue payment. Similar dissatisfaction was felt in Diwaniya district, whereupon the P.O. reverted to the old policy of the big stick, and arrested Shaykh Haji Farman of the Bahaytha and Shaykh Mandur of al-Ghanim.[2] As a way of discouraging the increasing complaints about taxation the A.P.O. at Diwaniya demanded from each person presenting a complaint to him about revenue collection or assessment a deposit of Rs. 100, which would be confiscated if he failed to convince the A.P.O. of the validity of his case.[3] Lastly, because of the urgent need of the administration for grain supply the P.O. required each tribe to provide a certain amount of grain to be sold at a fixed price of Rs. 100 per ton which happened to be less than the market price by at least 50%.[4] The adverse effect of such a measure on the attitude of the tribesmen requires no further comment.

The Shamiya Division covered the area irrigated by the two branches of the Hindiya, the Kufa and Shamiya channels. The main towns in the

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1 Diwaniya Political Diary, for 1-31 July, 1918.
See also Administration Reports for 1918, vol. I, pp. 135 and 201. In Hilla district the full 60% was demanded on Miri land, with no reduction, because of the administration's urgent need for grain. In 1919 a reduction was made.

2 Political Diary of Diwaniya Division for July, 1919.

3 Ibid. for May, 1919.

4 Political Diary, Hindiya district, July 16th-31st, 1918. Sarkals were forced to sell to the Resources Department at Rs. 100 while market prices at Karbala and Hilla were 150-200 Rs. per ton.

division were Kufa, Um-Ba'rur, Abu Sukayr, and Ja'ara, which were trading centres as well as government posts. The Shamiya region flourished as the Euphrates began to abandon its normal course, the Hilla Channel, for its new course, the Hindiya, and only the erection of the Hindiya Barrage in 1913 saved Hilla channel from total destruction. Hence, unlike the other tribes of the Middle Euphrates region the Shamiya tribes were engaged in reclaiming land, and the fact that the land remained basically Miri or Saniya rather than Tapu meant that the tribesmen were the main beneficiaries. Tribes from neighbouring areas whose land was drying up began to move into the Shamiya Division seeking better opportunities. The main tribes of the Division were the Khaza'il, Bani Hasan, and al-Fatla. The constituent tribes of the once strong confederation of the Khaza'il were more or less independent, except that some of them maintained a nominal adherence to the shaykhly family. The Fatla and Bani Hasan had greater unity and solidarity, probably because they were less exposed to Turkish destruction.

The distinctive characteristics of the Shamiya Division were the following:

1. The absence of extensive Tapu holdings meant that the tribes retained possession of their hereditary lands. The shaykhs of the tribes leased the land from the government according to a Shartnama (contract) by which they undertook to pay the government share of the produce. The government had the right to evict tribes which refused tax payments, but such action was a rarity, mainly because of government weakness.

2. Though the Shartnama was usually in the name of the shaykh or a number of shaykhs, the shaykhs were in fact acting on behalf of all the tribe,

and the land was divided among a cluster of families (Ḥumula) whose head was usually called the Sarkal. The Sarkal was responsible for the management and for the "Tisgam" (collecting and distributing his cultivators over the land). The cultivators were members of his Ḥumula or tribe. The Shaykhly family obtained a comparatively large tract of land and in addition the Ḥumulas were required to give the Shaykh a small percentage of their produce to enable him to fulfil his additional duties and defray certain costs, such as the cost of keeping an open guest house, Mudhif. Both the Shaykh and the Sarkal were directly responsible for revenue payment, which amounted in theory to 40% of the gross produce of flow Miri land. The cultivators' share was two-fifths, the remaining one-fifth was the Sarkal's share. The share of each Ḥumula varied from a few mishara (a mishara is 2500 square metres) to a hundred mishara. In the case of small holdings the Sarkal and his direct relatives were the owners as well as the cultivators. Generally in the tribal land the relationship between the shaykhs or sarkal and their tribesmen maintained to a great extent its traditional paternal character.

3. Sayids not belonging to local tribes became owners of extensive areas of cultivable land tilled by tribesmen from different tribes under the control of the Sayid. Two factors contributed to this phenomenon. First, there was proximity to Najaf, the most sacred Shi'i place. Since the Middle Euphrates tribes were Shi'is, they came under the influence of Najaf, and the Sayids enjoyed a special status because of their hereditary link with the Imam's family. The second factor was the encouraging attitude of the Turkish authorities toward the Sayids' ownership of agricultural land in the tribal areas. The Turks expected the Sayids to act as peace makers and to help

establish government control over the unruly tribes. The Sayids permeated the Shamiya region without resistance and some of them had been settled in the area for many generations, had intermarried with leading Shaykhly families, and had adopted many of the tribal habits and traditions, such as opening a Mudhif. Their Sayidship was a major asset to them and they remained a distinctive class of owners, different from the townsmen and absentee landlords. However they resembled the latter in their relations with their cultivators, who were an aggregate from different tribes, in that the economic basis of cultivation was the Mallak and the peasant or labourer. The following is an interesting comparison between a tribal ownership and Sayid ownership in Shamiya Division in 1919.

> ... Saiyid Muhsin Abu Tabikh's lands this year run to 3,500 misharahs, all in his own name, on which every fallah is a labourer pure and simple living under the worst abuses of the truck system; their condition is extremely bad, hamlets are very rare and wretched, and the whole country is almost deserted. Compare with this 'Aqar, extending to a little more than 3,800 misharahs of rice, held in 50 or more different names; on all of which the Shaikh takes a share, though in his name he holds probably less than 500 misharahs ... and it is at once apparent that half at least of the immense difference in the property, population, and general well-being of the latter, is due to a comparatively rational system of land holding.[1]

However, there were in a few cases Sayids who had for many generations held land and whose cultivators, though initially from different tribes, had through the passage of time developed a kind of tribal entity, with the Sayid acting as Shaykh.

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior. File No. 48/48. Report of Eastern Shamiya, for the month of October, 1919.

4. Lastly, the Shamiya Division was particularly rich because of its rice cultivation, which was dependent on an elaborate system of perennial irrigation and on a sufficient supply of water. Diversion of the Euphrates into the Hindiya channel guaranteed the water supply, and when the Hindiya Barrage was constructed the Turkish authorities adopted a system which allowed all the water to flow into the Hindiya during the summer and into the Hilla during the winter, thus providing enough water for the summer crop, rice, in the Shamiya region, and so emphasising the concentration on rice cultivation. Rice cultivation required efficient control and administration to provide for digging Tubars, small distributors, and Buzzal, drainage. This situation tended to increase the authority of the manager of the work, namely the Shaykh and Sarkal or Sayids. While the Shaykh-tribesmen relationship was a safeguard against maltreatment of the cultivators, in the case of non-tribal ownership it led to oppression.

Late in 1917, when British officials made their first appearance in the Shamiya region, it had been, since the Najaf rising in 1915, in a state of virtual independence. The new authorities were passively acknowledged by the shaykhs of the region, who were asked to visit Baghdad and meet the higher British administration. Early in 1918, a large number of Shaykhs and Sayids visited Baghdad. During their meetings with British officials at Baghdad they were always reminded that the new regime had the interests of the Shaykhs and their tribes in mind and they were assured that prosperity would prevail. Before the departure of the Shaykhs they were given presents.

The British administration's irrigation plans for the Middle Euphrates chiefly concerned the Shamiya region, mainly because of a change in

the distribution of water through the Hindiya Barrage. The British Irrigation Officers thought that the old Turkish way of letting all the water through one channel in one season and through the other in a late season, would prevent the whole Middle Euphrates from sowing two crops a year. They therefore introduced a weekly rotation system, the flow of all the water being directed into each channel in alternative weeks. This proved detrimental to the rice cultivation in Shamiya because it drastically diminished the flow of summer water to their land. Before the British took control in late 1917, a good rice crop produced 90,000 tons gross, but during the first year of British control the produce diminished to 600 tons gross, and in 1918 it was 20,000 tons.[1] Although the reason for the decline became clear to the British political officers in the region in 1918, for one reason or another the same system of weekly rotation was maintained, thus spreading dissatisfaction all over the region.

Revenue collection also had its share in disenchantment with the British, especially when only three per cent was deducted from the theoretical Turkish demands, while in a neighbouring district, Diwaniya, the reduction was up to 15% of the gross produce. Tightening the British hold over the region began with the replacement of Shaykhs by British officials, e.g. 'Alwan Haj Sa'dun, who was acting as the administration's agent was replaced in 1918 by a British officer. Not many steps were taken in the direction of

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1 Reports of the Administration for 1918, Shamiya Division, p. 81. "In the immediate future therefore a reversion should be made to Turkish system of giving the summer water to Shamiyah as the winter water is even more given to Hillah. With such an arrangement alone can cultivation be secured and certain political difficulties averted."

strengthening the Shaykhs' position, partly because most of the influential shaykhs were already firmly entrenched thanks to tribal solidarity, and the P.O. could hardly strengthen their position vis-a-vis their tribesmen or extend their influence over other tribes. Those who publicly adhered to the P.O. had an axe to grind which was not always compatible with the P.O.'s idea of good rule.[1] The A.P.O. stationed at Um al-Ba'rur in 1919 felt the unpopularity of the British administration and in a letter addressed to his mother he wrote:

> I can appeal to absolutely no one but merchants or landlords, other than my own Government servants, who give me any answer they think I want. As for asking the poor, it is more profitable to ask a gramophone record: they have only one parrot-dirge - "We have no resource except Your Honour and the mercy of Allah!" ... the only way to govern the country is to say "Hadha amri" and go on saying it, and this is government by force and nothing else. The only alternative is to quit..."[2]

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1 Shamiya Diary, October, 1919.

2 Mann, An Administrator in the Making, p. 172. A letter to his father dated November 18, 1919, p. 175. A letter to his mother dated November 23, 1919. J. Mann was A.P.O. in 'Um al-Ba'rar and was killed in the 1920 rising.

Chapter 7

The Rise of the Independence Movement, 1918-1920

Before the war political consciousness was in its infancy, limited to a small minority of educated people, chiefly members of landed families and army officers. It flourished in Constantinople and only a faint radiation reached Iraq, where political activities were directed against the C. U. P. policies of centralization and Turkification, and were channelled into other Ottoman parties working within the Ottoman framework but in opposition to the C. U. P. No independent Arab movement developed in Iraq apart from the Basra Reform Committee, which was more Sayid Talib's personal creation than a party and which died just before the war when a compromise was effected between Sayid Talib and the Turkish administration. For the upper classes the landowners, the rich merchants and the officials, an Arab nationalist independence movement was inconceivable: for nearly four centuries they had lived as Ottomans. Religion rather than race was the predominant factor in the Ottoman Empire and Arabs were accepted as equals by the Turks and shared with them the control of the administration, particularly in local affairs. It was only after the 1908 revolution in Turkey that doubts began to be raised about Arab equality with the Turks. One wonders what trend that opposition to the C. U. P. would have taken if the war had not started in 1914; of only one thing can one be sure, that the war came at a time of growing divergence between Turk and Arab. The war and the ideas which dominated the latter stages of it, presented the people of Iraq for the first time in centuries with the prospect and possibility of achieving a new political status, and the

people were called upon to decide between alternatives.

From the beginning of the war British officials in Iraq tried to maintain a distinction between the Arab inhabitants and the Turks. On 5th November, 1914, the following proclamation was issued by Sir Percy Cox:

> Let it not be hidden from you that the Great British Government has to its great regret been forced into a state of war by the persistent and unprovoked hostility of the Turkish Government instigated by Germany for her own ends. The British Government has, therefore, been obliged to send a force to the Shatt-el-Arab to protect her commerce and friends and expel the hostile Turkish troops. But let it be known to all, the British Government has no quarrel with the Arab inhabitants on the river bank; and so long as they show themselves friendly and do not harbour Turkish troops or go about armed they have nothing to fear and neither they nor their property will be molested.[1]

And in another proclamation in the same month Cox emphasised:

> The British Government has now occupied Basrah, but though a state of war with the Ottoman Government still prevails, yet we have no enmity or ill-will against the populace to whom we hope to prove good friends and protectors. No remnant of Turkish Administration now remains in this region. In place thereof the British flag has been established - under which you will enjoy the benefits of liberty and justice both in regard to your religious and your secular affairs.[2]

The same theme recurred several times in the speeches and declarations of the British administration throughout the war.[3] This policy was conceived by the India Government, which was then responsible for the campaign, both as a safeguard against arousing Indian Islamic susceptibilities, and as an attempt

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1 Compilation of Proclamations, Notices, Etc. from October 31st, 1914 to August 31st, 1919, page 2, No. 4.
2 Ibid., pp. 2-3, No. 5.
3 Ibid., p. 4, No. 7. Notice by Cox dated 14th February, 1915; and notice No. 8, to the Shaykhs and Tribesmen of the Cha'ab, dated 15th March, 1915.

to neutralize if not to gain the support of the local inhabitants. Neither the India Government nor its representatives in Iraq would have gone further than this, but the British Government acting from different motives, forced on the administration further commitments to the people of Iraq. The Maude Declaration of 19th March, 1917, in a colourful way gave the impression that freedom and independence would be granted to the people:

> Since the days of Hulaku your Citizens have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, ... Since the days of Midhat Pasha the Turks have talked of reforms yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify to the vanity of those promises?

In the same declaration Maude pointed out that Britain did not wish "to impose upon you alien institutions" and maintained that "The people of Baghdad shall flourish and enjoy their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals."[1] The second and even more important public statement was the Anglo-French Declaration of November, 1918, giving similar promises. The framers of these declarations did not take into consideration the possible rise of hopes and expectations based on them or the way in which such feelings could be met. The first was drawn up by Mark Sykes, who had less than a year before concluded with the French the notorious Sykes-Picot Agreement dividing the Arab territories among the two powers. The declaration in fact was intended simply to mobilise the Arabs against the Turks during the war, and was not considered as a statement of future policy. Similarly, the Anglo-French Declaration was intended for

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1 Compilation of Proclamations, Notices, Etc. from October 31st, 1914 to August 31st, 1919, p. 5, No. 9.

the Arabs of Syria rather than for those of Iraq. In Iraq the occupation administration which initially objected to both declarations, continued to act in accordance with its belief that Iraq would eventually be placed under direct British control. The administration continued to pay lip service to the declarations to which it objected, as when the G. O. C. -in-Chief on November 2nd, 1918 referred to the Maude declaration in emotional terms ("That promise, as you know, Gentlemen, General Maude did not live to redeem. He laid the foundation and it has fallen to me to complete the superstructure."). But little was meant by its words. Nor did the administration pay much attention to the influence of President Wilson's fourteen points, which were put to Congress on 8th January, 1918, but did not appear in Iraq until October 11, 1918.

The discrepancy between the professed aims and the practice of the British administration in Iraq gave rise to a critical and suspicious attitude among the people. They were told that the war had been forced on the British, that Britain's aim in the area, in addition to the safeguarding of British interests, was to emancipate them from oppression, that the British government had no intention of subjecting them to alien institutions, and that freedom and prosperity were on the way. At first the British declarations and statements, which were addressed to the masses as well as to the educated classes, were taken at their face value. A people who for centuries had lived under Ottoman rule, scarcely conscious of the existence of alien oppression or exploitation, suddenly awoke to the fact that they had been missing something - or so they were told. There was a natural tendency to wonder when the promised paradise was going to come, no doubt reinforced by news of the emergence of an

Arab government in Syria and talk about the Peace Conference. When nothing seemed to be happening impatience began to grow, and criticism of the British administration rapidly built up.

Iraq, nearly two years after the conclusion of the war, was still under a military administration, staffed mainly by British and Indians. The existence of the Indians, who occupied the lower rungs of the official hierarchy and rubbed shoulders with the Arabs, contributed greatly to building up Arab fears of subjection to a new kind of imperialism.[1] The Arab share in the administration was negligible. As for freedom, it remained a word only: all the press was under the control of the administration which published the only newspapers (none of the local papers was owned by an Arab). Such Arab-language papers as reached Iraq served to emphasise the peculiar situation in Iraq. Those known to have been received were the Egyptian papers, notably Muqattam, the Hijaz Qibla, and 'Iqab which was the organ of the 'Ahd party in Syria. Even these papers were not approved by the authorities and some of them had to be smuggled into Iraq. Nor were the acts of the administration comprehensible. Its proclamations and notices amounted to volumes, closed to

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1 F.O. 371/5070/E804. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 1st February, 1920. "For practical purposes, therefore, there is at present no restriction on Indian immigration except such as are dictated by need for preventing influx of undesirables."
See also F.O. 371/5226/E6055. In May 1920 the Indian troops (all ranks) were 67,095, and Indians (all ranks) employed by the administration were 2,266.
See also F.O. 371/5072/E3278. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 10 April, 1920. Indians resident in Mesopotamia other than those employed by Army of Occupation or Civil Administration totalled 3,000, of whom 1,500 were here before the war.

a largely illiterate populace, who were disconcerted to find that failure to comply with new regulations meant punishment. Local complaints about the severity of British rule were widespread.[1] A. G. Walker, Military Governor and Political Officer, Basra, commented in his annual report for Basra Division 1919, "I do not think we are as popular in some ways, especially among certain classes, as were our Turkish predecessors. On the other hand the land-owning and the commercial classes want us to stay and feel that British rule alone will help them."[2]

The new order also had unsettling social implications. The social customs of the military administration were by no means always compatible with local customs. The aloofness and seclusion of the British officials in particular tended to symbolise for the people the gap between rulers and ruled. F. Balfour, Military Governor and Political Officer, Baghdad, wrote in his annual report on the Baghdad Division for 1919:

> No report on Baghdad for 1919 would be complete without some attempt to describe the complete change of conditions, at least as far as the British Community is concerned, which has taken place during the year. It has seen for one thing the advent of some hundreds of British married ladies.... The old British Commercial Community of Baghdad have now for the most part returned and have been augmented by many who are either new comers or who previously served in this country and have returned after demobilization to assist in its commercial development. All this is as it should be but puts a certain inevitable strain on the social structure and on the still new Administration machine.... We are not strong on the social side.[3]

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1 Almost all Arab sources, such as al-Ḥassani, al-'Umari, al-Bassir, agree to the severity of treatment. However, among the new measures introduced by the adm nistration was punishment by flogging which was not used previously.

2 Administration Report, 1919, Basra, p. 26.

3 Annual Report of Baghdad Division for the year 1919, p. 9.

The British administration, and particularly A. T. Wilson, was eager to elicit from the British government an announcement of direct British rule. This would have had the effect of closing the gap between the tendency of developments in Iraq and the statements and declarations previously made by the British government and the Allies. But as the hopes of an early peace settlement faded, and the government's decision was time and again deferred, the disappointment of Wilson and the administration grew. They rightly felt that the longer the delay the more difficult it would be to establish British rule. Meanwhile the long delay from October, 1918, when the war with Turkey ended and May, 1920, when Britain finally accepted the mandate for Iraq, had a profound influence on the development of political consciousness among the people as a whole. The idea got about that the people of Iraq might have a genuine choice about their future, with the result that they came under increasing pressure from different directions, which widened their horizons and helped to foster a popular movement which led to a rising.

The attitude of the British government towards the future of Iraq underwent a radical change during 1918. The policy of annexation or of declaring the country a British protectorate was no longer a practical one, because of the widespread acceptance of the doctrine of self-determination with which the British Prime Minister apparently concurred in his War Aims speech of January 5th, 1918, in which he said: "Arabia, Arminia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine are, in our judgment, entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions."[1] Thus on 31st January, 1918, the India Office

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1 Cab. 27/23. M.E.C. 60. War Cabinet. Middle East Committee. Mesopotamia: British Engagements as to future Status. A memorandum by India Office, dated January 30, 1918.

suggested in a memorandum that the best way to reconcile this development with Britain's designs in Iraq would be "if the people concerned, or the local chiefs on their behalf, can be induced to accept our assistance and supervision of their own accord." and

> In other words, our position towards Mesopotamia is or may become, not that of a ruler towards his subjects, but that of a candidate towards his constituents. We shall want their votes; and unless we nurse the constituency in advance, we may not get them. Is it possible so to handle the local population, or the elements in it that count, as to ensure that, if and when the moment for "self-determination" arrives, they will pronounce decisively in favour of continuing the British connection? That seems to be the immediate question we have to ask ourselves; and it is one to which the local authorities are alone competent to furnish us with a reply. They alone can say what elements in the population it is desirable to strengthen and encourage, ...[1]

Accordingly Cox was invited to London for consultation, and in a memorandum on "The Future of Mesopotamia" dated April 22nd, 1918, which was accepted by the authorities in London, he followed up the India Office's line of thought:

> The elements that we most need to encourage are: Firstly, the Jewish community in Baghdad. In this connection I recommend that Dr. Weizman be induced, if possible, to pay a visit or send a reliable representative to Baghdad to influence the Jewish community in favour of the British connection. Secondly, the Arab notables and nobility among the townspeople of Baghdad and Basrah. They are a somewhat impecunious and backward element, but one which it is very necessary to encourage and take into our councils as far as possible. Thirdly, the wealthy landlord element, both Arab and Jew, and the important Shaikhs of the settled tribes.[2]

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1 Cab. 27/23. War Cabinet. Middle East Committee. Secret M.E.C. 68. "The Future of Mesopotamia". Memorandum by India Office, dated January 31st, 1918.

2 F.O. 371/3387/142404. Secret. No. 18. India Office, London, August 9th, 1918. Enclosure: memorandum by Sir P. Cox, "The Future of Mesopotamia".

Cox expressed his belief that provided these elements were secured and the Turks were not to return, they would vote in favour of a British connection.

The assumptions on which Cox seems to have built his view was that traditionally the landlords and the nobility had been the natural leaders of the urban masses, and that the Jews were the masters of the economic and financial resources of the country, so that taken together these two elements, provided that they favoured the British, would be strong enough to secure a favourable verdict from the people as a whole. The Jewish community had soon gained the favour of the administration. British rule provided them with security and they looked forward to a prosperous future as trade was quickly expanding, and they were accepted on an equal footing by the British. But winning over the notables was not so easy. Unlike the Jews, they had enjoyed great political and administrative powers under the Ottoman empire, whereas under the British they were deprived of their offices and subjected to indignities. Their houses were occupied by the British army and administration and rent restriction hit them harder than any other class. Those of them who owned agricultural land in the tribal districts also had reason for discontent because of the British policy of consolidating the power of the tribal shaykhs, who were frequently at odds with their urban landlords, and the policy of preventing the mallak landlord from evicting the sarkals without the political officer's permission, which weakened the owner vis-a-vis the cultivators. Other notables were also gravely offended by the prominence of the religious minorities in public life. The British administration endeavoured to abate the fears of the notables and to eliminate the sources of their complaints by gradually easing the restrictions on them, notably by relaxing rent control,

by abolishing forced labour which tended in certain areas such as Basra to deprive the notables of the cultivators of their land, and by payment of compensation for damage caused by the army or the administration.

Two attempts were also made to introduce the notables into the administration and to give them a greater share in the management of local affairs. The first took the form of a declaration, which appeared in the vernacular papers in mid November, 1918,[1] about the resuscitation of municipal councils in the large urban centres. The municipal councils were to enjoy limited authority and were to be under British supervision. Basra municipal council was established in November, 1918. By the following year it consisted of 14 members, the Municipal Commissioner, two Rays Baladiya (heads of sub-municipalities), a representative of the British firms, five Muslim Arabs, four Christians, and one Jew.[2] In Baghdad, the establishment of the municipal council met with delay and difficulties. Naji Swaydi, an Iraqi and a member of a notable family, was asked to draw up the constitution for the council but when some of his ideas were opposed he resigned. The municipal council was eventually established in July, 1919, and consisted of twelve appointed members, two British representing the British firms, six Muslim Arabs, three Christians, and one Jew.[3] The other measure taken by the British administration to increase the participation of the notables and upper classes came later in May, 1919. In a speech by the Civil Commissioner, on 29th May, 1919, a further measure of local self-government was foreshadowed.

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1 Al-Arab newspaper, No. 141, dated 16th November, 1918.
2 Administration Report, 1919, Basra, p. 7.
3 Annual Report of Baghdad Divison for the year 1919, p. 6.

> I wish that the time had come when I could announce to you a definite decision by the Peace Conference, but Peace tarries and the announcement must wait. Meanwhile, you may like to know what we are already doing towards introducing a system of Government which will enable the inhabitants of Iraq to take a share from the first in managing their own affairs. Mesopotamia has been divided into several divisions (Liwas), ... In each of these provinces it is proposed to set up as soon as possible a council of notables who shall assemble periodically to advise Government as to matters of provincial concern such as Education, Agriculture, Irrigation, Roads, and the like. The President of the Council will be the Political Officer of the Division, the Secretary will be an inhabitant of Iraq, who will generally be the adviser (mashawir) of the Political Officer.

But the Commissioner, in the same speech, cautioned those who wanted more power:

> ... I would remind those who would be glad to see more ambitious schemes set up forthwith, that Iraq needs expert guidance and Foreign Assistance if it is to escape the fate of neighbouring Countries, and to fulfil its high destinies.[1]

Had this plan been applied in pre-war conditions it might have enjoyed wide support, but it fell far short of popular expectations and it was reported by the secret police that

> The Civil Commissioner's recent speeches are being criticised unfavourably by the majority of the Muhammadan Community. Dissatisfaction is being expressed at the proposal of the Government to appoint "ruassa-baladiyyeh", the idea being that this appointment should be in the hands of the people themselves, and has nothing to do with the Government. With regard to the Revenues of the Country, there is a belief among certain classes, that most of it is being spent on the Army of Occupation.[2]

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1 Compilation of Proclamations, Notices, Etc. from October 31st, 1914 to August 31st, 1919, pp. 38-39, No. 49.

2 F.O. 371/4149/119757. Confidential Report for week ending 7th June, 1919. By the Criminal Investigation Department, Baghdad, paragraph 244.

This report explains the failure of the administration to proceed with the establishment of divisional councils, except in Basra, where it enjoyed more support from the commercial and landed classes, and in some of the tribal divisions. In Baghdad and Mosul, where the people were most politically minded, [1] no divisional council was created.

Further elements of dissatisfaction:

In the urban centres the British administration suffered from having alienated one important and competent group, namely the ex-Turkish officials and officers. During the early stages of the war, as the British forces gradually advanced, the Turkish administration's officials normally retreated with the defeated army. As a result almost all of the old officials left after the fall of Basra. But later in the war most of the Arab officials stayed put, notably in Baghdad and Mosul, because they had little faith in a Turkish victory. Furthermore, after the conclusion of the Armistice, most of the remaining Arab officials, both those who had served in Mosul and those who had served in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, began to return to their homes. Until the fall of Mosul the ex-official class did not pose any problem for the administration. Thus Cox in his April, 1918 memorandum made no reference to them and their possible influence. But after the Armistice they became an effective power.

The official class which was sometimes referred to as the "Affindi"

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1 F.O. 371/4152/148636. From the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 28th October, 1919.

class had developed a distinctive identity both in appearance and mentality. They dressed in European dress, unlike the majority of the people, and they were bureaucratic by training, attuned to decades of inefficiency and corruption. They were regarded by the poorer classes with envy and suspicion, although the majority of them were drawn from the middle and lower classes. In former times their only source of livelihood had been their salaries and the perks that went with their offices, such as the right to hospitality from landowners or shaykhs while on official duties. They were also very status conscious, drawing dignity from their official titles and from the meagre education which distinguished them from the vast majority of the illiterate population. They were not politically minded in any meaningful sense, being content to echo the views of their superiors. The Young Turk revolution of 1908 had not disturbed their hierarchy, except on the surface and by changes at the top of the hierarchy, and when the British administration was established they expected to be re-employed. A British administrative report noted in 1918 that:

> It is noticeable that ... ex-Turkish officials, even those who are incapacitated by age, confidently anticipate employment under the British Government.[1]

But there was really no place for most of them under the British administration, and those who, in accordance with the rules of the military occupation, were entitled to an allowance or a pension were paid only a portion of their pension.

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1 F.O. 371/4148/34797. "Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories of Al-Iraq. 1914-1918." Compiled in the office of the Civil Commissioner. Baghdad. November 1918.

As their salaries and pensions were already small, the effect of the cuts along with the special conditions of war and the tremendous increase in prices, was that the ex-officials were very hard hit, and some were driven to beg in the coffee shops, a severe blow to their pride which left them with a sense of anguish. The ranks of the discontented were further increased when the Iraqi prisoners of war began to return. By August 1919 15,000 prisoners had been repatriated, including nearly 1,000 former officials and officers, and there still remained a similar number waiting in India to be repatriated.[1] The fact that by training and education they were suitable for no job other than an administrative one, caused them to be regarded by the British administration as a liability, and they in turn waged a war of survival on the administration. Some of the ex-officials and officers turned to Syria for employment and indirectly served to link Iraq with the nationalist movement in Syria and channel the Syrian progaganda to Iraq. Others remained in Iraq, and formed a potent source of discontent.

Political Movements

At the conclusion of the war there was no sign of any organized political movement in Iraq, although there was widespread irritation at the difficulties arising from the war and the restrictions imposed by the military administration.[2] After the Anglo-French Declaration and the spread

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1 F.O. 371/4174/152215. From A. T. Wilson, Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia to Secretary of State for India, dated 27th August, 1919.

2 The British Commander in Chief of the Mesopotamian force tried in a speech on November 2, 1918 to abate that feeling by announcing the ease of certain restrictions.

of the doctrine of self-determination, the people began to speculate about their future, but it was at first little more than a kind of coffee-shop talk or, as a British police report put it, "Bazaar rumours". The political life of the country lacked a focus, a sense of purpose and, most important, a leadership. The call for a plebiscite in December 1918-January 1919, provided the first opportunity for the mobilization of politically-minded people into an organised movement.

The fact that the Wilson plebiscite (consisting of three questions: do the people favour a single Arab State under British tutelage? do they want an Arab titular head of state? and, if so, whom do they prefer?) was conducted in such a manner as to elicit only views "satisfactory" to the administration, in order to provide popular backing for Wilson's policies, did not entirely destroy its political significance.

Those who supported the policy of direct British rule without any Arab ruler were quite sincere in their belief. Both Muslim merchants, landed notables and shaykhs, on the one hand and the religious minorities on the other supported British rule in Iraq on grounds primarily economic. The British administration provided efficiency and order, which were vital for their prosperity, and they had little faith in the capacity of the Arabs to supply anything more than a regime of petty tyranny.

Ahmad Chalabi 'Abd al-Wahid, a wealthy landowner in Basra gave the opinion that "Arabs cannot at present govern themselves.... They must have a Government from outside." And as to the desirability of an Arab ruler, 'Abd al-Wahid said, "It would be leading us to suicide to appoint an Amir even under veiled British supervision. We have had a taste of the rule of Arab tyrants

such as Saiyid Talib, the Sa'aduns, etc."[1] Another leading notable from Basra, Ahmad Pasha al-Sani', said in reply to the three questions:

> I don't want any other Government than a purely British one.... Make one country of Mosul, Baghdad and Basrah....
>
> Please do not leave the country, but govern it yourselves with a firm but just hand. Don't convene a meeting and put the question to it. They might vote for you through fear, but they might possibly combine and say: "We do not want you; leave our country." ....
>
> X is trying to be nominated as Amir of 'Iraq, he has even sent me messengers and said he was going to present a madhbatah, ... He is a great friend of mine, but he is not the man for us, ... What I tell you is, of course, confidential, for if in a meeting I was asked if X would suit as Amir of 'Iraq, I would say yes.[2]

This answer coming from a prominent man, who later occupied ministerial positions in Iraq, is very revealing, and such views were by no means confined to al-Sani'. Haji Mahmud Pasha another leading figure in Basra expressed the following views in a confidential talk with a British official:

> We Arabs as you know are all divided and selfish; we look to our own interest first. You would be pushing us into bankruptcy if you gave us our freedom and let us do as we like....
>
> The British Government must remain in its present form....
>
> You are very wise to ask each man separately and confidentially for his opinion. Believe me if you had a big Majlis you would never have obtained any man's sincere opinion. You English people do not understand our ways....
>
> In a Majlis if a big man got up and proposed something we should feel bound, by a sort of feeling of courtesy mingled with a certain amount of fear, to agree with all he said. Besides owing to natural shyness few would care to put forward their own views.[3]

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1 Self Determination in 'Iraq, Office of the Civil Commissioner, No. 1. Basra.
2 Ibid.
3 Self Determination in 'Iraq, Section 1.

Fourteen shaykhs in 'Amara Division signed a declaration advocating a united Iraq under British administration with Sir Percy Cox as Governor. However, they added that cases of a tribal nature should be settled by the shaykhs, acting through the British political officer, and that as long as the shaykhs were loyal and performing their duties to the government their lands should not be auctioned to the highest bidder.[1] Similar views came from the shaykhs of Qurna,[2] Kut and Nasiriya.

The religious minorities were outspokenly for British rule. A declaration signed by the Chaldean Patriarch and some thirty prominent members of his community, "greet the Empire of Great Britain which has freed us from the bondage of the Turks, and delivered us from the trials under which we laboured. We entreat your Excellency to endeavour to ensure that we remain under the shade of the British Empire."[3]

The inference that can be drawn from these declarations is that there was a lack of national or political consciousness; and that many of those who were aware of the existence of a longing for independence, brushed it aside as nonsense. To some extent the attitude of these people was natural. For centuries they had been accustomed to being ruled without consultation and their first loyalty was to their family or their immediate community. As a leading notable put it when asked about his views:

> To my mind that you are Government and should come to me and ask me what kind of Government I want in 'Iraq denotes an extraordinary state of affairs - it is quite unheard of.

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1 Ibid., Section 3.
2 Ibid., Section 2.
3 Ibid., Section 14.

> What has the matter to do with me? Whether you appoint a Christian, a Jew, or even a nigger, it will be Government to me just the same.[1]

By contrast with these views, the reaction in the Shi'i holy centres and in Baghdad, which was politically more advanced, was very different. The plebiscite encouraged the demand for independence and it helped to crystallise what was to become the main objective of the independence movement, namely the demand for a united and independent Iraq under an Arab Amir, particularly one of the sons of the Sharif of Mecca. The question of British tutelage was not raised directly since it was not put in the plebiscite.

In the Shamiya Division, which included Najaf, the pro-British Naqib of Najaf with twentyone other merchants and notables signed a declaration advocating British rule,[2] but to the surprise of the Civil Commissioner, who personally visited the division, a further petition was submitted at a later date, signed by ten shaykhs and others, asking for a united Iraq from Basra to Mosul under an Arab Amir, preferably a son of the Sharif of Mecca. They argued that "'Iraq is chiefly inhabited by Arabs. Each man being naturally inclined to like his nation, we therefore prefer that this new country should be under an Arab Amir."[3] The attitude of the Chief

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1 Self Determination in 'Iraq, Section 1, Sayid Muhammad Barakat. See also Cmd. 1061, Review of the Civil Administration, 1914-1920, p. 127. "The bulk of the people to whom the questions were addressed had no definite opinion and were not in a position to form one."

2 Self Determination in 'Iraq, Section 7.

3 Ibid. See also F.O. 882/23/MES. 19/17. Telegram from Political Officer, Baghdad. To Secretary of State for India, London, January 26th, 1919. Change of situation in Najaf was due to "active intrigues by emissaries of extremist party in Baghdad.."

Mujtahid, Mula Kadhum al-Yazdi, swung Najaf behind the British.[1] But in Karbala the attitude of the Mujtahid, Mirza Muḥammad Taqi al-Shirazi, counterbalanced that of the Yazdi. He gave a Fatwa on 20 Rab' Thani 1337 (December 1919), to the effect that no Muslim should elect or choose a non-Muslim for the rulership of Iraq.[2] This was the first time during the period of effective British control over Iraq, that a high Shi'i religious authority had pronounced himself publicly against the British and had given the demand for self-rule a religious sanction. The effect of the Fatwa was immediate. A number of leading personalities in Karbala on December 20th, 1918, submitted a petition in which, after a reference to the Anglo-French Declaration, they asked for the establishment of an Islamic Arab State with one of the sons of the Sharif of Mecca as Amir and with an elected assembly.[3] The pro-British element were encouraged by the administration to submit a counter declaration in favour of the British, but eventually the British administration decided to disregard both and did not report the results of the plebiscite in Karbala in any form.[4]

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1 F.O. 371/4148/13298. From Political Officer, Baghdad, 14th December 1918. Wilson reported an interview with al-Yazdi.

"On morning of 12th I was privileged to visit the aged Saiyid Muhammad Kazim Yazdi.... 'I speak', he said 'for those who cannot speak for themselves. Whatever Government do let them consider well the interests involved at large of Shiahs in particular and especially the masses of the inarticulate and helpless. These people are not civilised; the installation of Arab officials will cause anarchy. They have not yet learnt honesty; until they have done so they must remain under the orders of Government. No man can be found who would be accepted as Amir.'"

2 Sayid 'Abd al-Razaq al-Wahab, Karbala in History, p. 51

3 Ibid., p. 51.

4 Administration Report, Shamiya, 1919, p. 30. Cited Ireland, 'Iraq, p. 169. "Their opinions were not in accordance with those taken by the Najafis. Fortunately, in Najaf the step had been irrevocably taken, and there could be no turning back. The double effect was that in Karbala no progress was made and the opinion formulated was never expressed officially, while in Najaf the discussion was closed beyond reopening."

In Kadhimayn, just a few miles from Baghdad, a combination of religious and political pressures, resulted in stronger opposition to the British in a declaration signed by a hundred and forty three residents of Kadhimayn. They asked (after a reference to the Anglo-French Declaration) that

> ... we being of the local Arab 'Iraq nation choose a new Moslim Arab Government to be ruled by a Muhammadan King, one of the sons of our Lord the Sharif bound by a local Majlis, and the question of protection will be considered after the completion of the Peace Conference.[1]

Baghdad was the last to be asked about its views. This was partly because it was hoped that the people of Baghdad would be influenced by favourable replies from the other areas, but in fact the delay gave the nationalist elements time to concert their activities. Indeed, the wording of the anti-British declarations from Karbala, Kadhimayn and, later, Baghdad suggests some previous agreement between the three centres.

The Civil Commissioner on January 9, 1919 invited the Shi'i Qadhi, the Naqib of Baghdad and the heads of the Jewish and Christian communities to nominate respectively 25 Sunnis, 25 Shi'is, 20 Jews and 10 Christians to constitute a native body representing Baghdad's view. The Naqib declined the invitation and the Qadhi of the Sunnis was called upon to act in his stead. The withdrawal of the Naqib and the aloofness of his family deprived the British of the backing of a strong supporter. The two Qadhis called a meeting of the leading members of the two communities to hold a discussion and to elect a combined delegation, instead of themselves nominating the number required as Wilson would have liked. This gave the militant

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1 Self Determination in 'Iraq, Section 13, No. 8.

advocates of independence, such as Ja'far Abu al-Timan and Hamdi Bachachi, the chance to gain the upper hand, and they presented to the meeting a definite policy, the creation of a united Iraq with an Arab government headed by a Muslim king, namely one of the sons of the Sharif of Mecca. In an atmosphere of religious fanaticism and patriotism no voice was raised against this demand, but once the delegates had been chosen one Shi'i, Haji Mula Ridha, and seven Sunni, withdrew from the delegation of 50 members and only five of the Sunni were replaced by advocates of independence. Thus a declaration signed by forty seven, both Shi'i and Sunni, was presented to the British Civil Commissioner in favour of independence with a son of the Sharif of Mecca as king working within the framework of a legislative assembly. The Jewish and Christian delegates, notwithstanding the approaches by the Muslim advocates of independence, submitted declarations in favour of British rule. In addition, the British administration encouraged its supporters in Baghdad and Kadhimayn to submit counter declarations in favour of British rule. The administration's justification for this move was that the advocates of independence were mainly either of unknown family or young men of little importance. Two counter-declarations, one signed by merchants and the other by wealthy Sunni notables, were submitted.[1]

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1 See Appendix IV names of those who signed the independence declaration and the names of those who signed the counter declarations.
See also F.O. 371/4150/12979. Self Determination in Mesopotamia, February, 1919, Memorandum by Miss G. L. Bell, sent by A. T. Wilson, officiating Civil Commissioner to the Under Secretary of State for India.
"The leaders of the movement were men under 30, two of them (Hamdi Pachachji and Sa'dun Shawi) being members of good families, while the rest were of no position, social or economic."

The British administration and the pro-British notables recognised the danger to them of an independence movement and agreed that steps should be taken to suppress it. The administration prepared a list of the leading men, who included Shaykh Sa'id Naqshabandi and his brother 'Abd al-Wahab, Hamdi Bachachi, and Ja'far Abu al-Timan, who were to be arrested and deported. However, the Naqib advised that the first two should not be arrested. The Naqib said "No, you cannot either imprison or deport them. The scandal would be too great."[1] The Naqib, however, recommended the imprisonment of others, on the ground that they were "men without name or honour".[2] A number of arrests were made and twelve men were deported.[3] This brought into the open the clash between the administration and the rising independence movement, since the latter responded to the arrests by organizing a propaganda campaign, accusing the British of repressing freedom of expression, and by arranging for the transmission of several declarations signed by prominent anti-British figures in Baghdad and Kadhimayn to the Sharif of Mecca protesting against the British administration in Iraq.[4]

From fear of British persecution and from the need to develop a

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1 Ibid. Annex A. Also see Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, Appendix III. But Wilson omitted the names of his text.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. Also see Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration, 1914-1920, p. 128, mentioned only seven; but F. O. 371/4172/25005 from Political Officer, Baghdad, dated 7th February, 1919, gave the number as twelve.

4 F. O. 882/23. Document No. MES/19/8. Telegram from Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 23rd February, 1919. "Intrigue in favour of Sharif in Baghdad.
Also F. O. 371/4148/28587. From Political Officer, Baghdad, dated 14th February, 1919.
See also Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. 3, pp. 26-27.

satisfactory organisation free of British supervision, the memorialists and other nationalists turned to underground activity, and established a number of secret organisations and parties. The leading nationalist party was the "Haras al-Istiqlal al-'Iraqiyin" (Iraqi guards of Independence). The 'Ahd also had two branches in Iraq, one in Mosul and the other in Baghdad, of which the Baghdad branch was the weaker and looser in organisation. The members of the 'Ahd were drawn from the old notable families, ex-officials and officers, and included a group of educated young men. Among the leading members were the following:

Shaykh Sa'id Naqshabandi	-	leader of the party, religious authority, landed notable in Baghdad.
Baha Naqshabandi	-	relative of the above.
Nuri Fatah	-	ex-officer.
Sulayman Fatah	-	brother of the above.
Sami Naqashli	-	ex-officer.
Anwar Naqashli	-	brother of the above.
'Izzat 'Adhami	-	writer.
Hasan Ridha	-	lawyer.

The Baghdad branch was continuously in contact with Syria, and representatives of the 'Ahd there visited Baghdad with the object of strengthening the party.[1] Even so the party had a small membership which, according to one of its

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1 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 139-141. In July, 1918, two leading members, Jamil al-Madfa'i and Kamal Ibrahim, came to Baghdad from Syria to assist building Baghdad Branch. In late 1919, another leading 'Ahd member came from Syria for the same purpose.

members, did not exceed seventy.[1] However, the 'Ahd branch in Mosul proved to be both more active and bigger, becoming in time the sole nationalist party in Mosul. Its members were drawn from the landed notables, ex-officials and officers, but it gained wide support among all types of young educated Arabs, such as school teachers, and professional men. The following were among its leading members:

Sa'id Haji Thabit - landed notable.

Ibrahim 'Attar Bashi - " "

Mustafa 'Umari - an educated young man of a landed family.

Ra'uf al-Ghulami - a school teacher, son of a landed family.

Muhammad Dubuni - ex-officer.

The proximity of the city of Mosul to Syria played a major role in building up strong links with the 'Ahd in Syria. The branch co-operated in planning the armed rising of June 1920 in the small town of Tal 'Afar. It was also highly organised and was able to foil the British attempts to uncover it. The political officer in Mosul was thus driven to report:

> It is a matter of keenest vexation to me that we have been unable as yet to unearth the society in Mosul which uses the seal of the "Ahd" and whose circulars have, as is now known, been freely distributed through the Arab and Kurdish districts.[2]

The Haras party was established in February, 1919, in Baghdad by the following:[3]

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2 F.O. 371/5130/E 9897. From India Office to Foreign Office, dated 13th August, 1920. Enclosure 3 in No. 1. Report by political officer in Mosul, dated 25th June, 1920.

1 From an interview by the author with Nuri Fatah in Baghdad.

3 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 57.

Jalal Baban

Shakir Mahmud

'Arif Hikmat

Mahmud Ramiz

Husayn Shilash

'Abd al-Majid Yusuf

Sa'id Haqi

'Abd al-Latif Hamid

Haji Muhi Din Sahrawardi

'Ali Affindi Bazirkan

Later it was joined by a number of influential notables, such as Yusuf Swaydi who came to Baghdad in the summer of 1919, and Sayid Muhammad Sadr, a prominent religious figure in the Kadhimayn district. Another society called the "Shabiba" (the Youth) dissolved itself and its members joined the Haras party.[1] A British secret police report in May, 1919, says that: "It is now reported that practically every Moslim of education in Baghdad is a member of this society."[2] This report, however, called the society the "Iraqiyyin" society, which seemed to have been a mistake, because there was no such society. The Haras, unlike the 'Ahd, established branches in Najaf, Hilla and Shamiya. Although these branches were rather small groups of sympathizers than organized bodies of militant members, they nevertheless

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1 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 141-142.
2 F.O. 371/4149/119757. Confidential Police Report for week ending 24-5-19, by Assistant Commissioner of Police, C.I.D., Baghdad.

became an effective channel of communication in the preparations for the summer 1920 rising.

The general objectives of these two main parties were similar. That is, they wanted the independence of Iraq, comprising the three Wilayas of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, under the kingship of one of the Sharif Ḥusayn's sons. The 'Ahd of Baghdad also called in their programme for reliance on Britain for advice and technical aid where necessary, without prejudice to the country's independence. But the Ḥaras party objected to this part of the 'Ahd programme, and preferred to leave the door open to ask for help from any direction.[1] In addition, the Ḥaras felt that the direction of Iraqi affairs should be solely in the hands of Iraqi, and felt that it was inappropriate that an Iraqi party (i.e. the 'Ahd) should have its headquarters in Damascus, if only because difficulties of transport and communications would hinder its activities in Iraq.[2] The fact that the 'Ahd in Syria was a participant in the government of Syria, which was then dependent on British support against the French, also raised fears among the Ḥaras of a possible compromise by the 'Ahd on the future of Iraq.[3]

An attempt was made in July 1919 by two delegates from the 'Ahd in Syria, Jamil Madfa'i and Ibrahim Kamal, to patch up the differences between the two groups, and they succeeded in co-ordinating the activities of the two parties by creating a joint committee of the two. But the committee soon

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1 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, p. 139.
2 'Askari, My Memoirs about the Revolution, Vol. 2, p. 41.
3 Al-Ḥassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 59.

collapsed and both groups resumed their activities independently. However, the 'Ahd in Baghdad failed to consolidate itself, and by 1920 it had become ineffective, and in the 1920 rising the 'Ahd played no part. By contrast the Haras party flourished, two factors contributing to its success: first, the increasing number of young educated nationalists among its members, who had imbibed nationalist ideas and were active in spreading party propaganda; secondly, the party's attempt to unite the long rival sects, the Sunni and Shi'i, in the national struggle against the British administration. This was a major new development, and much was done to woo the Shi'i. Sayid Muhammad al-Sadr, a leading Shi'i dignitary, became leader of the party, and in his district, al-Kadhimayn, the British secret police recorded:

> It is reported by a reliable agent that the Shias and Sunnis at Kadhimain and Muadham have been holding meetings with a view to sinking their religious differences and combining against foreign rule in 'Iraq. Sayyed Ja'ffar and Hussain-es-Sarraf are reported to be the only two influential persons in Kadhimain who continue to support British claims. They are becoming unpopular with the other residents.[1]

Co-operation between the Sunnis and Shi'is in Baghdad, paved the way for the Haras party to extend its activities to the Shi'i districts of the Middle Euphrates and to Najaf and Karbala.

Opposition to the British administration also developed for a time on pro-Turkish lines, in the belief that Iraq would eventually be returned to Turkey.[2] But developments after the war, particularly the Allied declarations

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1 F.O. 371/4149/110528. Office of the Civil Commissioner to India Office, dated 12th May, 1919. Enclosure, Confidential Report of Criminal Investigation Department, for week ending 10-5-1919, paragraph 177.

2 Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia 1914-1917, p. 260. "Those who prided themselves on their knowledge of world politics declared that Iraq would be handed back to Turkey in return for the liberation of Belgium."

and the Peace Conference effected the pro-Turkish movement as much as it influenced the direction of British policy. The Peace Conference formally severed the Arab territories from the Ottoman Empire and eliminated the possibility of a resumption of Turkish rule over Iraq. Consequently no important voice was heard in Iraq demanding the resumption of Turkish rule,[1] but there were voices calling for the maintenance of special ties with Turkey. In January, 1919, when A. T. Wilson's plebiscite was taking place, a Madhbata (petition), written in Turkish, calling for Iraqi signatures, was distributed, which maintained that:

> The population of the Irak country demand national autonomy on a broad basis in order to itself administer and direct its national destiny and seriously desires to live as in the past under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire.[2]

The nationalist movement in Turkey, which rose under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal in summer 1919, revived the hopes of reunion with Turkey which were cherished by a group of ex-officials and notables of Turkish origin living in Baghdad and Mosul. But the attitude of the Kamalist movement towards the Arab nationalists gradually forced the pro-Turks into collaboration with the Arab nationalists. For the Kamalists accepted the right of the Arabs to independence and on behalf of Turkey relinquished all claims in the Arab world.[3]

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1 Civil Administration Mesopotamia, Administration Report 1919, Basra. Appendix B, p. 59. "Until the armistice the pro-Turkish party still had hopes and spread rumours but these were rarely taken seriously for longer than a few days. The Armistice sealed the fate of this section."
2 F.O. 371/4147/1301. Naval Staff, Intelligence Department, dated 1.1.1919.
3 S. Husari, Day of Maysalun, Beirut, 1948, p. 178.

In Iraq the pan-Arab movement, unlike that in Syria, was a new one which had not been in armed conflict with the Turks. It was, therefore, more favourably disposed towards co-operation with the Turks in achieving their common goal, the destruction of the British administration in Iraq. However, when the pro-Turkish group in Iraq advocated a Turkish mandate in opposition to a British one there was a reassessment, for pan-Arabs objected to their subjection to any mandatory power.[1] For the most part, however, there were good relations between the Haras and the pro-Turkish Iraqi, a fact which added to the disagreements between the 'Ahd of Baghdad and the Haras party.[2]

The independence movement was a movement of notables, landed proprietors and religious leaders, ex-officials and officers, and members of the intelligentzia. The man in the street, the craftsman, the shopkeeper, the petty trader in the local market, were mostly illiterate and the concept of nationalism was unknown to them. In pre-war society they had usually followed the lead given by the notables and politically they had not counted. Now, however, things were different. The traditional social leadership found itself devoid of power, except in so far as it could command the support of the masses, and even that could not be taken for granted, since the British administration had succeeded in gaining the support of some influential figures,

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1 F.O. 371/5076/E8448. Secret, Mesopotamia, Police. Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. 2, Baghdad, 22nd May 1920, No. 21, paragraph 391. A meeting was held in the house of Fu'ad al-Daftari and among those who attended it were Ahmad Bey Awraq, 'Abdulla Sabri Bey, Haji Dalmi al-Bimbashi, Najib Affindi ex-Yuzbashi, Murad Bey brother of Sawkat Pasha, they called for a Turkish mandate or failing that an unfettered Arab government.

2 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 59. The 'Ahd accused the Haras

such as the Naqib, al-Shawi, Jamil Zada, through whom the masses could be influenced. The ascendancy of the concept of self-determination and the revived hopes that an international commission of enquiry would come to Iraq to ascertain the wishes of the people made the attitude of the masses and the side they would take of vital importance: with the masses behind them, the leaders of the independence movement could argue from strength.

Events played into hands of the independence movement. The common man had plenty of reasons for dissatisfaction with the British administration, which was identified with all the misery and hardship caused by the war, and was regarded as alien, both in social and religious terms. The masses were, therefore, a latent power to be brought to bear against the British administration, and it was the responsibility of the leaders of the independence movement to find ways of utilizing that latent power. The fact that Iraq was under military rule and that there was therefore no freedom of the press or freedom to hold political meetings or to form political organisations did not prevent the independence leaders from establishing close links with the masses, although they were sometimes driven to make use of ingenious means. First, the Mosques and other religious places, which were immune from government intervention, became a favourite place for the distribution of pan-Arab propaganda. The Mosque, as well as being a place for prayer, was the place where preaching and teaching took place, and on Fridays and other days of celebration, special meetings were normally held, at which a Khatib (Orator) delivered a speech, which could deal with anything, including politics. As there were nearly 130 mosques in Baghdad, 35 in Basra, and 51 in Mosul, independence propaganda was able to reach the people pretty

effectively.[1]

The coffee shops continued the work which had begun in the mosques. Their number was enormous,[2] and in an eastern society where the house was considered primarily a place for women, the men were to be found in the coffee shops, which were the usual place for social meetings and entertainments. In many coffee shops there had traditionally been a professional reciter of poems, legends and stories, who was known as the Ruzakhun, a sort of one man show. The latest news could be heard and exchanged. And the coffee shop was a fruitful source of gossip and rumour. A British administrative report was quite right to play down the importance of coffee shop gossip:

> Coffee shop gossip is very popular and the most extravagant rumours spread with wonderful rapidity and are eagerly discussed for a day or two or perhaps longer but in the end they generally dissipate into thin smoke.[3]

But in fact there were ways of utilising even gossip, and independence propaganda flourished.

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1 The Iraqi Official Directory for the year 1936, pp. 155-161.
See also F.O. 371/4149/110528 and 119757. From the confidential reports of the police, enclosed in despatch from Offices of Civil Commissioner to India Offices, dated May 1919.
Report for week ending 31-5-19, paragraph 241.
"It is reported that on the night of the 27-5-19 religious meeting was held in the Fadhil Mosque the preacher was Ibrahim Effendi an ex. Turkish Officer. He extorted his hearers to strive for "Independence"."
Report for week ending 7th June, 1919, paragraph 248.
"Khatibs, particularly Mulla Mustapha at Hayderkhana, and Muhammad Sa'id Joofa at Khaldiyyeh, have recently been speaking on political matters at the Ramadhan meetings in the Mosques. They are attempting to discredit the British Government in the eyes of the lower classes."
Report for week ending May 17th, 1919, paragraph 199.

2 There is a saying that in Baghdad between every two coffee shops there is a coffee shop.

3 Civil Administration Report, 1919. Basra. Appendix B, p. 59.

Even the lack of a free press could be to some extent counteracted with the help of the Iraqi nationalists in Syria, who embarked on a pamphlet war. The following is a typical example of these Manshurs (pamphlets) widely distributed in Baghdad in May, 1919.

> Long live the Independence.
> Liberty is the daughter of Independence.
> No liberty without independence and no honour without Liberty.
> Independence is our most just and holy right.
> We want independence and we will have independence as we are not slaves. We will not have entire independence except under the shade of the Arab flag and within the Arab union. The life of the Arabs is in their Union. Demand your independence until death.[1]

Arabic papers published in Damascus, Cairo and Mecca, although were prohibited, were secretly circulated among the educated people; indeed, the fact that they were prohibited by the administration made them all the more interesting to the people. For the illiterate masses the pamphlets and smuggled papers had a mysterious attraction, and they too became anxious to learn their contents by persuading a literate person to read the Manshurs to them in the coffee shops.

The most ingenious move was made by the Haras party. Members of the party applied for permission to open a private school, and when permission was granted in September, 1919, the Haras party turned it into a front for political activities. Similarly in Mosul al-Khidhriya school came under the

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1 F.O. 371/4149/110528. Police report for week ending 31-5-19, paragraph 242. Translation of the Manshur.
See also 'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. III, pp. 416-518, cited a letter by Yasin al-Hashimi, Commander in Chief of the Syrian Army to the people of Iraq urging them to unite in pursuing their independence and submit their wishes about the independence of Iraq to the expected commission of enquiry.

control of members of the 'Ahd branch in Mosul. The students, as a result of wearing nationalist colours, became in May a target for action by the political officer: 20 boys were expelled and others were severely reprimanded.[1]

The most effective weapon in the hands of the independence movement was, however, the successful use of religious loyalties. The coalition between the Shi'is leaders and the Sunnis was a major step in giving the independence movement the character of a pan-Islamic crusade against the Kafir (unbeliever). It was the language of the crusade rather than that of nationalism that meant most to the masses, and which made it difficult for those who wished to do so to support the British administration.

Support for The British

The long period of indecision about the future of Iraq had the effect of gravely weakening the pro-British elements in Iraq. The Jewish community, with whom the British administration was particularly keen to co-operate, soon became so identified with it.[2] that the Jewish leaders were

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1 F.O. 371/4152/106012. Memorandum no. 243/17, dated 10th May, 1919. From Deputy Director of Education, Mosul.

2 F.O. 882/13. Arab Bureau Papers (Mes./18/3), dated 4-10-1918. From Baghdad to India Office. "Jewish feeling in Baghdad has for some months past been improving and is now I think markedly pro-British. I have always regarded active support of Jewish commercial community as a potential asset of great political value and have done my best to demonstrate to them that the fruit of our intentions in this country will be palatable and beneficial to them, more so perhaps than to any other class..."
See also F.O. 371/4149/119757. Baghdad police report for week ending 7th June, 1919, paragraph 246. "There is a certain amount of jealousy at the number of Government posts which have been given to Jews, ..."
See also Harry N. Howard, The King-Crane Commission, Beirut, 1963, p. 138. The Iraqi in Syria expressed their opposition to all immigration particularly to that of Hindus and Jews.

greatly alarmed by possibility of an Arab government and appealed to the British to be granted, in that event, British citizenship.[1] Meanwhile, because the possibility of Arab rule existed, they refrained from open activity against the independence movement, although as discreetly as possible they made it clear that they favoured British rule.

The degree of support from the Arabs on which the British could rely depended very much on the character of their relations with the notables and merchants in the different centres. In Mosul the landed notables had been greatly attached to the Ottoman administration, both from religion and from their relatively close links with Turkey. When opposition to the Ottoman rule began to appear after 1908, Mosul had been the only place which remained unaffected by pan-Arab feeling. Furthermore, in Mosul more than in other places in Iraq, there had been animosity between the dominant Muslim community and the religious minorities, who had to accept an inferior status. The war had made things worse because the willingness of some of the Christian communities in the north of Mosul Wilaya to work with the Allies had led to large-scale massacres of Christians. As a result, when the British occupied Mosul in November 1918, the Muslim notables suspected that the Christian British would revenge their co-religionists. The late occupation prevented the British from gradually developing a better understanding with the notables, whose fears began to be realised when steps were taken by the new British officials to give the religious minorities

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1 F.O. 882/28. Arab Bureau Papers, Secret, Arab Bulletin No. 108, dated January 11, 1919.

equality of status.[1] The notables also suddenly found that they were devoid of authority and without a voice in the administration, and saw newcomers of humble origin assigned high positions in the British administration.[2] Conditions were also unusual in Mosul, because it was conceded to the British only after the signature of the Armistice and under Turkish protest. Unlike the rest of Iraq, it also had a separate administration, a fact which emphasised the uncertainty of its future. As a result the Muslim population was generally little inclined to commit themselves in any way to the British. This mattered relatively little to the British because, as a commercial centre, Mosul was far less important than Basra or Baghdad. Mosul was a local market for the adjacent districts and its sources of trade were, unlike those of Baghdad and Basra, Syria and Turkey as much as Iraq. The commercial community, other than the Jews and the Christians, had less to gain from the British administration than other parts of Iraq and consequently had less to offer to the British administration.

In Baghdad, which benefitted most from the war and the British administration, the mercantile community gave unequivocal support to the British. But among the landed notables the success of the British administration was less general. Among certain of the notables the British

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1 F.O. 882/23. Arab Bureau Papers (M1/19/5), The Residency, Cairo, dated April 27th, 1919. From a telegram from Political Officer, Baghdad to Cairo, repeated to Simla, dated April 26th, 1919. "Following received from Major Noel, now arrived at Nisibin, by wire: As a result of unpleasant rumours which have been coming through recently from Mosul to the effect that we are adopting a policy of retaliation for Christian massacres against the Moslem population, ..."

2 Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. III, pp. 3-4. The author himself is a member of the landed notability of Mosul.

were not total strangers, since many of them during the Ottoman rule had been frequent visitors to the British Residency in Baghdad. The Naqib of Baghdad's family and the Jamil Zada family, and 'Abd al-Majid Shawi were among the ardent supporters of the British administration. In a society where family ties predominate, the political attitude of the whole family tended to favour one policy or the other and rival families tended to adopt opposite views. Thus, because the Naqib family and the Jamil Zada family rallied behind the British, families like the Naqshabandi, Swaydi and Sadr took the opposition side. The British administration also appointed a number of notables to high positions in the Judicial and Waqif departments, among them Haji 'Ali Alusi and 'Abd al-Wahab al-Nayb. However, as the independence movement gained momentum and took on the appearance of a religious crusade against the infidel many of these notables drifted away from the British. Some genuinely took up the case for independence, while others accepted it as a matter of expediency. Sulayman Faydhi, a close associate of Sayid Talib, and a participant in the pan-Arab movement before the war, who had been appointed by the British administration to a post of a member of the Appeal Court, put the dilemna of the educated notables very well in an interview with Gertrude Bell in June 1920 (in which she described him as a "moderate; he wishes to see an Arab Government, under the British mandate"):

> You cannot let things go on as at present. The agitation is taking dangerous proportions. I very much fear open disturbance, not perhaps in Baghdad but in the provinces, for all the tribes are affected. I have the greatest desire to avoid this both for our sake and for yours. I regard the meetings in the mosques with abhorrence. I look upon the combination of religion and politics as specially dangerous for it is almost impossible for me or any one else to stand up against it. Though I dislike the Mauluds intensely I find myself obliged to go to them; I dare not stay away - such

> pressure is brought to bear on me. You may be sure that that is the case with many others. It would be much better if the people were to hold similar meetings or form clubs for discussion, so as to divorce religion and politics as far as may be. I may say in passing that the boasting reconciliation of Sunnis with Shi'ahs is most distasteful to me and that I should regard Shi'ah domination as an unthinkable disaster.[1]

The leading protagonist of the British administration in Iraq was the old Naqib of Baghdad, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Naqib, head of the Naqib family, which enjoyed wide religious influence among the Sunnis in Baghdad and, as the guardian of the Qadiri Shrine, had a wide influence among the Sunni in India, which increased his importance to the British administration. His authority and influence had suffered a great blow with the advent of the Young Turks to power and he had thereafter been deeply hostile to the C. U. P. The British administration was courteous to him, took him into their confidence, and frequently consulted him about administrative problems. He became the first prime minister of Iraq in Ocotber, 1920, in order to implement the new course adopted by the British government, and acting in co-operation with the able High Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox. The following is a report of a private talk between the Naqib of Baghdad and Gertrude Bell, which took place in February 1919. About the Wilson plebiscite he said:

> I bear witness in God that if Sir Percy Cox had been in Baghdad we should have been spared the folly of asking the people to express their wish as to the future. It has been the cause of great unrest, and the agitation in the town is not yet allayed. You know that I forbade my family to meddle with the business.

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1 F. O. 371/5228/E8915. Enclosed in despatch from Offices of Civil Commissioner to India Office, dated 14th June, 1920. "Note by Miss G. L. Bell, dated 13th June, 1920, reporting conversation with Sulayman Faydhi."

> My son, Saiyid Mahmud, was the first to resign his appointment as delegate to the Majlis.

For the Naqib the British were merely the latest conquerors of the country and the defeated should stick to the rules of the game and work with the victors:

> The English have conquered this country, they have expended their wealth and they have watered the soil with their blood.... Shall they not enjoy what they have won? Other conquerors have overwhelmed the country. As it fell to them, so it has fallen to the English.... You are the governors and I am the governed. And when I am asked what is my opinion as to the continuance of British rule, I reply that I am the subject of the victor.

However, the Naqib added that he personally would have preferred to return to Ottoman rule, though he added a codicil:

> If I could return to the rule of the Sultans of Turkey as they were in former times, I should make no other choice. But I loathe and hate, curse and consign to the devil the present Turkish Government. (The Naqib was alluding to the C. U. P.) The Turk is dead; he has vanished, and I am content to become your subject.

His comment on the principle of national self-determination was appropriately cynical:

> "What is all this talk," said he "and what is its value? I trace it to America and I hear the voice of (President) Wilson. Does Shaikh Wilson know the East, and its peoples? Does he know our ways of life and our habits of mind? You English have governed for 300 years in Asia and your rule is an example for all men to follow. Pursue your own way. Do not submit to guidance from Shaikh Wilson."

For a man brought up under the old system it was clearly difficult to comprehend what nationalism was about or what the masses could meaningfully say about the future of the country. For him, those who were leading the opposition to the British were "men without name or honour": they were Majnun (mad) to think of such things. As the leader of a religious sect and the guardian of the Qadiri Shrine, which had, incidentally, been once demolished

during a Persian invasion of Baghdad by the Shi'i, he was very hostile to the Shi'i, and advised Miss Bell "to beware of the Shi'ahs".[1] In other talks with the Military Governor of Baghdad, the Naqib was reported to have said that he "hates three things worse than the Devil - a Jew, a Shi'ah and a Frenchman."[2]

For the Naqib and other notables who supported the continuance of British rule, the concept of nationalism and self-determination were irrelevant.[3] Their personal and family interests came first, just as they did with many notables who took the side of the opposition. The pro-British notables had in some cases regained the powers which the Young Turks had stripped them of before the war. To others the British occupation offered opportunities to increase their wealth and power or was accepted simply because there seemed to be no alternative. Indeed, the alternatives to British rule were not attractive to many of the pro-British notables. A return to Turkey would mean the return of the loathesome C.U.P. as reincarnated by Mustafa Kamal's movement. The wind of Arab nationalism emanating from Syria threatened their replacement by a new ruling strata, such as the Sharif

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, Appendix III, Annex A "Political Views of the Naqib of Baghdad. See also F.O. 371/4150/129679.

2 F.O. 371/5228/E8448. Copy of Confidential Memorandum No. c/6 D/189, dated 24th May, 1920. From the Military Governor and Political Officer, Baghdad to the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

3 F.O. 371/4148/60942. Enclosed in a Memorandum by the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, "Mesopotamia: Future Constitution", Enclosure No. 7. Note by Military Governor and Political Officer, Baghdad, 24th February, 1919. 'Abd al-Majid Shawi and Jamil Zada wanted government by British officials with Arab advisers and not the reverse and "The idea of importing Baghdadis now in Syria into Baghdad appeared to be unpopular with all the three spoken to." the Naqib and the above two.

family and his supporters among the Iraqi officers. A local revolution would mean the possibility of Shi'i supremacy. Hence, taking the British side and pressing for certain modifications such as a return to normality, the easing of restrictions and an increased share for the Arab notables in the administration recommended itself as the best solution. The British administration, looking for allies, naturally adopted this solution and accepted the notables as representatives of "more sober opinion".[1]

The relative success achieved by the British administration among the landed notables of Baghdad was matched by an even more complete success in Basra. When in November 1914 Basra fell to the British, and during the four years of war, it was generally felt that it would remain under permanent British control.[2] The large commercial community, whose interests were deeply linked with Britain and particularly with India, were relieved by the British occupation, and readily accepted the British administration. When in early 1918 it became known that the future of all occupied territory would be decided by the peace conference, and the possibility of returning Basra to the Turks was mooted, many of those committed to the British asked "would those who feared to remain be given asylum in India and be compensated for loss of their property in case country was restored to Turkey?"[3]

The landed notables of Basra had, nonetheless, several reasons for

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1 Ibid.

2 Cab. 27/23. M.E.C. 60. War Cabinet. Middle East Committee. "Mesopotamia British engagements as to future status". Sir Percy Cox's letter to various Arab chiefs in the Persian Gulf, including Ibn Sa'ud and the Shaykh of Muhammara, in November 1914.

3 Cab. 27/23. M.E.C. 86. War Cabinet. Middle East Committee. From Sir Percy Cox, dated 14th February, 1918. Addressed to Foreign Office.

complaint, such as land acquisition, forced labour which deprived their land of its cultivators, the billeting of soldiers and rent restrictions:

> ... it will be realised that best element in division viz., the landed gentry, have suffered heavily in pocket whilst uninfluential mercantile community have made a fortune as profiteers.

wrote A. T. Wilson on July 14, 1919, after a visit to Basra, and added

> This state of things is not peculiar to Mesopotamia, but here political power rests with landed proprietors, and if they do not receive more satisfaction at our hands in the matter of compensation for damages for land cultivation and labour we shall forfeit their goodwill and government by consent will be difficult if not impossible.[1]

As a consequence in 1919 many steps were taken to ease the lot of the notables. Forced labour was abolished in Basra city, and claims for compensation for damages were hurriedly settled:

> All minor cases have been dealt with systematically. A larger number of these recur every year for loss of crop in date gardens, where irrigation has been stopped as an antimalarial measure.
>
> The majority of big cases which had been kept pending have now been settled. A certain number of wealthy landlords who had refrained from asking for compensation, hurriedly put in their claims as soon as the Armistice was signed, Saiyid Hashim Beg al Naqib is among the latter.[2]

Moreover, the system of tax farming followed by the British administration in Basra benefitted the landed notables and merchants to whom the farms fell, and they opposed attempts by the administration to introduce direct collection of taxes by the administration.[3] Less tangibly, perhaps, the wide influence of

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1 F.O. 371/4149/106880. From Political Officer, Baghdad, 14th July, 1919.
2 Administration Report, 1919, Basra, p. 50. "Compensation".
3 Ibid., p. 11.

the Shaykhs of Kuwait and Muhammara was heavily in favour of the British administration.

There was some pan-Arab and independence propaganda in Basra division, but it did not go far and its influence was very limited.[1] The primary reason for the weakness of the independence movement was the lack of leadership. The only possible leaders were members of the landed and merchant classes, but both of them were committed to the support of the administration, and since ex-officers were few if there were any, it fell to the ex-civil officials and the intelligentzia to initiate such opposition to the British as there was. And the feebleness and small numbers of the intelligentzia virtually precluded any chance of success. As Sir Percy Cox described the situation in 1920:

> In Basrah Vilayet I found no enthusiasm for idea of a national government. The merchants and people of Basrah itself have grown rich, their trade is prospering; ...
>
> In Baghdad and Mosul Vilayets, the type and temper of people are different. They are in closer touch with the West. The practical benefits of British administration are less apparent to them, and its disadvantages more pressing. Among them there is a very general and impatient desire for a greater share in the administration and early establishment of a national Government. The majority of intelligentzia are no doubt strong nationalists, ...[2]

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1 Ibid., p. 59. "A fairly active pro-Sharifian policy was carried out secretly and anonymous letters were slipped under doorways at night."

2 F.O. 371/5231/E13471. From High Commissioner, Baghdad, 26th October, 1920.

The Iraqi outside Iraq

Arab officers constituted an important part of the Iraqi intelligentzia. Their training and education in Constantinople had opened their minds to western influences and had introduced them to the incipient nationalist movement. They developed a sense of the separate national identity of the Arabs, manifested by the creation of several political societies, public and secret, which emphasised the distinctiveness of their Arab nationality and demanded equality with the ruling Turks. These societies were basically emotional outbursts against the spread and dominance of Turkish nationalism. The 'Ahd Society, established late in 1913, was the main society and the one which enroled the most of the nationalist Iraqi officers. The 'Ahd was reminiscent of the Qahtaniya Society established a year earlier, and, like the Qahtaniya, did not profess a separationist policy until the outbreak of the war. Once Turkey joined the war, a new situation arose, which gave the 'Ahd an opportunity to press its demands. However, the 'Ahd did not envisage any very clear policy, such as joining the Turks or seeking an understanding with the Allies for the independence of the Arab people. In Iraq the officer members of the 'Ahd acted in incoherent manner. Some defected to the British; others talked about rebellion but did not act, although when they heard of the Sharif's revolt in Hijaz many of them went, or tried to go, to Hijaz, especially after the fall of Baghdad in March, 1917. In Syria where the 'Ahd society was stronger, it managed to concert its attitude. The notion of independence was widely mooted, but the Society followed the instructions of 'Aziz 'Ali Masri, who managed to send them from Cairo, not to take hostile action against Turkey, lest it would open their

country to European conquests, before a guarantee against such an eventuality was obtained.[1] Meanwhile, they should stand by Turkey. Another society, the Fatat, which was the civilian equivalent of the 'Ahd, came to the same conclusion in early 1915.[2] Suddenly, however, the attitude of both societies changed, after visits of Sharif Faysal to Damascus in March and May, 1915, during which he established contacts with the leading members of both societies and reported to them the character of his father's secret contacts with the British authorities about co-operation in raising a revolt for the independence of the Arabs. Both societies in May, 1915, drew up a protocol setting out the demands that must be met by the British before any agreement could be reached:

> The recognition by Great Britain of the independence of the Arab countries lying within the following frontiers:
>
> North: The line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37°N. and thence along the line Birejik-Urfa-Mardin-Midiat-Jazirat (ibn 'Umar) -Amadia to the Persian frontier;
>
> East: The Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf;
>
> South: The Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden whose status was to be maintained);
>
> West: The Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin.
>
> The abolition of all exceptional privileges granted to foreigners under capitulations.
>
> The conclusion of a defensive alliance between Great Britain and the future independent Arab state.
>
> The grant of economic preference to Great Britain.[3]

Before the conclusion of any definite agreement between the British and the Sharif, the Turkish authorities became aware of the rebellious tendencies

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1 Antonius, Arab Awakening, p. 155.
2 Ibid., p. 153.
3 Ibid., pp. 157-158. The text was a translation of the Arabic version lent to the author by King Faysal. It should be mentioned that these conditions were wholly embodied in the Sharif's letter, dated July 14, 1915 (Jamada 2nd, 1333) to Sir H. McMahon.

among the Arabs in Syria. Jamal Pasha, Governor of Syria, was able to strike first by transferring the majority of the Arab officers to non-Arab districts and by imprisoning or executing a number of civilians. Though Jamal succeeded in repressing the nationalist movement, he also widened the gulf between the Turks and the Arabs, throwing the nationalists on to the side of the Allies. Thereafter, although the 'Ahd society was not uncovered, its members were dispersed and their actions were far from harmonized: some of them seized the first opportunity to defect to the British, others found that their duty as officers obliged them to remain in the Ottoman army.[1] Though generally the 'Ahd members were now favourably disposed towards the British, they did not have direct relations with them. It was left to the Sharif of Mecca to conduct the negotiations and such discussions as took place between British officials in Cairo and 'Ahd members were far from conclusive. 'Aziz 'Ali Masri, as a prominent leader of the 'Ahd, was contacted by the British during the early days of the war, but 'Aziz 'Ali refused to commit himself to anything short of Arab independence. An officer, with whom the British had several discussions, Sharif al-Faruqi, a young Iraqi officer who had defected to the British in 1915, incautiously agreed to concessions which went far beyond the May protocol, and it is not, therefore, surprising that al-Faruqi in the later years of the war and after it, was out of favour with the Sharif

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1 Yasin al-Hashimi remained in the Army until the fall of Syria and he was one of the leaders of the society and a senior officer. While al-Faruqi escaped at the first chance offered to him in Gallipoli, 1915.

of Mecca as well as with other Iraqi officers.[1] When the Hijaz revolt occurred many of the Iraqi officers who joined it did so on the understanding that it was for the achievement of Arab independence with the help of the Allies, and without any knowledge of al-Faruqi's ideas.

On 3rd October, 1918 Faysal, at the head of the Arab Army, entered Damascus and four days later issued a proclamation announcing the establishment of an independent Arab government for the whole of Syria. Most of the Iraqi officers in the Hijaz were with Faysal's force and they quickly became the backbone of the new Syrian Army while many other Iraqis occupied high government offices. The conclusion of the Armistice with Turkey brought more Iraqi officers and officials to Syria because they preferred to work under an Arab government. The Iraqi officers and officials in Syria late in 1918 created a new organisation called 'Ahd al-Iraqi, an off-shoot of the old 'Ahd society. The formation of an Iraqi rather than an all-Arab society was caused by disagreements between the Iraqi and Syrian officers, which had already began during the war in Hijaz, and which increased during Faysal's rule in Syria. The differences between the two factions were partly political but chiefly the product of personal jealousies. The reason given by the Iraqi 'Ahd for creating a new society was that the Allied powers opposed the creation of a single independent Arab state, so that it was

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1 F.O. 882/Vol. 6. Arab Bureau Papers (HRG/16/79). Secret. Dated 13th December, 1916. Extract from Mr. Storr's Diary. Visit to Grand Sharif. "He is for example far from satisfied with the person of Faroki as his Cairo representative..."
See also F.O. 371/4241/170432. Telegram to Lord Allenby (Cairo) from Foreign Office, dated 13th January, 1920. Faruqi stated that he is unwell and penniless.

expedient for the Iraqi leaders to organise separate societies to champion the interests of the different sections of the Arab world.[1]

The objectives of the 'Ahd al-Iraqi society were set out in the society's constitution, published in 1919:

1. Independence for Iraq, which was to extend from the Euphrates north of Dayr al-Zur and from the Tigris north of Dyar Bakir, to the Persian Gulf in the south, including the banks of the two rivers.

2. Technical and economic aid from Britain, but without any prejudice to Iraq independence.

3. The advancement of the people of Iraq.

4. The welfare of the whole Arab Nation.[2]

The headquarters of the society was in Damascus, but there were several branches in the provinces, and further subdivisions in the smaller districts. At the head of the society there was a central committee, consisting of seven members elected yearly by an elected body called the General Council.

The Iraqi 'Ahd society, as shown by its constitution, sought the help of Britain, partly from genuine trust in Britain and the need of Iraq for outside help, and partly as the price for British support for Iraq independence. A mood of general optimism prevailed among the Syrian Iraqis during late 1918. The emergence of an independent Arab government in Syria, coupled with the declarations of the Allies, particularly President Wilson's statements about self-determination and the fourteen points of January, 1918,

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1 Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. III, p. 29.
See also 'I. A. 'Adhami, The Arabic Question, pp. 65-66.

2 Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. III, pp. 36-37.

and the Anglo-French declaration of November 8, 1918, roused high expectations among the Iraqi 'Ahd. But this optimism gradually gave way to suspicion and disillusionment.

In Syria the feeling was that the Iraqis had out-stayed their welcome, and those who occupied high positions were regarded with envy by many Syrians.[1] On the other hand, conditions in Iraq were far from encouraging. Many Iraqi left home for Syria, either from fear or from the desire for employment with the Arab government. The situation was aggravated, when the Ottoman army was demobilised and Iraqi officials were turned out of their jobs in the defunct Turkish administration. But there was also a long backlog of discontent going back to the early years of the war when many Iraqis were taken as prisoners of war to India. A group of Iraqi officers, war prisoners in India were reported to have said:

> It is needless for us to say that we always entertained friendly ideas towards the English....
>
> As officers in the Turkish Army, we fought bravely and performed our duty, and when we were defeated and captured, we expected to be kindly treated by our captors. We are sorry, however, to say that our expectations were not realized and we were insulted and humiliated in every way...
>
> The treatment we received in Egypt from the British officials at once showed us the great difference between the English people here and the Indian officers and officials, and this tended to mitigate and reduce the bitter memories we carried with us from Mesopotamia: ...[2]

The Cairo authorities, unlike those in Mesopotamia, encouraged the nationalist tendencies of the officers, because they helped to mobilise the Arabs against

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1 Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 51.
2 F. O. 371/2775/187454. Secret. A statement on my visit to Jeddah and Yenbo from 30th July to 17th August 1916. By Ibrahim Dimitri, Arabic secretary to Sir R. Wingate.

Turkey. This led to a better understanding between the Arabs and the British authorities in Cairo, but made the Iraqi officers more critical of the British administration in Iraq, which according to them "did not play up to Arab nationalism as much as it might have done", but instead attempted to impose Indian government ideas upon them:

> ... not only the realization of the Arab aspiration, which had been their goal for years, had been denied them, but they had to submit to having imposed upon them Indian officials, Indian institutions, and Indian culture.[1]

The discrepancy between the attitude of the Cairo authorities and of those in Mesopotamia encouraged the Iraqi 'Ahd society to appeal to Cairo and London for a change in British policy in Iraq. In January, 1919, four Iraqi, Maulud Mukhlis, Naji Swaydi, Thabit 'Abd al-Nur, and another, Naji Bey Asil,[2] all members of the Iraqi 'Ahd society, wrote on behalf of over 385 Iraqi officers and officials serving in Syria and Hijaz, asking the British government:

> 1. To (? assign) Iraq as Princely state under one of the sons of King (Sultan) El Arab El Hussein Bin Ali El Musni, and for which laws will be promulgated in accordance with its requirements and wishes of its population having liaison with general Constitutional Government at the head of which will be H.M. the Great King of the Arabs.
> 2. Fundamental (? organic) laws (will be ?) made and general liaison between the Iraq Government and other Arab Governments which would be established in liberated countries will be communicated by a general council (or the Fundamental Council) whose members will be selected from all the Constituted Governments. Each will have equal number of members.
> 3. It should rely upon aid of Great Britain and her noble principles (the Ally of Arabs) this to (three groups undecypherable) success of country but it should not touch spirit of independence

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1 F.O. 371/3044/4084. Secret. Arabian Report. New Series, No. XXIV, January 3rd, 1917. Appendix (a) A joint statement of four Arab officers.
2 The name is not clear in the original account.

at all.

4. Efforts would be displayed by inhabitants of Iraq together with inhabitants of other liberated Arab countries for insuring the independence of whole, a perfect independence united and which should not be separated.

5. The Iraq country will include Lower Iraq between two rivers; and the country inhabited by these who speak Arab language on banks of both Euphrates and Tigris.[1]

The British reply was a mere acknowledgement and an indication that the communication had been referred to the British delegation at the Peace Conference.[2] The Iraqi in Syria, unsatisfied with this reply, wrote three months later on 22nd April, 1919, another memorandum signed by Ja'far 'Askari, Military Governor of Aleppo, Naji Swaydi, General Maulud Mukhlis, commanding the troops in Aleppo District, General 'Ali Jawdat, on behalf of the Iraqi in Syria, addressed to the British liaison officer, Aleppo:

> Sir as deputies of the Society of the Mesopotamian Pledge, which represents the public opinion in all Irak, after having fought with the Turks, and sacrificed a great number of its young men ... we, the undersigned, beg you to transmit to the British Government, which you represent, the following words, being the aspiration of every true Mesopotamian patriot:
>
> 1. To fulfil now the promise made by Great Britain and France to the world about Arabia, in November, 1918 - that is, to organise a purely national civil government in Mesopotamia - keeping there at present the Army of Occupation. This action is rendered necessary by the expected arrival shortly of the Commission sent out by the League of Nations.
>
> 2. There are at present out at Irak, some of its men, deported by the Military Authorities. We beg for their immediate release and speedy return to their homes, as a measure of justice and humanity.[3]

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1 F.O. 371/4148/18974. Decypher. Sir M. Cheetham (Cairo), January 31st, 1919. No. 172.

2 Ibid. Cypher telegram to Sir M. Cheetham (Cairo) from Foreign Office, dated 8th February, 1919. No. 180.

3 F.O. 371/4149/91481. Enclosed in despatch No. 57, from General Headquarters, Egyptian Expeditionary Force, signed by Clayton, to the Secretary of State for Foreign Office, dated 8th June, 1919.

Two days later they added in reply to a query about their reference to the Army of occupation, the following note:

> The keeping of the Army of Occupation in the country, at present, will be to carry out what the National Government, thinks it best for its own upholding.[1]

The above memorandum bears the signature of the more influential members of the 'Ahd. Their reference to the British Army of occupation added a new factor to the 'Ahd-British relationship, since it meant greater dependence on the British than the economic and technical assistance envisaged in the Iraqi 'Ahd constitution and the previous memorandum. The question naturally arises: against whom did the 'Ahd memorialists envisage the need to use British troops? Though it is hard to ascertain the answer, it can hardly have been the Turks, especially at a time when the Kamalist movement was still unborn (it began in June, 1919). Persia, the Gulf of Arabia and Syria were either under British control or influence, or under friendly Arab rule. Thus most probably the help of the British troops was thought to be needed against internal dangers, such as tribal risings and dissident groups. The comment of the British liaison officer at Aleppo on the memorialists sheds more light on their intentions:

> What these men feel is that the longer the change to native government is delayed, the more difficult will that change be. The people have now, as the effect of Turkish rule, a certain amount of self-reliance and independence which will rapidly disappear under the influence of a strong foreign administration.

Major F. L. Brayne added that:

> Uncontrolled independence either internal or external, is the

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1 Ibid.

last thing they want. They want first an English protectorate and English help in setting up a native government.[1]

For one reason or another this memorandum did not reach the Foreign Office until 8th June, 1919. Meanwhile the Amir Faysal wrote to General Clayton, Chief Political Officer of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, early in June, 1919, reiterating the points mentioned in the second memorandum of the Iraqi 'Ahd members,[2] and also the points raised in Major Brayne's comment. In Paris, the Hijaz delegation transmitted on 24th June, 1919, a memorandum on the Arab question by Nuri Sa'id, Chief Aide-de-Camp to Faysal and a leading member of the Iraqi 'Ahd. The aim of the memorandum was "to prove the necessity of forming one united government of the liberated Arab provinces of Syria and Mesopotamia". Nuri Sa'id put the case for unity on ethnic, political and economic grounds and the separation of the two was based "in part on the imperialistic policy of certain parties in Europe". Nuri concluded his memorandum:

> The best solution for the Arab question, and it is the only solution which will meet with the approval of the majority, is, to form one government composed of federal states on the same lines as the United States of America;[3]

The reaction of the British government to the array of Iraqi appeals came early in July, 1919, when Lord Curzon deemed it "impolitic to ignore the

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1 Ibid.
2 Young, Independent Arab, pp. 286-287.
See also F.O. 882/vol. 23. Arab Bureau Papers, Series C, Document No. (MES/19/9). Amir Faysal to Commander-in-Chief, Expeditionary Force, Egypt.
3 F.O. 371/4181/102396. Paris, June 23rd, 1919.
See also Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, 1st Series, Vol. IV, p. 296, No. 204.

repeated requests of the Baghdadi officers for a reassurance on the future policy of H.M. Government in Mesopotamia."[1] Accordingly, a draft reply was prepared and on 15th July, 1919, it was communicated to A. T. Wilson, Acting Civil Commissioner at Baghdad:

> 1. That His Majesty's Government fully realise objections to crystallization of Western bureaucratic methods of Mesopotamia.
> 2. That certain steps, e.g. formation of provincial and divisional councils are already being taken to ensure such Arab participation...
> 3. That if and when we obtain mandate British commission will be sent out as soon as possible to discuss in consultation with all classes form of future government.[2]

A. T. Wilson's reply of 19th July, 1919, was strongly against any pronouncement extracted from the British government by "such small fry", and suggested that if a reply was considered necessary it "should be restricted to an intimation that the writers appear to have been misinformed as to the progress of events in Mesopotamia, and that it is open to them to go to Mesopotamia to see things for themselves."[3] Three days later on 22nd July, 1919, another telegram found its way to the Foreign Office, in which Wilson spoke his mind frankly about the future of Iraq:

> I submit, if we are to prevent anarchy in the Middle East, the political problem of Mesopotamia must be regarded, not primarily from the Arab stand point, but in relation to our policy in the Middle East as a whole; and we must be prepared to interpret the declaration of 8th November corrupt group? less literally here than in other Arab speaking countries....
> To install a real Arab Government in Mesopotamia is impossible, and, if we attempt it, we shall abandon the Middle East to anarchy.

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1 F.O. 371/4149/91481. Minute by Lord Curzon, dated 8th July, 1919.
2 F.O. 371/4149/107927. Telegram from Secretary of State to Civil Commissioner, dated 15th July, 1919.
3 F.O. 371/4149/107927. Telegram, dated Baghdad, 19th July, 1919, No. 8107. See also Ireland, Iraq, p. 191.

> Declaration of 8th November took, if I may be permitted to say so, little account of facts as they are in Mesopotamia, but it is not too late to give this pronouncement a fresh and virile interpretation which will enable us to make Mesopotamia the keystone of our policy in the Middle East.

Wilson added that the commercial and natural wealth of the country was an inducement to retain British efficient control.[1] Nor was it only A. T. Wilson who objected to the draft. The Commander in Chief of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force endorsed Wilson's telegram of 19th July, 1919, and sent a separate despatch on 22nd July, 1919, to the effect that the Iraqi officers in Syria "have neither status nor backing in this country" and as far as Iraq was concerned "Government by sympathetic political officer has been very successful and must continue for some time".[2]

In accordance with A. T. Wilson's objections the Foreign Office redrafted their reply to the Iraqi 'Ahd members in Syria:

> Pending decision of Peace Conference as to mandatory power and nature of mandate it would be premature to attempt constitutional experiments. His Majesty's Government have no desire to prejudice that decision and memorialists appear to have been misinformed as to the progress of events in Mesopotamia.... Recent appointment of Naji Beg to high administrative office in Baghdad, even though he has greatly to our regret decided to resign, is example of desire of H.M. Government to offer Arabs of proved character and ability full scope for exercise of their talents.[3]

Although the reply was watered down in accordance with Wilson's criticism, he remained unsatisfied and considered the reply to the Iraqi officers as a "serious blow",[4] partly, because it implicitly recognised the importance of

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1 F.O. 371/4149/107933. From Baghdad, dated 22nd July, 1919, No. 8169.
2 F.O. 371/4149/107927. Secret. From G.O.C. Mesopotamia, to the War Office, dated 22nd July, 1919.
3 F.O. 371/4149/110324. Cypher telegram to Colonel French (Cairo), repeated to Baghdad, from the Foreign Office, dated August 9th, 1919.
4 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 124.

the Iraqi group in Syria, which he was anxious to discredit.

Two incidents occurred during the first half of 1919, which increased the mistrust between the British administration in Iraq and the Iraqi nationalists in Syria. The first was the abortive appointment of Naji Swaydi to office in the British administration in Iraq and his consequent resignation; the second incident was Wilson's opposition to the return of the Iraqi officers to Iraq.

Colonel A. T. Wilson on his way back to Baghdad from London in May, 1919, met in Damascus two leading members of the Iraqi 'Ahd society, Yasin Hashimi and Nuri Sa'id. During a discussion with them at which Cornwallis was present, Wilson was reported by Nuri Sa'id to have admitted certain shortcomings in the administration in Iraq and put part of the blame on lack of suitable Iraqi personnel. Yasin Hashimi at once suggested that Wilson might agree to the despatch of capable Iraqis working in Syria to Iraq to assist and advise him. A. T. Wilson readily agreed and it fell to Naji Swaydi to go to Baghdad.[1] Naji Swaydi was a member of a prominent family in Baghdad. His father had been a member of the nationalist movement in Baghdad before the war, and Naji had been educated in Constantinople where he graduated as a lawyer. He occupied several official positions under the Turkish administration (e.g. Qaymmaqam in Najaf), and when Syria fell in October he was in Aleppo, where he was appointed by the Arab government to be Acting Civil Governor of Aleppo. In early June, 1919, Naji arrived at Baghdad where he was offered by the British a choice of two jobs, Adviser to the Judicial Secretary

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1 F.O. 371/4150 /144472. See also Young, Independent Arab, p. 286.

or Adviser to the Military Governor, and he chose the latter. His first task was to study a British proposal for a municipal council, but as Gertrude Bell put it:

> ... without giving himself time to weigh them thoroughly, he drew up and presented on 7th July a scheme on somewhat different lines, salient divergences being that the body should be elected by universal suffrage, and that no British officer, with the exception of the Officer of Health and Municipal Engineer, should be a member.[1]

A week later when Naji realised that his scheme would not meet the approval of the British authorities he tendered his resignation and in his letter of resignation he wrote,

> managing the administration of the municipality and directing its affairs before the election of the council and the completion of the organisation will neither secure the success aimed at nor derive the intended benefits.[2]

This was not merely "shadowy explanation" as Miss Bell commented, but rather reflected a basic difference of opinion between those who favoured an appointed municipal council and Naji who wanted an elected one. A further reason for Naji's resignation was that he, as he said on other occasions, believed that his role was to assist and advise on the creation of a national government and that as soon as he realised that the British intended no such thing he resigned.[3] The return of Naji Swaydi to Syria confirmed the impression held by the Iraqi in Syria that the British administration in Iraq was opposed to the fulfilment of the Allies' promises of a national government. It was now clear

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1 Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration, 1920, p. 131.
2 Ibid.
3 Ireland, Iraq, p. 190. From footnote no. 2. An interview with N. Swaydi.

that the British authorities in Iraq regarded the nationalists "as active enemies, who were trying to undermine British influence in that country."[1] The Acting Civil Commissioner, A. T. Wilson added to the mistrust by attributing Naji's resignation to apathy and unjustified ambition. Wilson wrote in a despatch dated 28th July, 1919:

> ... official here and, in any case, he had seen enough in the (office?) of the Baghdad municipality to make him realise that the duties devolving on him in this ... centre would be much more arduous than that at Aleppo, and would involve more time and energy than he was prepared to devote to them.[2]

As to the return of the Iraqi in Syria to Iraq, the Iraqi naturally contemplated a return to their homes. Faysal during his stay in Paris in April, 1919, pointed out to the British delegates the desire of the Iraqi officers to return to their homes in the near future. The political attitudes of these officers was then described as pro-British and in favour of a British mandate in Iraq, with 'Abdulla, Faysal's elder brother as Amir of Iraq.[3] A. T. Wilson on his way back to Iraq from London was consulted on the subject during his stay in Paris. Wilson agreed to the return of the officers so long as "they were furnished with credentials".[4] Accordingly T. E. Lawrence was authorised to despatch to Faysal on May 8th, 1919, the following communication:

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1 F.O. 371/4150/144472. An interview between H. Young and Nuri Sa'id, dated October 21st, 1919, in London.
2 F.O. 371/4149/111421. From Political Officer, Baghdad, dated 28th July, 1919, No. 8419. In the same document Wilson gave another reason for Naji's resignation, that he wanted to accompany the International Commission which he expected would visit Iraq soon.
3 F.O. 371/4145/66280. From Lewis Mallet (for Mr. Balfour), British Delegation, Paris, April 29th, 1919. To Earl Curzon of Kedleston. No. 613.
4 Ibid., enclosed in the above.

> H.M. Government agree to your officers going to Mesopotamia, where they may say what they like, so long as it is not contrary to police regulations. They should not have any message from you to the people there, or any official status.[1]

Soon after Wilson's return to Iraq in May, 1919, however, he seems to have become alarmed by the rising nationalist movement, and to have come to believe that the activities of the Iraqi in Syria were responsible:

> There is a considerable apprehension as to the activities of Sherif Feisal's adherents in Syria. Individuals like Jafar Pasha, Maulud, Nouri (?) Said, and others have written to their friends and relatives in Baghdad or have sent messages they are coming to Baghdad before long to prosecute a political campaign in favour of an Arab Government on the lines of what they hope to have in Syria....
>
> Our friends here urge we should make up our mind that Sheikh Feisal and his adherents are to have no part in Mesopotamian politics and that we forbid their coming here, adding that the fact that some of his emissaries are Baghdadis by race should not be allowed to affect their judgement in the matter, ...

As a result, Wilson asked that the Iraqi officers and "others of same colour [be informed] that they cannot be permitted at present to return to this country".[2]

The British administration in Iraq appears to have been quite unable to understand that the Iraqi 'Ahd in Syria was basically pro-British. The constitution of the society and numerous memoranda and talks with British officials had demonstrated the attitude of the Iraqi in Syria clearly enough. They aimed at independence for Iraq, but at the same time they were convinced of the need for the political and economic support of Britain, which would

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1 F.O. 371/4145/70896. No. 687. British Delegation, Paris, May 8th, 1919, enclosed in despatch from Mr. Balfour to Earl Curzon.

2 F.O. 371/4145/79634. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 14th May, 1919, No. 5454.
The India Office concurred in Wilson's demand. See F.O. 371/4145/79634. India Office to Under Secretary of State for Foreign Office, dated 26th May, 1919.

also guarantee British interests in the country. Yasin al-Hashimi, a leading member of the 'Ahd al-Iraqi, expressed, in October, 1919, the view that:

> ... It was obvious that Mesopotamia could not for the next ten years be left without foreign guidance, and equally obvious that no foreign nation except England had any claim to act as adviser.... An Arab Amir must be set up as head of the state ... Abdullah would sweep the board the moment he appeared in Mesopotamia.... The Amir would be assisted by an advisory council appointed by himself with the advice of the High Commissioner. This council would consist mainly of British officials but there was no reason why suitable Arabs, if such were to be found, should not find a place upon it. The ministers would all be Arabs appointed by the Amir with the advice of the council. The country was not ready for representative institutions, in the provinces, an Arab Wali, with a British Adviser, might well be assisted by an elected majlis, it being clearly understood that the powers of the majlis were strictly limited to local matters, ...[1]

Naji Swaydi, although he had resigned from his post in Iraq, nonetheless made it clear in October, 1919, that when a civil administration was instituted he would be glad to return to Iraq. He disagreed with Yasin Hashimi about the necessity for establishing an elective assembly, and was prepared to accept an assembly "composed partly of elected native members and partly of British advisers appointed by us".[2] Other officers, such as Ismail Haqi and Subhi Halim, went further, regretted the discontent with British rule, and offered to help bridge the gap, because Iraq could not do without Britain's help.[3]

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1 F.O. 882/Vol. 24. Arab Bureau Papers, Series C, Document No. (SY/19/10). Memorandum by Miss G. L. Bell entitled "Syria in 1919". Enclosed in despatch dated November 15th, 1919. From A. T. Wilson to the Secretary of State for India, India Office.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

The position of the Iraqi officers by the end of 1919, was disheartening and full of frustration. Their petitions to the British government had elicited no favourable response. The Baghdad authorities persisted in antagonising them, and on driving more and more people to leave Iraq for Syria.[1] On the other hand in Turkey the Kamalist movement was emerging as a national force against western imperialism, and the Kamalists appealed to the Arabs to join them against the British and the French. This was an ironic anti-climax for the officers who had joined the British during the war against the Turks in the hope of gaining freedom and independence.

Almost inevitably many of the Iraqi in Syria drifted away from friendship towards Britain. For instance, Yasin Hashimi, who was imprisoned in late 1919, was described in March, 1920, as "one of the extreme exponents of Arab independence as against a French mandate or any other form of foreign control".[2] There was an increase of militancy among the 'Ahd officers, and in the spring of 1919, the Iraqi 'Ahd envisaged the possibility of using force in the event of the failure of diplomatic and political means.[3]

The counter claims of the Syrian government and the British administration in Iraq for the district of Dayr al-Zur triggered a series of armed clashes between the British and Arab forces led by Iraqi officers. Dayr al-Zur before the war had formed a separate province linked directly with

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1 F.O. 371/4231/131560. Telegram from Political Officer, Egypt Force, Cairo, to Political Officer, Baghdad, dated 11th July, 1919. "Large number of Baghdad officers continue to arrive at Damascus from Mesopotamia. We have no work to offer them this side and suggest their departure should be discouraged."

2 F.O. 882/Vol. 23. (MI/20/3). Arab Bureau Papers, March 1920, Personalities: Arab Government of Syria. Yasin Pasha.

3 'Askari, My Memoirs about the Revolution, pp. 6-8.

Constantinople. Late in 1918, a British political officer was reluctantly sent there after an appeal by the local inhabitants of the district. The representative of the Syrian government was recalled from the Dayr on the understanding that the boundaries were to be regarded as provisional. In September, 1919, the British and the French authorities came to a provisional agreement about the boundaries between Syria and Iraq by which the Khabur river became the frontier between the two, thus leaving Dayr town in the Syrian hand. However, for one reason or another, that decision was not conveyed to the British administration in Iraq which continued to control Dayr. In September, 1919, the Syrian government appointed Ramadhan Shilash governor of Riqa district, adjacent to the Dayr district. Ramadhan was the son of the leading shaykh of the Albu Sarraj tribe, a section of the 'Aqaydat tribe which extended over Riqa and Dayr districts. Ramadhan had been educated in the military school for the sons of shaykhs in Constantinople and during the war had defected to the Hijaz Army. The Dayr population, who had called for the British to install a representative, seem by now to have turned against the British. This encouraged Ramadhan to spread propaganda amongst them to join the Arab government of Syria. With the support of the Iraqi 'Ahd, Ramadhan launched on 11th December, 1919, an attack on Dayr town. Captain Chamier, the political officer of Dayr, surrendered after putting up a slight resistance. The Baghdad authorities strongly objected to the occupation of Dayr, and Faysal, who was in Paris attending the Peace Conference, hurriedly repudiated the attack and sent instructions to his brother Zayd to that effect. This was just what Faysal must have been expected to do since he was counting on Britain's help against France's claims

to Syria. In Syria two officers, Ra'uf al-Kubaysi and Tawfiq al-Damaluji, were sent by the military governor of Aleppo, Ja'far 'Askari, with a message to the British political officer at Dayr. Tawfiq established contact with the Acting Civil Commissioner at Albu Kamal, and claimed that his government had decided to eject Ramadhan and asked for British help for that purpose. At that time the Acting Civil Commissioner had at last been informed about the September, 1919, agreement between the British and French authorities on provisional boundaries, so that he declined Tawfiq's offer and announced his acceptance of the Khabur as the provisional frontier, leaving Dayr in the hand of the Syrian government. This was a victory for the militant members of the 'Ahd over the officers who were close to Faysal, such as Ja'far 'Askari and Nuri Sa'id.

The Khabur frontier gave rise to further clashes. The Syrian government, in a letter to Cairo of 12 January, 1920, complained that the new provisional boundary divided tribal units inhabiting the two banks of the Khabur and demanded its extension to include the whole district of Dayr, including Albu Kamal. The 'Ahd al-Iraqi society gave its consent to the inclusion of the Dayr district in Syria, although according to their constitution the Dayr was included in Iraq. It supported Ramadhan Shilash's activities so long as they embarrassed the British administration in Iraq. The 'Ahd branch in Aleppo adopted a resolution in January, 1920, calling for the spread of military activities along the Syria-Iraq frontier and called for the recruitment of Iraqi officers working in Syria for that purpose.[1] In

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1 'Askari, My Memoirs about the Revolution, Vol. 2, p. 48

Dayr itself Ramadhan was elated by his first victory and the encouraging reaction of the Syrians and Iraqi. On 11th January, 1920, Ramadhan therefore raided Albu Kamal, but this was to go too far and the Syrian government replaced him by Maulud Mukhlis, a leading Iraqi, who had served in the Hijaz Army and had later held high military positions in the Syrian Army. Maulud's task was to establish order and to discuss with the British authorities the desirability of modifying the Khabur border. He reached Dayr on 17th January, 1920, and promptly wrote to the British Commander-in-Chief in Iraq, asking for the inclusion of all Dayr district as far as Wadi Huran, south of 'Ana, in Syria. The British reply insisted on the maintenance of the Khabur as the boundary because it had been settled by the Anglo-French agreement of September, 1919, and any change ought to be made through diplomatic channels. The British authorities in January, 1920, brought reinforcements to Albu Kamal and as a demonstration of power advanced their troop to Salahiya, half way between Khabur and Albu Kamal. Although this was within the area assigned to the British administration, Maulud and the neighbouring tribes interpreted it as a step towards a further advance on Mayadin, just east of the Khabur, which was under Arab control. The military force under the command of Maulud Mukhlis in February, 1920, consisted of 90 cavalry, two guns and two machine guns, in addition to a police force of not more than 150.[1] In fact Maulud had to rely for support on the tribes of the district. To gain further strength he wrote to the 'Ahd al-Iraqi society

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1 Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. III, pp. 357-358.

urging the resignation by all the Iraqi officers of their commissions in the Syrian Army in order that they might join in preparations to resist the British.[1] Between 30-40 Iraqi officers responded to Maulud's appeal and went to the Dayr. Meanwhile the tribesmen, who were more or less independent, frequently raided the British lines of communication, and while Maulud was in Damascus the tribes in mid February, 1920, attacked the town of Albu Kamal. On 20th February the British Commander-in-Chief wrote to Maulud condemning the attacks and holding him responsible for them. At the same time the Commander-in-Chief informed Maulud that he had given orders not to occupy Mayadin, but in the event of any hostile action from the Arab tribes or from forces under Maulud's command, the British forces would retaliate by gunfire and by air attacks.[2] The British government also informed the Syrian government that "the continuation of the subsidy which was being paid to the Arab Government by Great Britain would be dependent on its ability to impose its orders."[3] Faysal who could hardly stand without a British subsidy and British support, promptly wrote to Cairo in early March regretting the incidents at Dayr and at the same time suggesting as the means for a solution the appointment of a mixed committee to study the boundary dispute.[4] This ended the clashes in the Dayr.

Matters did not go at all well for the 'Ahd in the Dayr. The tribesmen remained independent, the authority of Maulud Mukhlis was undermined by the

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1 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, p. 125, and around 250 soldiers went too.
2 Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration, p. 137.
3 Ibid.
4 F.O. 371/5128/1546. Secret. From G.H.Q. Cairo to G.H.Q. in Command, Mesopotamia, dated 8.3.1920.
See also Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration, pp. 137-138.

return of Ramadhan Shilash to the Dayr in March, 1920, in defiance to the government's orders, whereupon he challenged Maulud's authority. Finally, Maulud was recalled to Damascus and was replaced by a Syrian called Mustafa Kanawati.[1]

In Damascus the Syrian nationalists decided in early March 1920 to convene a national congress to determine the political future of the country and this encouraged the Iraqi 'Ahd to take a similar step. Faysal blessed the move by the Iraqi, who intended to proclaim his brother as ruler over Iraq, because it offered a solution to a possible conflict between him and his elder brother, 'Abdulla, who by tradition had a prior claim to the throne of Syria. The 'Ahd secured several declarations signed by leading Iraqi from Mosul and Baghdad nominating the 'Ahd leaders as their representatives at the Congress. This was intended to give the Congress the character of a representative body. The congress consisted of 29 members chosen from the Iraqi community in Syria, with the sole exception of Muḥammad Ridha Shabibi, who was on his way back from Ḥijaz.[2] Out of the 29 members, seventeen had been at one time officers or reserve officers in the Ottoman Army: the rest were writers, lawyers or merchants. All except one were Sunni (Shabibi was the only Shi'i member). Ja'far 'Askari, Naji Swaydi, Jamil Madfa'i, and Tawfiq Swaydi were the effective members of the congress. Many of the other members were there simply for the sake of "show".[3] Early in March, 1920, the Iraqi congressmen held several meetings in the house of Muḥammad al-'Asami in

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1 Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. III, p. 371.
2 See Appendix X
3 From an interview with Tawfiq al-Swaydi.

'Arnus where they drew up a draft declaration. On March 8th, 1920, the Iraqi congress was held simultaneously with the Syrian Congress and a declaration was read in the name of the Iraqi Arab people, after an introduction which listed the numerous promises of freedom and independence made by the Allies it declared:

> We, the members of this Congress which represents truly and legally the Iraqi Arab people, decided to make public its will and to get the country out of the embarrassing, vague and disturbing conditions; and in accordance with the natural right of the nation to a free life and independence; and in accordance with the noble principles which the great Allies had declared more than seventy times during the war; and in accordance with the wishes of the Iraqi Arab nation ... we in our capacity as representatives of the people declare unanimously the independence of the country of Iraq ... and support the independence of Syria; and declare the political and economic unity of Iraq with Syria. We declared his Royal Highness the prince 'Abdulla as constitutional King....
>
> In the name of the Iraqi Arab nation ... we declare ... the reservation of our friendship with the generous allies and our determination to respect their interests and the interests of all foreign states in our country.[1]

The Congress did not refer to the Dayr incidents or approve the use of force. The Congress was meant to be a political demonstration to formalise the demands of the nationalists and to focus the attention of the Iraqis as well as of the British authorities upon the popular opposition to the British administration in Iraq. In an interesting memorandum dated 5th April, 1920, sent to Major H. Young of the Foreign Office, Nuri Sa'id wrote that the discontent caused by the existence of a military administration in Iraq gave rise to pro-Turkish sympathy:

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1 My liberal translation of the Arabic version in Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. III, pp. 407-410.

> Agitators were not slow to assert, with seeming justification, that it would be preferable to have maintained even such a malignant authority as the Turk had over the country in order to safeguard its unity and such national rights as were conceded under the old regime.

As to the intentions of the Congress and the nature of its members, Nuri Sa'id wrote:

> The majority of the members of the Mesopotamian Congress is made of those who fought by the side of the British against the common enemy and is strongly opposed to the prolongation of any misunderstandings and differences between the people of Irak and their allies as to the resumption of any understanding and co-operation with the Turks. In their eagerness to avert more incidents and stem the current of disaffection the Congress was unanimous in their conviction that the means most effectual for that purpose was to conform to the wishes of the people which are in perfect harmony with the intentions and promises of the British Government....

Among the members of the Congress, Nuri Sa'id wrote:

> ... there is not one who holds any unfriendly views of our allies, the British, or will lend themselves to create embarrassments for them in dealing with the Irakians. On the contrary they are one and all imbued with the spirit of comradeship with the British and are most an ous to continue on the path of loyalty and collaboration with them, and, in special manner, they are determined to put an end to all the motives that may tend to renew the connection with the Turks. [1]

Notwithstanding all these assurances the British government denounced the Iraqi Congress as devoid of authority to speak on behalf of the people of Iraq, thus killing among many Iraqi all hope of a political settlement.

Many Iraqis had already joined the small force at Dayr, and Faysal now came under pressure from the Iraqi officers to support a militant campaign

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1 F.O. 371/5226/E2719. A memorandum addressed to Major H. Young, signed by Nuri Sa'id, dated 5th April, 1920. The Carlton Hotel, London, S.W.1. See also 'Askari, My Memoirs about the Revolution, Vol. II, pp. 91-92. In March, 1920, the Iraqi made their first contact with the Kamalist at Mardin and managed to get light military equipment.

against the British administration in Iraq. They argued

> We fought for the liberation of all the Arab lands. Then you came here and have now proclaimed yourself King of an independent Syria. But we are Iraqis and Iraq is under British occupation. Did we fight to get rid of the Turks on our country, only to replace them by the British?.... Give us arms and money and send with us your brother Zaid. We shall then organize guerilla bands in the north of Iraq.[1]

Faysal objected, but gave way at last to the extent of presenting them with five thousand Egyptian pounds. They obtained some arms and ammunition and proceeded to Dayr which was turned into a base for military operations and propaganda against the British administration in Iraq.[2] Unlike the 'Askari-Nuri group, the militant officers, now looked to the Kamalist movement for support.[3]

The Iraqi force under the leadership of Jamil Madfa'i, an 'Ahd member who had fought in the Hijaz Army, moved north of the Khabur river in the direction of Mosul. With the collaboration of the surrounding tribes, e.g. the Shammar and part of Dulaym under Nirjis Qu'ud, and of the active branch of the 'Ahd society in Mosul, raids were launched on the British lines of communication between Mosul and Baghdad during April and May, 1920. As a prelude to an attack on the city of Mosul plans were made in early June for an attack on a village west of Mosul called Tal-'Afar. On 4th June Tal 'Afar fell into the hands of the tribes and the Iraqi officers, though not before two British officers and fourteen soldiers had been killed. The British,

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1 Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, p. 146, see footnote.
2 Ibid.

reacting very differently from the way they had behaved in Dayr Zur, quickly despatched reinforcements to the scene, which were able to reoccupy Tal 'Afar on the 9th, after several clashes with the tribesmen. The Iraqi officers were forced to withdraw to Dayr, and their withdrawal marked the end of the last serious attempt against the British in Iraq. All hopes of further resistance soon faded as a result of the fall of Damascus, the Syrian capital, to French troops in July, 1920. The Amir Faysal and his government was overthrown, and with the French in Damascus and the British in Iraq the few remaining militant Iraqi officers decided in August to fall back to Raqa in North Syria and attempt to establish an independent enclave with Turkish support.[1] But the odds were overwhelming, and they soon dispersed.

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1 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 134-135.

Chapter 8

The Rising

The 1920 rising or revolution, as nationalists prefer to call it, is a major landmark in the development of Iraqi national consciousness. The rising resulted from the coming together of four dissatisfied groups, the tribal communities, the Shi'i religious communities, the urban masses with a leadership of notables and intellectuals, and the Iraq community outside Iraq, primarily the Iraqi officers in Syria. The evacuation of British forces and independence became the rallying point around which all four groups united. But each group reached that stage independently, as a result of various motives which were not necessarily the same or compatible. Moreover, not all the people in these groups joined the rising: some drifted along with it, others remained passive. The rising began as a peaceful political demonstration, and only the tribes, after an abortive attempt by the officers, put teeth into it and thus transformed it into a sort of war of liberation. Independence and Arab government were the objectives, but what these terms exactly stood for was open to a wide range of interpretations. In the previous chapters I have tried to assess separately the development of the groups concerned. In this chapter I will examine the final steps which united them in a popular rising, and the contribution of each group, and how it conceived the rising.

The Role of the Iraqi Officers

The Iraqi officers and their political organ the 'Ahd Society in Syria had done much to promote the development of nationalism in Iraq. The literature of the 'Ahd and its representatives served as a link between Iraq

and the Arab liberation movements in other Arab countries. The 'Ahd branches in Baghdad and Mosul became transmitting stations for 'Ahd propaganda. The 'Ahd in Syria publicized the case of Iraq independence at the international level through their petitions to the Peace Conference, the British government and the American commission of enquiry which visited Syria in Summer 1919. Initially the 'Ahd was favourably inclined towards Britain, and it was only after the long delay in fulfilling the promise to create an Arab government in Iraq that a militant faction of the 'Ahd began to contemplate the use of force against the British administration in Iraq. The military activities in Dayr al-Zur during 1919 and early 1920, which had achieved some success partly because of the political agreement between the British and French governments, encouraged militancy and the raid in early June, 1920 on the village of Tal 'Afar. These two events demonstrated to the people of Iraq the vulnerability of the British military administration.

Contrary to British belief, the Syrian regime and the 'Ahd Society did not pour money into Iraq for propaganda purposes, most probably because they had little money and depended for what they had on British aid. Limited sums were, however, spent on the military activities at Dayr al-Zur;[1] and a small sum was taken by Jamil Madfa'i to Baghdad during his mission in 1919 to patch up the differences between the two major nationalist organisations the 'Ahd branch and Haras party. It is difficult to know how much Jamil distributed, but according to a British secret police report for the week

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1 Zeine, Arab Struggle for Independence, p. 146.

ending 6th September, 1919, both Shaykh Sa'id and Hamdi Bachachi were given T£ 500, and an unknown amount was given to Sayid Muhammad al-Sadr.[1] 'Ali Bazirkan, a leading member of the Haras party wrote, that to his knowledge, T£ 700 was distributed by Jamil Madfa'i in Baghdad and a further T£ 600 was distributed by Jamil in Mosul.[2] Ahmad al-Da'ud, another active politician and participant in the rising said that only £500 was received in Baghdad from outside.[3] On one point we can be sure, that no money from Syria reached the Middle Euphrates tribes or the Shi'i holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

Ironically, once a popular rising had begun in Iraq during June 1920, the 'Ahd in Syria failed to support it, either because of their weakness or from differences of policy. An important part of the 'Ahd, led by Nuri Sa'id and Ja'far 'Askari, was appeased by the change in the policy of the British government in May, 1920, which pointed to the creation of an Arab government with British advisers under the League of Nations Mandate. Nuri Sa'id telegraphed on 1st May, 1920, to his friends in Baghdad saying that:

> During my stay in London became convinced that Britain who liberated the Arab countries remains sympathetic to the Iraq cause and within a few weeks the question will be settled in the Peace Conference according to the wishes of the people by the institution of, at all events, National Government. You may acquaint the public for expression of gratitude to British Government.[4]

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1 F.O. 371/4151/150751.
2 Bazirkan, The True Events in the Iraqi Revolution, pp. 160-161.
3 Far'un, The Iraqi Revolution of 1920, p. 404. See also F.O. 371/5230/E11753. Report of conversation between Yusuf Swaydi and Sayid Talib. 28 July, 1920.
4 F.O. 371/5226/E4539. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 5th May, 1920. Cited Nuri Sa'id's telegram and Wilson commented on the telegram: "It is perhaps unnecessary for me to urge the inadvisability of making any communication in London to Nuri Pasha with regard to Mesopotamia. He in no sense represents Mesopotamian interests..."

This telegram was a result of Nuri's talk with H. Young of the Foreign Office. After the rising had taken place, Nuri Sa'id offered in early August, 1920, to help the British authorities in repressing it.[1] Similarly, Ja'far 'Askari offered in late June, 1920, to resign his position in Syria and to go to Baghdad to help to remove the misunderstanding of the Syrian government by the British administration in Iraq.[2] And as the rising progressed Ja'far's views were reported to be:

> He thinks that as soon as Cox announces his intention to set up an Arab Government, the Mesopotamians who are the back bone of the resistance will fall away from Ajaimi; .... He thinks that as soon as we can organise propaganda, and also persuade them by our deeds of our intentions, the "war" will at once cease. The pro-British Arabs are the vast majority: there are a few, headed by Yasin, who are pro-Turks; and these, Jaffar believes, are animated by motives of personal ambition rather than genuine patriotism.[3]

Thabit 'Abd al-Nur, another leading 'Ahd member from Mosul, also approached the British in October, 1920, during a stay in Paris, and recommended co-operation with the 'Ahd in pacifying the rising in Iraq.[4]

As the rising progressed in Iraq, British officials who had to a large extent attributed it to the Kamalist movement, began to envisage the use of the 'Ahd society as a counter to the Kamalist movement. Earl Curzon wrote:

> One of the principal dangers, not only to British policy in Mesopotamia, but to British policy elsewhere, is the relation between Mustapha Kemal and the Mesopotamian extremists.

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1 F.O. 371/5229/E10329. From India Office to General Nuri Sa'id, Haifa, dated 16th August, 1920.
2 F.O. 371/5227/E7675. Lord Allenby (Alexandria), July 1st, 1920.
3 F.O. 371/5231/12841. S. S. Morea, dated 24.9.1920, addressed to Mr. Montagu, signed by C. C. Garbett.
4 F.O. 371/5231/E12820. From Secretary of State to High Commissioner, Mesopotamia, dated 13th October, 1920.

> Mustapha Kemal will promise help in establishing their independence and will certainly intend to substitute for such independence later on, reincorporation in the Ottoman dominions. It is necessary therefore to begin as soon as possible to work for Arab Independence of a kind which will lead to division between Turks and Arabs and amity between Arabs and British.[1]

And in October, 1920, the Secretary of State telegraphed to the High Commissioner: "If we are to make any use of El 'Ahd it is desirable not to defer our overtures until its leading members as Nuri are definitely committed to our enemies".[2]

Thus the 'Ahd society in Syria, which had helped to pave the way for the 1920 rising in Iraq, had broken up, and an influential section of it had turned against the rising. The small militant group which led the attacks in the Dayr and Tal 'Afar had small chance of success from the beginning. Their activities were far from organised, dissension prevailed among the leaders (e.g. Ramadhan Shilash contested the authority of Maulud and acted independently of the 'Ahd and the other officers) and some members seemed preoccupied with the illegal business of gold smuggling to Iraq, where it fetched high prices.[3] Many of the other officers who went to Dayr in response to Maulud's call for the liberation and defence of the Arab lands in March 1920, soon found themselves disillusioned with no money or troops to fight with. Ahmad Naji Bachachi, who was in command at Mayadin, was reported to have said in a talk early in May 1920 with a man called Fatuh, who

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1 F.O. 371/5229/10440. Foreign Office, dated September 11th, 1920, to the Under Secretary of State, India Office, signed by J. A. C. Tilley.
2 F.O. 371/5231/E13272. From Secretary of State to High Commissioner, Mesopotamia, dated 23rd October, 1920.
3 The Iraqi officer, Nuri Fatah was involved in this business.

apparently worked for the British administration:

> I want very much to come to Baghdad. Could the Khatun get me permission? Fattuh said, "Come with me now." He replied "I am afraid of what the English may do to me if I don't get permission to come. They look upon me and the rest of us as enemies, but what's the good of my staying here with these people? We have no troops and no money and the whole thing is mad. I would like to get back to Baghdad and settle down to trade."[1]

The small number of officers had to rely on the support of the surrounding tribesmen, which tied their hands by making them dependent on the tribal shaykhs. Lastly, all their hopes were shattered by the fall of Syria to the French and the dispersal which followed. Nor was it easy for the officers to rejoin the Turks. There were old quarrels between them which prevented Iraqi officers who had defected to the British during the war from falling back on the Turks, when the door was opened to them by the Kamalists. As soon as they got the chance after the establishment of an Arab government, almost all the officers returned to Iraq, and after the institution of Faysal as King of Iraq the Iraqi officers rallied to him, even the militant members of the Iraqi 'Ahd, to become the backbone of the new regime in Iraq.

The Role of the Urban Centres

Baghdad was the centre of the independence movement and the Haras party was its leading organisation. The general character of the movement during the early months of 1920 became progressively more and more pan-Arab and pan-Islamic, hostile to Britain both as an occupying power and as a threat

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1 F.O. 371/5076/E8007. Note by Miss G. L. Bell dated May 22, 1920.
2 F.O. 371/5232/E15853. From High Commissioner, dated 13th December, 1920. From information given by T. 'Askari, who fled from Dayr as he heard of the news of the French advance. Iraqi officers were reported to be afraid to join the Turkish nationalist force at Mardyn.

to Islam. This attitude was partly due to events taking place outside Iraq: the Egyptian rising of March 1919; the victorious Kamalist movement in Turkey; the explosive situation in Persia; the creation of a socialist Russia, whose forces and propaganda were rapidly penetrating Persia, and through Persian pilgrims and newspapers reaching Iraq. Even Syria, although the regime was basically pro-British, had become a focus of discontent and had brought about border clashes with the British forces. In all these areas the British were on the defensive or in retreat. The news of the Egyptian rising, wrote al-'Umari, made the people belittle British prestige and power.[1] In January, 1920, a police report commented that "Bolshevik talk in Baghdad is on the increase", and in another report during the same period it was reported that the "chief topic of conversation during the week have been the advance of the Bolsheviks".[2] At the end of April, 1920, Russian troops entered Baku and in the middle of May the port of Enzeli was occupied by the Russian troops. As far as local opinion in Iraq was concerned, both incidents demonstrated Britain's weakness and the Soviets lost no time in spreading anti-British propaganda. In May, 1920, a Bolshevik manifesto written in Arabic was circulated in the Middle East, urging Arabs to rise in the name of Islam.

> Russia with all the power she has helped the East to restore its religious traditions, and religious places and freedom just as the people in the East please.

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1 Al-'Umari, Political Destinies of Iraq, Vol. 3, p. 99.

2 F.O. 371/5081/E13603. Extracts from Baghdad Police Reports, January-June, 1920. From report dated 17.1.1920. And in a police report dated 20.3.1920, it mentioned the establishment of "Jam'yat al-Balshafiya" (the Bolshevik Society); however, there is no evidence in any other source of such a society.

> Now, as Russia is helping you O! You the Moslems of the East whether Turks or Arabs, Indians or Persians, you should also assist her by all the means in your power that she might be able to bring your rights to light.[1]

The Turkish revival under the Kamalist movement had a tremendous effect on the masses, particularly in Mosul, where the people owed their loyalty first to Islam. Contacts with the Kamalists had already been established by Iraqis in Syria and by tribal shaykhs, such as 'Ajimi al-Sa'dun, who remained loyal to the Turks and became a link between the nationalist Turks and the tribes. The impact of this development was expressed in an official letter from the general secretary of the 'Ahd branch in Mosul to the centre in Damascus, dated 30th October, 1919, in which he expressed his and his colleagues' distrust of the Allies and particularly of Britain, which had betrayed the Arabs and broken their promises to them, and argued for a broad-based anti-British movement.

> ... they imagine that there is no salvation for the Arab, in particular, and the Islam in general ... except by the agreement of the Arab, Turks with the Bolsheviks and Germany and Austria.... Many of the Iraqi at the present are more inclined towards the Turks than to the government of Hijaz ... and we do not want a union with the Bolsheviks and the acceptance of their dogma and its application in our country, but making use of their power and name in threatening those who had betrayed us.[2]

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1 F. O. 882/Vol. 24. Arab Bureau Papers, Document SY/20/17. Enclosed in a despatch from the Residency, Cairo, to Foreign Office, London. Letter from Amir Faysal to Viscount Allenby, dated 7 June, 1920.

2 A. Fayyad, The Iraqi Revolution of 1920, Baghdad, 1963, pp. 159-161 cited the letter from Ra'uf al-Ghulami, General Secretary of the 'Ahd branch in Mosul to the 'Ahd central committee, which was published by Sada al-Ahrar newspaper, Mosul, No. 204, dated 19 Rajab, 1372 (3rd April, 1953). The above is a liberal translation rendered by the author.

The equivocal attitude of the British government and the increasing criticism of British policy in the British press and parliament, encouraged the independence movement to press on with its campaign against the British administration in Iraq.[1]

Among the pan-Arab elements there were three trends. The predominant one was the advocacy of complete independence unfettered by any mandate. The second group stood somewhere between advocacy of British administration and advocacy of complete independence. They thought in terms of Arab rule with British help and protection. They formed a minority group within the 'Ahd branch and among the older notables, and were not organized in any party. Thirdly, the pro-Turkish elements, mostly ex-officials and notables of non-Arab origin, saw in independence freedom to re-establish links with the new Turkey on equal partnership. When a Turkish grand national assembly was convened in April, 1920, these elements tried to send representatives to it, although without success. When the question of choosing a mandatory power for Iraq was raised, they wished for a Turkish mandate; failing that, they opposed any form of European tutelage.

Co-operation between the advocates of complete Arab independence and the pro-Turks, along with a rapprochement between leadership of the Sunnis and Shi'is, made possible the creation of a coalition leadership for the independence movement. This was, socially, a combination of the intelligentzia, local merchants squeezed by the spreading influence of foreign, Jewish and Christian traders, landowners and notables, men of religion and theologians,

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 255.

and ex-officials. It was a political leadership devoid of any social or economic programme and even in the political sphere independence and the evacuation of the British administration and forces provided almost the only common ground. The leadership was ineffective because of its composition and because of the uneasy relations between its members. The social status of the leadership gave it its importance rather than the possession of political and leadership skills, with the result that each man considered himself the equal if not the better of the others. Moreover, even when the leadership was agreed it had to take account of communal factors: a Sunni leader could not approach the Shi'i masses directly, but must work through the Shi'i leadership.

A leading characteristic of the leadership of the independence movement in Baghdad and Mosul was the lack of efficient organization. Decisions were taken in Ijtima'at (meetings) held in the traditional manner at the house of a leading notable. When issues were raised those with most social influence would usually lead the conversation,[1] and the remainder were expected to convey the decisions so taken to their own followers and circles. Conversation was often discursive and secrecy was hard to maintain. Indeed, the British administration usually learned what had happened at meetings.

Baghdad maintained informal contacts with the Middle Euphrates tribes and Najaf and Karbala and on April 23rd, 1920 (3rd Sha'ban, 1338)

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1 The Shi'i dignatory, Muḥammad al-Sadr, a Shi'i leading Mujtahid in Kadhimayn used to preside at [illegible] the Ḥaras party meetings, and the Naqsabandi, an elderly man of high religious status was head of the 'Ahd branch in Baghdad.

two official representatives from Najaf and Hilla attended a meeting in Baghdad with the leaders of the independence movement to discuss future action. The two representatives were Hadi Zwayn, a shi'i sayid from Hilla, who came of a well-known and respected family, and 'Abd al-Muhsin Shilash, a leading Najafi merchant with widespread dealings with the Euphrates tribes. Among the leading Baghdadi whom they met were the following:

Hamdi Baban - A prominent Kurdish notable, a wealthy landowner who was disheartened by the British decision to prevent him and other landowners in Hilla from evicting their sarkals without the British political officer's consent. His former wide influence in the Turkish administration had been greatly curbed. The meeting was held in his house.

Muhammad al-Sadr - A prominent Shi'i 'Alim in Kadhimayn, who came of a rich family.

Yusuf Swaydi - A Sunni notable and landowner who had participated in pan-Arab activities since 1908. He was the Sunni counterpart of al-Sadr.

Ja'far Abu al-Timan - A Shi'i merchant with wide contacts with Persia and one of the very active nationalists.

Rif'at Chadirchi - A Sunni, who had held various offices under the Ottomans. A landowner in his seventies.

Shaykh Sa'id Naqshabandi - A Sunni notable and man of religion.

'Abd al-Wahab al-Na'ib - Brother of the above, and a judge.

Fu'ad al-Daftari - A Baghdadi, in his seventies. A Sunni who had held various high positions under the Ottomans, his last position being that of representative of Baghdad in the Ottoman Parliament.

Shaykh Ahmad al-Da'ud - A Sunni, from a family of religious status, who had worked for a period in the Auqaf Department, but was dismissed by the British administration for mal-administration.

Fatah Pasha - A Sunni from Karkuk by origin, a landowner who had held high positions during the Ottoman rule.

There were other less important people at the meeting, but from the above list it is apparent that members of the Haras party and the 'Ahd, as well as pro-Turks were present. There are no detailed reports of the discussion that took place, apart from a report that Sayid Hadi Zwayn gave those present the impression that the Middle Euphrates was ripe for revolt and that when he enquired as to the likely position of the Baghdadi in the event of a rising, Abu al-Timan replied that Baghdad was ready to go as far as the tribes and Najaf and Karbala would go.

One decision was reached by the meeting, that Abu al-Timan should visit Najaf and investigate the situation on the spot.[1] Apparently Abu al-Timan was impressed by his visit to Najaf, which was the scene of intense political activity. By the time he returned to Baghdad the news of the San Remo Conference decision to grant the mandate for Iraq to Britain had become public knowledge and had set the whole political agitation ablaze. Because the word "Mandate" was at first rendered in Arabic as "Wisaya" (guardianship) it was felt to be particularly offensive, although later in the year a more neutral word "Intidab" (the chosen or selected, and in this case the government selected) was adopted. On 20th Sha'ban, 1338 (10th May, 1920), Ja'far Abu al-Timan attended a meeting similar to that of 3rd Sha'ban where he reported on the highly inflammable situation in Najaf and Karbala. As at the previous meeting no positive step was taken, except for an agreement to attempt to step up the opposition to the mandate.[2] On the following day at a meeting

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1 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 142-143. See also Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, Second Edition, Saida, 1965, pp. 61-62.
2 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 143-144.

held by the leading members of the Haras party it was decided to commence a political campaign against the mandate and to demand independence for Iraq. The method chosen was to hold a weekly "Maulud" (Celebration of the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad) as well as a "Ta'ziya" (Shi'i ritual mourning the martyrdom of the Imam al-Husayn) in all the important mosques in Baghdad and Kadhimayn, both Shi'i and Sunni, after which Khatibs (orators) would deliver patriotic speeches calling for independence and the rejection of the British mandate.

The pro-Turkish elements held a separate meeting on 13th May, 1920, to consider their reaction to the Mandate. The meeting was held in the house of Fu'ad al-Daftari at which were present: Fatah Pasha, Ahmad Awraq (a Turkish officer); 'Abdulla Sabri; Haji Dalmi al-Bimbashi (a Turkish police officer); Najib Affindi ex-Yuzbashi; Fu'ad Effendi (ex-Mudir of Saniya); Murad Bey, brother of Shawkat Pasha; Salih Bey Qaymmaqam of Radif; Mustafa Bey al-Atrash; Madhat Bey ex-Bimbashi (police officer); Qasim Raji ex-Bimbashi, and a few others.[1] At the meeting it was decided to reject the British mandate and demand a Turkish mandate or alternatively complete independence. As a means of organising themselves it was suggested that a new society to be called "Fida al-Watan" be established.[2] The 'Ahd branch failed to take any action and its members either drifted with the Haras or remained passive, vaguely disapproving of the new trend of events.

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1 F.O. 371/5076/E8448. Secret. Mesopotamia Police, Abstract of Intelligence, dated Baghdad, 22nd May, 1920, No. 21.

2 F.O. 371/4152/167027. From Baghdad, dated 27th December, 1919, and some pro-Turk Baghdadi contemplated sending deputies to Turkish parliament.

Within a few days the Mauluds had mobilised the masses into a solid anti-British force. Rhetorical appeals to religion and patriotism had a tremendous effect and independence became a household word. The British administration took no immediate action to suppress these Mauluds, but on 6th Ramadhan, 1338 (25 May, 1920), 'Isa 'Abd al-Qadir, a young employee in the Auqaf Department was arrested for delivering a nationalist poem, which was considered "dangerous to public order".[1] But such a half-hearted measure, instead of stemming opposition, caused a great reaction, and in a meeting held in the house of Ja'far Abu al-Timan on the same day, it was decided to call for a mass demonstration on the following day to protest against the imprisonment of 'Abd al-Qadir and to elect delegates to represent the movement in talks with the administration. A meeting was accordingly held in Haydar Khana Mosque and a delegation of 15 members was elected. The appearance of two British armoured cars on the same day led to the first instance of violence, causing the death of one Arab. The following day A. T. Wilson sent for four of the leading men at the Haydar Khana meeting, Ja'far Abu al-Timan, Shaykh Ahmad Da'ud, 'Ali Bazirkan, and Muhammad Mahdi al-Bassir. The latter subsequently reported the meeting in a book where he says that Wilson told the four men that he was responsible for the preservation of order and that although he considered them responsible for the recent disturbances, he was not going to repress them provided they refrained from further acts of violence.[2] A. T. Wilson commented later that:

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1 Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration in Iraq, 1914-1920, p. 140.
2 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, p. 150.

> The leaders were officially warned that no breach of the peace would be permitted ... I decided against resorting at that moment to measures of repression. I have come to the conclusion in the light of after events that this was a grave error of judgement on my part. I underestimated the influence of the Nationalists; and the susceptibility to their propaganda and that of the dissident "'ulama" of the mass of the people on the Middle Euphrates. I knew that we were on the eve of initiating an indigenous Government. I was most reluctant to imprison or deport members of a group some of whom would almost certainly, within a few months, be called upon to assist us in the task of forming a Government.[1]

A few days later the nationalist delegation of fifteen, called the "Mandubin" (the delegated) asked the Civil Commissioner to receive them to discuss the political future of Iraq. A. T. Wilson agreed but to dilute the effect of the invitation he asked some forty notables and merchants, including Jews and Christians of known pro-British inclinations,[2] to attend the meeting. The Mandubin were mostly elderly notables and merchants who included some 'Ahd members but were chiefly supporters of Haras. In an attempt to outmanoeuvre the Civil Commissioner the Mandubin asked most of the notables invited by Wilson to attend a preliminary meeting to discuss, before their combined meeting with Wilson, the future of Iraq. This preliminary meeting was successfully held in the house of Ra'uf al-Chadirchi and there was general agreement on the following points:

1. Establishment of an Iraqi Congress or Assembly to represent the country and decide upon the future government of Iraq.

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 254.

2 See appendix with the names of Mandubin and invited notables. The number of the latter varied: in Cmd. 1061, The Review of the Civil Administration in Iraq, 1914-1920, p. 141, the number of invited notables was put as 25.

2. Freedom of the Press.

3. The lifting of restrictions on postal and telegraphic communications within the country and with the outside world.

The meeting with the Civil Commissioner took place in the "Sarai" (government quarter) on 2nd June, 1920, and was attended by all the fifteen mandubin. However, only nine of the other notables invited by the Civil Commissioner were present.[1] A. T. Wilson opened the meeting with a speech: after referring to the Anglo-French declaration of November 8th, 1918, and Article 22 of the League of Nations Treaty he went on to say:

> These declarations represent the policy of H.M.'s Government ... (which) desire to set up a National Government in this country and it is their intention that this shall be done as soon as possible. No one regrets more than I do the delay that has occurred. It is due to causes beyond our control.... I can assure you that those individuals in Baghdad who have sought from patriotic or other motives to hasten the establishment of a Civil Government here by incitements to violence and by rousing the passions of ignorant men are doing and indeed have already done a great disservice to the country.... It is my duty ... to warn you that any further incitements to violence and any future appeals to prejudice will be met by vigorous action by the Military authorities and by the Civil Administration.

Then he turned to the question of the future government of Iraq and said:

> ... it is our intention as soon as we can do so to consult public opinion, and for weeks past, as most of you are aware, I have been in consultation with H.M.'s Government and with the principal officers of the Civil Administration with the object of devising a Provisional Civil Government which can function until we have had time in consultation with you to devise a permanent scheme.
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> Proposals that have been made to H.M.'s Government in this connection have been in print for some weeks past.

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1 The Baghdad Times newspaper, of June 3rd, 1920.

> H.M.'s Government have found themselves unable to authorize me to make them public until accounts have been settled with Turkey, or, at all events, some progress made to that end, but I may tell you that, broadly speaking, the lines on which we have been proceeding are as follows:
>
> We desire to establish a Council of State under an Arab President to hold office until the question of the final constitution of 'Iraq has been submitted to the Legislative Assembly which we propose to call. The public will thus be given the opportunity of forming a considered judgement and of making their views known through the Legislative Assembly when formed. There is no advantage to be gained by hasty action.[1]

The reply of the Mandubin was in a written statement presented by Yusuf al-Swaydi containing the three points previously agreed upon. However, the two most prominent members of the Mandubin, Sayid Muḥammad al-Sadr and al-Swaydi added in conversation two important points. The first came from al-Sadr who emphasised that their movement was a peaceful one.[2] The second point was raised by al-Swaydi, who took up the point made by the Civil Commissioner when he declared Britain's intention to create a national government, and said that immediate measures should be taken to establish a national government which could settle the mandate question with the British authorities. Probably to Wilson's disappointment, men like 'Abd al-Majid al-Shawi and Jamil Zahawi concurred in the views presented by the Mandubin, although they had been invited by Wilson.[3] Other notables from the invited group did not participate in the discussion or raise any objections, probably

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 255-256. It should be noted that the British government's reasons for withholding their consent to Wilson's constitutional proposals were partly peace with Turkey and partly, but more important, disagreement with the proposals.

2 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 69.

3 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, p. 172.

because they felt that the issue was between the Mandubin and the Civil Commissioner, and also because of the nationalist demonstrations which were taking place around the Sarai at the time of the meeting. Wilson described the demonstrations:

> On entering and leaving the "sarai", however, Bonham-Carter, Howell, Balfour, and I were greeted with shouts of abuse and hisses from groups of students and ex-Turkish officials. It was the first demonstration of its kind and was intended as a sort of declaration of war.[1]

For Wilson the demands of the Mandubin were unacceptable, because he thought that the real intention of the delegates was to use the early establishment of a national assembly or convention as a springboard for a declaration of independence and the rejection of the mandate, on lines similar to those followed by the Syrian Convention in March, 1920.[2] As a matter of fact the nationalists had never contemplated such a move. But at the time Wilson was in a precarious position: on the one hand he was at loggerheads with his government and the tension between the two reached its highest level with Wilson's telegram of "Govern or Cox" dated 9th June, 1920; on the other hand, in Baghdad Wilson's local supporters were losing ground to the nationalists who were increasingly open in their condemnation of the administration. Later, in mid June, the British government decided to reject Wilson's stand and to pursue a "middle course" policy. Wilson was instructed

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 257. See also Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, London, 1927, Vol. II, p. 489. A letter dated June 14th, 1920. "The Nationalist propaganda increases. There are constant meetings in mosques.... The extremists are out for independence without mandate.... They have created a reign of terror; if anyone says boo in the bazaar it shuts like an oyster. There has been practically no business done for the last fortnight..."

2 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 257.

to publish immediately the following statement which appeared on June 20, 1920, in the local press:

> H.M.'s Government having been entrusted with the Mandate for Iraq anticipate that the Mandate will constitute Iraq an independent State under guarantee of the League of Nations and subject to the Mandate of Great Britain, that it will lay on them the responsibility for the maintenance of internal peace and external security, and will require them to formulate an Organic Law to be framed in consultation with the people of Iraq and with due regard to the rights, wishes and interests of all the communities of the country. The Mandate will contain provisions to facilitate the development of Iraq as a self-governing State until such time as it can stand by itself, when the Mandate will come to an end.
>
> The inception of this task H.M.'s Government have decided to entrust to Sir Percy Cox, who will accordingly return to Baghdad in the autumn, and will resume his position on the termination of the existing Military Administration as Chief British Representative in Iraq.
>
> Sir Percy Cox will be authorized to call into being, as provisional bodies, a Council of State under an Arab President and a General Assembly representative of and freely elected by the populace of Iraq. And it will be his duty to prepare in consultation with the General Assembly, the permanent Organic Law.[1]

It was partly because of the determination of the British government to try to mend its bridges with the local people that Wilson felt obliged to continue to avoid a showdown with the nationalists. The announcement of the return of Sir Percy Cox, coupled with another announcement made by Wilson in which he issued a stern warning that Britain, contrary to certain rumours, intended to keep troops in Iraq and fulfil its duty in maintaining peace and order, were intended to check the rising anti-British trend and strengthen the "moderates".[2] Furthermore in a dramatic move,

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1 Ibid., p. 263.

2 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, p. 265. Also see Compilation of Proclamations, Notifications, etc. from September, 1919 to 30th September, 1920, Baghdad, 1920, p. 100.

Wilson soon after Cox's departure on June 20th secretly approached the nationalists, with whom he held a secret meeting at midnight in the house of a pro-British notable 'Abd al-Qadir Khudhayri.

> After an interchange of courtesies and some small talk on foreign politics, we turned to the business of the evening. My opponents listened with interest and with some sympathy to my explanation of the cause of the intolerable delays of the past two years....
>
> They replied that they accepted as true all that I had said "but", they added, "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed". It was known to the world, they said, that the Mandatory system was a disguised form of annexation.... The scheme that I had outlined was inadequate and unacceptable. For them in 'Iraq to accept anything short of complete independence would be disastrous, for it would involve the acceptance of a similar scheme under French auspices in Syria....
>
> I warned them that H.M.'s Government would be compelled to maintain, or if need be to restore, order by military force - I begged them to realize the bloodshed that this policy must entail. They replied that it would be a small price to pay for independence.... They answered ... that as between nations liberty was not given, but taken; that a rebellion, whether successful or not, was not only the best but the sole way to advance the cause of freedom ... once the Mandate is granted and its terms settled we shall lose the chance of obtaining complete independence; nothing short of this will satisfy us, nothing else is worth having.... After nearly two hours of conversation on these lines, conducted with courtesy and restraint, it became clear that no compromise or understanding was possible.[1]

On June 30th, 1920, the Mandubin said in a written reply to Wilson's announcement about Cox's return that they could see no reason for the delay in convening a national assembly until the Autumn. At this point the armed rising in the Middle Euphrates began with a minor dispute in Rumaytha. Wilson's position, since the announcement of Cox's return in the

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1 Wilson, A Clash of Loyalties, pp. 268-269.

Autumn, had now been reduced to that of a caretaker, waiting to be relieved in the Autumn; meanwhile, he played his last card in attempting to contain the independence movement by peaceful means, before reverting to force. In an announcement, which appeared in the local press on 12th July, 1920, Wilson said:

> H.M.'s Government has authorised the Acting Civil Commissioner to invite the leading representatives of various localities to co-operate with the Civil Administration in framing proposals under which election to the General Assembly will, in due course, be held, and in making the necessary arrangements for electoral areas, the preparation of the registers of electors and other matters preliminary to the election of the General Assembly. Inasmuch as there are at present in Iraq individuals who were the representatives of Iraq in the Turkish Senate or the Turkish Chamber of Deputies, and who therefore have experience in matters relating to elections and in the discussion of public affairs, all these ex-Senators and ex-Deputies have been invited by the Civil Commissioner for the abovementioned purpose.... This Committee will be invited to elect a President from among their number, and to co-opt additional members from areas which, owing to the absence or death of the former Deputies, or from some other cause, are not already represented.[1]

The Electoral Committee was to bring these neglected elements into play[2] but even more important to keep the politically minded people and the nationalists busy until Cox's return.[3] The man chosen to carry this plan through was none

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1 Cmd. 1061. Review of Civil Administration in Iraq, 1914-1920, p. 142.

2 Ibid.

3 The following are the names of ex-Deputies invited to the Committee: Sayid Talib, Fu'ad al-Daftari, Fu'ad Saniya, Murad Sulayman, Jamil al-Zahawi, Sami Sulayman, Sasson Ḥisqal, 'Abd al-Razaq al-Ni'ma, Sulayman Faydhi, 'Abdulla al-Zuhayr, 'Abd al-Majid al-Shawi, 'Abd al-Karim al-Sa'dun, Nadhim Naftaji, Da'ud Yusfani, Ḥasan Bey, Ḥaj Sa'id, 'Abd al-Wahab al-Qirtas.
The following were the co-opted members:
Sayid Da'ud al-Naqib, 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Ḥaydari, Fakhri al-Jamil, 'Abd al-Jabar Khayat, Izzat Pasha, Rashid al-'Umari, Asif Qasim Agha, Sayid Zayd al-Naqib, Khudhayr Mula Farḥan, Khayr Alla, 'Abd al-Razaq al-Amir, Mahmud al-Ma'tuq al-Ni'ma, Muzaḥim Bachadhi, Naji Sawkat, Robin Sumaykh, 'Abd al-Ghani Kuba, Baqir Shabibi, Sayid Muḥammad Sadr, Yusuf Swaydi, Ja'far Abu Timan. The last four declined the invitation.

other than Sayid Talib, and a diversion at this point is necessary to trace Sayid Talib's position from the date of his exile to India at the beginning of the war until his sudden appearance in July, 1920, in Baghdad. Probably it is best to start with Sayid Talib's explanation of why he was sent to India. In a letter to Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy of India, Sayid Talib said about himself:

> I belong to the party of Sultan Abdul Hamid whom the Young Turks deposed. I had never been friends with Young Turks. A little before the war broke out they wanted to make peace with me. Then I gave my word of honour that I would do nothing against them. At the same time they were bound not to do anything against me. When the war did break out I could not actively help the English. When Bassra was taken by the English Turkey seems to have thought it was due to my help. The English thought because I did not render any help to them that my leanings were towards Turkey. Under these circumstances I thought it was not safe for me to remain in Bassra and requested that I be sent to any place under the British. The English Government also thought that it would be good to me and good to the Government also that I should leave Bassra. I took the suggestion and at once left Bassra for Bombay. Ever since I came to India I have had nothing but kindness at the hands of the good Government of India, and I am highly grateful to it.[1]

It was in the same letter which was dated sometime between late July and early August, 1919, that Talib made his first approach to the British authorities offering to co-operate with them against the Turks. He argued that the atrocities of the Turks in recent times and their determination, once they could lay their hands on him, to hang him, made him free to break his word of honour given to them at the beginning of the war. Sayid Talib wrote:

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1 F.O. 371/2783/220355. The date is not given, but it should be according to the document in 1916, sometime between late July and early August.

> I am glad that Turkey has taken the initiative in freeing me from the word of honour given to her. As she has broken faith with me I am free now to help the English Government. With a clean conscience I could help the British in Mecca, Jiddah and other places in Arabia. The Sheriff of Mecca is right in having revolted against the tyranny of Turkey. I know the Sheriff well; he is a good friend of mine; .... I shall most willingly place myself at the disposal of the British Government and render it all the assistance I can. Before I was a friend of the English but could not render any help. Now I am not only a friend but an ally willing to place myself and my sources for any service in the cause of Britain. Though it may sound like boasting I can assure the Government of India that I can help them in Mesopotamia and Mecca...[1]

Sayid Talib was curtly thanked for his friendly offer, which was not accepted because "no useful employment can be found for his services at the present moment".[2]

Sayid Talib was left in exile with a generous allowance of Rs. 12.000 a month until late 1919, when he appealed again to the British authorities to allow him return to Basra and gave a written promise to serve British interests to the best of his ability.[3] A. T. Wilson, to whom the matter was referred in October, 1919, was hesitant and later in the year he gave his consent only on the condition that Talib should not take any part in politics.[4] On 8th February, 1920, Talib arrived at Basra. After a short

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1 F.O. 371/2783/220355.
2 Ibid. Confidential letter from the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, to the Acting Chief Secretary to the Governor of Madras, dated Simla, 15th September, 1916. From a minute by a Foreign Office official, "Saiyd Talib could scarcely be trusted for this sort of work, ..."
3 F.O. 371/4152/165248. Telegram from Political Officer, Egyptian force, Cairo, to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 16th October, 1919.
4 Ibid. See also F.O. 371/5231/E 12756.

visit to Baghdad, A. T. Wilson began to think better of Talib, but still found him difficult "to fit into local representative institutions".[1] However, once in Iraq, Sayid Talib, energetic and ever ambitious, was bound to make his presence felt; and the condition that he should not take part in politics was interpreted as not including active support of the British administration. Talib's opportunity for a return to public life came when the administration was fast losing ground to the nationalists and was desperate to counterbalance the influence of the nationalists. Although Wilson was well aware of Sayid Talib's history and character, he nonetheless summoned him on July 25th, to Baghdad, nominally for the purpose of establishing the Electoral Committee. Sayid Talib took the move to be a belated recognition of his abilities and of the British need for his services. Accordingly he set himself out to please the administration; at his first interview with the Civil Commissioner on July 25th, Sayid Talib expressed his doubts about the possibility of establishing an Arab government, such as was desired by the British government, at an early date and criticised the Baghdadi notables as unreliable, "of whom he said that one half had brains and no stomach and the other half were conversely endowed".[2] After that introduction he offered the following bargain:

> He was willing, nevertheless, to take the risk involved to his life by taking a leading part in local politics on the lines desired by us, provided that we guarantee him personal protection and support for himself and for his sons somewhat on the same lines as the guarantee we have given to the Sheikh

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1 F.O. 371/5231/E 1454.
2 F.O. 371/5228/E 9368. From a telegram from the Civil Commissioner, dated July 25th, 1920.

> of Mohammerah, accompanied, I gather, with some promise of financial support, as he is a man with practically no private means....[1]

Apparently Talib was given such an assurance and he quickly set to work.

In his contacts with the leaders of the independence movement Sayid Talib exploited his pre-war pan-Arab activities and, ironically, his deportation to India by the British, in order to improve his image among the post-war nationalists. According to the biographer of Sayid Muhammad Sadr, 'Abas 'Ali, Sayid Talib professed to the Sadr his support for the policy of the Mandubin.[2] But the conversation between Sayid Talib and Yusuf Swaydi on July 28th is most revealing not only about Sayid Talib, but also about the nationalists, although it should be noticed that Sayid Talib was himself a reporter.

> Yusuf Suwaidi began by saying that the nationalist party had been at work for six months and had accomplished marvels but it was a great disappointment that the notables of Basrah had refused their support. S. Talib in particular should have given them his powerful backing.... But now that he had come, even though it had been in answer to a British invitation, they were prepared to make him the leader. It was true that they had loudly expressed their desire to have 'Abdullah as Amir but that was only a ruse. The person they really wanted was Saiyid Talib.

Talib also mentioned further offers from the Swaydi, but knowing Talib, and that he was reporting the conversation to the British Civil Commissioner, one would not be wrong in assuming a certain amount of exaggeration. However, one point in the conversation about Syria is of importance, and it could be

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1 Ibid.
2 'A. 'Ali, Leader of the Iraqi Revolution, p. 74.

nearer the truth, since it was not directly connected with Talib.

> They were deeply disappointed with the Syrians. They expected money, troops and munitions of war in abundance. What had they received? A bare £16,000!

The other point of interest regarding the independence movement was when Talib enquired about the movement's programme. Yusuf Swaydi replied "No foreigners, no mandate, no interference from without": beyond that they had not made any programme. Lastly, Sayid Talib laid down his conditions for joining the movement:

1. The head of the 'Iraq State must be an 'Iraqi, a Sharif of the best blood and family of the 'Iraqi.
2. A committee must be formed of reputable and honourable men.
3. The policy of political propaganda and incitement to rebellion to be dropped at once.
4. The Ashraf of Baghdad and elsewhere who had not joined Yusuf Eff.'s party to be invited to take part in the Committee.

The first clause would have meant the end of the candidature of a son of the Sharif of Mecca and no doubt was intended to put Talib in his place; the second clause would have allowed the ex-deputies and other notables with pro-British views to have a stronger say; the fourth clause emphasised the same point; and lastly, the third clause would have led to the dismantling of the rising. In short, Talib was asking for total submission with no guarantee for the fulfilment of complete independence.[1] Sayid Talib seems either to have been too optimistic about his chances of success in harnessing the nationalists, or, more likely, to have been merely creating a good image for himself in the eyes of the Civil Commissioner. As it was, the

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1 F.O. 371/5230/E 11753. Note by Miss Bell of 28-7-20 on Sayid Talib's conversation with Yusuf Effendi regarding the Arab nationalist movement.

nationalists rejected Sayid Talib's overtures, and the four nationalists Sadr, Abu Timan, Swaydi, Shabibi, invited to join the Electoral Committee declined the offer, and suggested instead that the Electoral Committee should be elected according to the Ottoman election rules.[1] It was at this juncture that Wilson deemed it necessary to use force. He wrote on August 8th, 1920, in a letter to his parents:

> The moment we get one party together and working on same lines,[2] a more extreme party is formed to intimidate them, and as these people have little moral courage, any bold bad man who is not afraid to stick at murder has it his own way unless Government intervenes and arrests the extremists. But if I do so, I am at once accused of dragooning the people, preventing free speech and so on.[3]

A few days later, on 11th August, Wilson gave orders for the mass arrest of the leading members of the independence movement. Al-Swaydi, Ja'far Abu al-Timan and 'Ali Bazirkan fled to the tribal areas, but other leaders were arrested, among them Shaykh Ahmad al-Da'ud, Sabri Qasim Agha, Muhammad Mustafa al-Khalil, Mustafa Bey son of Yusuf Bey, Nuri Fatah Pasha, Rif'at al-Chadirchi and his son Ra'uf, and Fu'ad al-Daftari and his son. With the exception of the Daftaris and Chadirchi who were sent into exile in Constantinople, all were transported to Henjam, an island in the Persian Gulf.[4] 'Abd al-Majid Kana was charged with leading a gang with plans to assassinate pro-British notables and was consequently hanged on 23rd September 1920.[5] A

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1 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 180-182.
2 Reference to the Electoral Committee.
3 Marlowe, Late Victorian, p. 228.
4 F.O. 371/5080/E 13065. Mesopotamia Police Report, No. 35, dated 28th August, 1920.
5 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 186-187. Kana studied in Baghdad military school and was a member of the Haras party but when the rising began he established a party called Hisb al Difa' (Party of Defence).

few nationalist ex-army officers joined the tribal rising in the Middle Euphrates and Diyala.[1] But the arrests put an end to organised political activity in Baghdad, and the Baghdadi leaders were pushed into the background leaving the tribal shaykhs and the leaders of Najaf and Karbala in control. The lasting contribution of the Baghdad leaders was the creation of the first popular nationalist movement in the history of Iraq, although it was at the cost of suspicion between the Shi'i and Sunni and some personal animosities.[2]

The other two urban centres, Mosul and Basra, failed to play an active part in the nationalist movement. A half-hearted attempt was made in Mosul in June 1920 to draw up a Madhbata including the same demands as those presented by the Baghdadi Mandubin. But nothing came of the move, mainly because of the crushing of the Tal 'Afar rising and the fall in late July of the Arab government in Syria. The notables in Basra were by contrast hostile to the nationalists. Ahmad Pasha al-Sani' on behalf of the Basra Divisional Council, which represented all the leading notable families and merchants in Basra, said on June 22, 1920:

> You have all come to know of the recent disturbances which are taking place at Baghdad in the name of the so-called demands of rights....
>
> We people of Basrah wish for all that there is in the way of improvement and development of the country, but we are

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1 F.O. 371/5080/E 13065. Mesopotamia Police Report, No. 35, dated 28th August, 1920. The following ex-officers have been reported to be on Ba'quba side:- Rashid Shiblawi, Shakir Muhammad, Husayn 'Awni, 'Abd al-Jabar, Ibrahim Adham. Also see al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 132, cited 13 names of ex-officers who joined the rising in the Middle Euphrates.

2 Bazirkan, The Events of the Iraqi Revolution, p. 84. Baghdadi feared Persian influence on the Shi'i in the holy places might deviate the independence movement. Also, p. 212, Bazirkan accused the Swaydi and Sadr of exploiting the rising funds.

excused if we declare that we do not agree to impracticable demands and that we fully believe that this Government will execute the promises in her earliest possible time.[1]

The Role of the Shi'i Holy Centres

Najaf and Karbala were the first places to rise against the British after the occupation, but the March 1918 rising failed, partly because of insufficient religious backing and partly because the British used strong measures, including the institution of an effective siege followed by mass deportations and executions. Thereafter the British administration encountered little effective opposition in the Shi'i holy cities until Wilson's plebiscite during late 1918 and early 1919. Then independence became the rallying cry of the discontented.

In the Shi'i holy cities politics and religion went so closely hand in hand that no political movement could be successful without the backing of the leading 'Ulama and Mujtahids and no religious leader could afford to ignore the views of his followers, to whose adherence the Mujtahid partly owed his authority. This reciprocal relationship was of great importance and to a large extent explains both the failure of the rising in March, 1918, and the differences which arose at the time of the plebiscite. On both occasions the Shi'i Chief Mujtahid, Kadhum al-Yazdi, supported the British administration, with the result that many Shi'i were disenchanted with his leadership and switched their allegiance to his ecclesiastical rival, Mirza Muḥammad Taqi

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1 F.O. 371/5078/E 11765. Proceedings of the Council of Notables, Basra, dated 22nd June, 1920. Al-Sani' was a close friend of Sayid Talib.

al-Shirazi, an old man in his eighties. Both men were of Persian origin, but al-Shirazi, unlike al-Yazdi, was a supporter of the Persian and Ottoman constitutional movements and was therefore identified with progressive politics. Al-Shirazi was a relative newcomer to Karbala, where he had settled as a result of requests from the shi'is of Najaf and Karbala and from some of the tribal chiefs. With him he brought his son, Muhammad Ridhā, who established on behalf of his father contacts with the leaders of the independence movement. The death in April, 1919, of Kadhum al-Yazdi, completed the religious ascendency of al-Shirazi and greatly added to his political weight.

The dreams of the Shi'i religious leaders all turned towards the creation of an Islamic and particularly of a Shi'i state, and these dreams had always been a potential source of a new political movement. However, by themselves religious aspirations were not enough to create an active political movement. For that a climate of political crisis was needed in which the Shi'i Mujtahids and 'Ulama could provide both ideological and moral leadership. Between the suppression of the March 1918 rising in Najaf and the popular rising of June 1920, several factors tended to create such a climate.

First, many of the causes of the outburst in March 1918 still existed, such as the displacement by the British of the traditional leaders, rigorous tax collection, an economic crisis in Najaf because of the

interruption of trade which had begun during the war but continued because traditional trading patterns had been destroyed, and high prices and a scarcity of food. If anything the irritations of 1918 had been intensified, notably by the return of the deportees of 1918 to their homes where they found themselves devoid of influence, which no doubt left them with a lasting feeling of soreness.

Secondly, Najaf and Karbala were not isolated cities but were closely linked with the tribal territories around them. Najaf formed part of the Shamiya division and Karbala part first of Hilla and then of Hindiya division. The tribesmen and their shaykhs were followers of the 'Ulama and Mujtahids, either directly, as in the case of those shaykhs who visited the holy cities frequently, or indirectly by way of the representatives of the Mujtahids, that is the Mullas, Mu'min and Sayids. There was also an economic tie between the towns and the countryside. The ecclesiastical hierarchy, and particularly its lower strata, relied to some degree on the financial contributions and the opportunities offered by the tribal society. Thus tribal grievances were bound to be reflected within the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the holy towns were expected by the tribesmen to give them at least moral support.

Thirdly, political developments in Baghdad and the dialogue established between Baghdad and the Shi'i holy cities, were important. Ironically, indeed, the death of al-Yazdi provided an opportunity to bring Sunni and Shi'i together: meetings were held both in Sunni and Shi'i mosques ostensibly in memory of al-Yazdi, but actually for political purposes. Furthermore, Kadhimayn, a Shi'i holy centre in the vicinity of Baghdad, became an effective link between Baghdad and the principal Shi'i holy centres.

Political developments in Persia also influenced events in the holy places. Because most of the leading Mujtahids and 'Ulama were either of Persian origin or of Persian nationality and the Shi'i 'Ulama had in the past been excluded from Ottoman politics, there was a keen interest in Persian affairs. Although Persia had never taken part in World War I, Britain, Russia, Germany and Turkey had all sent troops to take control of parts of Persia. Opposition to British influence increased during the war, and many Persians feared that an Allied victory would lead to the division of the country between the British and the Russians along the lines of the treaty of 1907, by which Persia was divided into British and Russian spheres of influence.[1] Germany was looked upon as a lesser danger and as a counter to British influence. The collapse of Czarist Russia in 1917, led to a further increase in hostility to the British. The new Russian regime, partly in an attempt to secure its borders from any attack instigated or helped by the British, embarked on an active anti-British propaganda campaign. The Russians in January 1918 and June 1919 denounced the 1907 Anglo-Russian treaty, abandoned Russian privileges in Persia, and offered to back the Persian nationalists against British interference. This encouraged the Persian nationalists to demand a similar renunciation from the British government, whose forces at the end of the war effectively occupied the country and sustained an Anglophile regime in Tehran. The signature on August 1919 of a new Anglo-Persian treaty added oil to the flames and became the focal point for nationalist criticism.

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1 Joseph M. Upton, The History of Modern Iran: An Interpretation, Cambridge, 1960, pp. 40-42.

The fact that al-Shirazi and his followers were in sympathy with the Persian nationalists encouraged them to welcome any move which might embarrass the British in Iraq as a means of reducing British pressure on Persia. Communications with Persia were relatively good and the atmosphere of crisis in Persia was effectively reported to the Shi'i holy places in print or by word of mouth; indeed, rumours about nationalist resistance in Persia were widely circulated in all parts of Iraq.[1] Bolshevik literature and news of events in Russia were discussed in the holy places, where there was a good deal of sympathy for the Bolsheviks, mainly because of their attitude towards the British in the East. It was even reported that al-Shirazi had issued a Fatwa decreeing that the Bolsheviks were to be regarded as the friends of Islam.[2] It would, however, be going too far to assume, as at least one British official did, that the Bolsheviks were the primary cause of the Shi'i rising.[3]

Developments in Syria and Turkey were another source of help and encouragement. The position of Najaf, on the fringe of the western desert, made it fairly accessible to both countries. In June 1919 Muhammad Ridha al-Shabibi was sent from Najaf to Hijaz with petitions denouncing the British

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1 F.O. 371/5074/ . Extract from Police Abstract of Intelligence, No. 13, dated Baghdad, 27th March, 1920, paragraphs 204 and 205.

2 Ibid. See also in paragraph 211 a book entitled "Mabadi al Bolshiviya" (Principles of Bolshevism) was brought by pilgrims from Aleppo. It was in the possession of Muhammad Ridha, son of al-Shirazi.

3 F.O. 371/5230/E 12339. Very Secret. "Mesopotamia, preliminary report on causes of unrest", by Major N. Bray, India Office, 14th September, 1920. See also Al Furat, a nationalist newspaper, Najaf, No. 2, 28 Dhi Qi'da, 1338, which expressed doubt about the Bolsheviks.

administration, and on the way back he was able to attend the Iraqi Congress held in Damascus in March 1920, the only Shi'i to do so. Letters were frequently exchanged between the leaders of the holy places and prominent Arabs in Syria, while newspapers and pamphlets were regularly smuggled from Syria into Iraq by way of Najaf.[1] As a result opinion in the holy places was also directly influenced by the mainstream of the Arab nationalist movement.

The link with Turkey was less close, but it was nonetheless important. The Kamalists approached both the Shi'i holy places as well as the Euphrates tribes by way of agents,[2] of whom the most important was 'Ajimi Pasha al-Sa'dun who maintained a small tribal force in the north of Iraq. The co-operation between the pan-Arabs and the pro-Turks in Baghdad facilitated a similar rapprochement in the holy places. But the main factor in the relationship between Turkey and the holy places was that the Shi'i 'Ulama who were most anti-British in 1920 had long before supported the Ottoman forces against the British invaders. In March 1920 a pro-British notable who visited Najaf and Karbala gave the following information to the British administration:

> During my visit to Karbala I visited all the Chief Alliens and notables of the place. Their whole conversation was of the early return of the Turks to Iraq - not as in the old order of things but simply as advisers to a true Arab administration. They were all obviously engaged in the

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1 F.O. 371/4149/110528. Confidential Report for week ending 31.5.1919, by the Criminal Investigation Department. Paragraph 237. Letters from Aleppo had been delivered to Shaykh Mahdi al-Khalisi and Sayid Mahdi al-Sadr. See also report for week ending 7th June, 1919, paragraph 247. (F.O. 371/4149/119757).

2 F.O. 371/5081/E 13603. Extract from Police Report of 24.4.1920. Two Kamalists, Nadir Hasan and 'Alla al-Din arrived in Samura.

spreading of pan-Arab and pro-Turkish propaganda.[1]

The importance of these outside influences on the holy places was, however, almost certainly less than that of events elsewhere in Iraq. Certainly the Persians, Russians, Syrians and Turks could do little more than engage in propaganda and offer moral support, since they were not in a position to supply sufficient quantities of money or men. It was the developments in Baghdad and among the Middle Euphrates tribes, which gave the 'Ulama and Mujtahids the opportunity to head a religious crusade against the British. The crusade when it came was most probably conceived as a great opportunity to establish a degree of Shi'i ascendancy or independence, and was therefore as much a product of long-standing religious frustration and subordination under the Ottoman empire as of any short-term causes. The Fatwa of al-Shirazi of December 1918 which forbade the election of a non-Muslim ruler marked the beginning of religious militancy in the holy places. The death of al-Yazdi in April 1919 removed the one man who could have prevented a direct clash with the British.[2] And the subsequent ascendancy of al-Shirazi ensured that such a clash would arise as much from religious as from economic or political motives.

The leadership of the independence movement in the Shi'i holy places may be divided into three parts. First there was the ecclesiastical hierarchy with the Chief Mujtahib, al-Shirazi, at its head. Those who were

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1 Ibid. Report dated 27.3.1920.

2 F.O. 371/4149/77939. From Political Officer, Baghdad, dated 13th May, 1919. "Kadum Yazdi, Chief Shiah Mujtahid of Mesopotamia, has died at Najaf. His influence was invariably used in our interests and he is a serious loss to us."

the most active included:

Shaykh al-Shari'a al-Asfahani	-	Persian
Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim al-Jaza'ri	-	Arab
Shaykh 'Abd al-Ridha Shaykh Radhi	-	Arab
Shaykh Jawad Sahib al-Jawahir	-	Persian
Hibat al-Din al-Shahristani	-	"
Mirza Ahmad al-Kharasani	-	"
Abu al-Qasim al-Kashani	-	"
Mahdi al-Khalisi	-	Arab
Sayid Muhammad al-Sadr	-	"

All were elderly men in their sixties or later years, who maintained a fairly close overall supervision of their followers. Their word among these Shi'i followers was law, but they were not an organised body and in practice al-Shirazi, and after his death al-Shari'a, had things pretty much his own way. Most of these old men had preached the Jihad against the British during the war.

The second part of the leadership of the holy places consisted of young and middle-aged educated Shi'is who were members of religious families or of the families of secular notables. The following were the leading men among them:

Muhammad Ridha son of the Chief Mujtahid

Baqir al-Shabibi

Muhammad Ridha al-Shabibi

Sayid Sa'id Kamal al-Din

Sayid 'Abd al-Wahab al-Wahab

Shaykh Muḥammad 'Ali al-Qassam

Sayid Muḥammad al-Baqir al-Ḥilli

'Abd al-Razaq 'Adwa

Tlayfiḥ al-Ḥassun

These men supplied the active day-to-day leadership and carried on an active propaganda campaign both in the cities and in the tribal areas. Muḥammad Ridha, the son of al-Shirazi, was the most prominent of them, probably because of his relationship to the Chief Mujtahid.[1] They were politically minded and thought in terms of a war of liberation against British colonialism. Thirdly, there was a group of landed tribal Shaykhs and Sayids, such as Sayid Nur Sayid 'Aziz, Sayid Hadi Zwayn, Sayid 'Alwan al-Yasiri, Qati' al-'Awadi, Sayid Muḥsin Abu Tabikh, Shaykh 'Abd al-Waḥid Sukar.

The fact that such a mixed body of men could be made to work together in what was conceived as a prolonged struggle against the British is most remarkable. It meant that traditional animosities, between the tribes and the urban centres in the Middle Euphrates, and between the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the secular leadership of the cities was being overcome. It meant that long-standing tribal grievances, agrarian and administrative, were for the first time presented within a political framework, that of

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1 Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration in Iraq, 1914-1920, p. 144, described Muḥammad Ridha as the real man behind his father, and "an active and restless politician, bitterly opposed to the Anglo-Persian agreement.... He was in touch with the Bolsheviks, who in an open telegram proclaimed him to be the head of the movement of liberation from the British; he was also in receipt of money from the Turks."

independence and the demand for an Arab government. Furthermore it meant that at last the Shi'i 'Ulama and Mujtahids were in a position to exercise effective political leadership after centuries of ostracism.

The pro-British elements in the Middle Euphrates and particularly in the Shi'i holy cities were totally submerged by the religious support given by the Mujtahids to their opponents, and the British were unable to take any substantial counter measures.[1] After the death of al-Yazdi the British administration became very uneasy about the rising tide of opposition in the holy cities. In July 1919 the first repressive action was taken with the arrest of six men, including two 'Ulama from Karbala, on the charge of inciting rebellion.[2] As a result of al-Shirazi's protests, and perhaps of Wilson's desire to avoid alienating the Chief Mujtahid altogether, the men were released after four months and a Persian Shi'i was made assistant political officer at Karbala. These moves were interpreted as a sign of British weakness, hostility towards the British increased, and the standing of al-Shirazi was enhanced. In the political diary of the political officer at Ḥilla (which included Karbala) for August 1919 it was reported.

> A mild wave of unrest not unconnected with the anti-British propaganda which has been emanating from Karbala, has passed over most of the division - Hindiyah alone remained

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1 Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt of 1920, p. 83. Opponents of the independence movement remained aloof, claiming neutrality or that they were men of religion and their duty was not about wordly affairs.

2 Al-Ḥassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 88. 'Umar Ḥaj 'Alwan, 'Abd al-Karim al-'Awad, Tlayfih al-Ḥassun, Muḥammad 'Ali Abu al-Hab, Sayid Muḥammad Mahdi Mawlawi, Sayid Muḥammad 'Ali Tabtaba'i.
Also see Cmd. 1061. Review of the Civil Administration in Iraq, 1914-1920, p. 144.

unaffected as a result due in the main to the personality of Umran al-Haji Sa'adun.[1]

In January 1920 a Divisional Council for Shamiya Division was chosen by the political officer, but to the administration's surprise a month later all fourteen members, including the four from Najaf, tendered their resignation. They were as follows:

Sayid 'Abas Killidar Sayid Hadi Naqib al-Ashraf Haji Muhsin Shilash Haji 'Abd al-Rahman Bushiri	representing Najaf
Sayid Hadi Zwayn	Ja'ara
Sayid Muhsin Abu Tabikh	Um al-Ba'rur
Shaykh 'Alwan al-Haj Sa'dun	Bani Hasan tribe
Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahid al-Sukar Shaykh 'Abadi al-Husayn	Al-Fatla tribe
Sayid Nur al-Sayid 'Aziz Sayid 'Alwan al-Sayid 'Abas	Shamiya Landed Sayids
Shaykh Laftah al-Shamkhi	Ja'ara
Shaykh Marzuk al-'Awad	'Awabid tribe
Shaykh Salman al-Dhafir	Al-Khaza'il

In their letter of resignation they wrote that:

> In order to give our opinions, we explicitly declare, after tendering our sincere thanks to the kindness of the Great Government, that as our country - Iraq - future has not yet been decided according to what the papers announce, and also the Peace Conference has not yet given its final decision as to the future of our beloved Iraq.

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1 Monthly Reports from Political Officers, Hilla, August 1919.

> Therefore we cannot give any opinion before we know the future of this country.[1]

Two points in this letter attract attention, first that it was unanimous and secondly that a change of government was clearly expected. A conversation between 'Abd al-Wahid Sukar and Hamid Khan, assistant political officer, which took place on 27th January, 1920, throws light on the matter:

> We have heard from a source which we consider entirely reliable that a son of the Sharif is about to be appointed as King of Iraq and that the British will be replaced by an Arab Government. We are given to believe that this will take place certainly within the next three months, and this being so we feel disinclined to pay any further revenue on our rice harvest.
>
> At the same time for the sake of the credit of our Hakim (British Political Officer - my note) we are anxious to be the first of all the Divisions in Iraq to fulfil our obligations in the matter of Revenue demands.
>
> There would seem to be, therefore, only one course open which will satisfactorily meet the situation, namely, that in view of the fact that we have already paid about half our rice revenue the conversion rate for the remainder should be so reduced as to make further payments a matter of but little financial significance to us.[2]

The political officer simply refused to consider such a proposal and within a few weeks the Council resigned. There was however another factor behind the unanimous resignation. This was the preaching of the 'Ulama, in conformity with al-Shirazi's Fatwa, against the election of a non-Muslim to rule over Muslims. Service under the British became as a result something of a disgrace, with the result that resignations from the administration increased and that in one case the corpse of an Arab levy (Sabana) who had worked for

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1 F.O. 371/5072/E 3801. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 13 February, 1920. See also Memorandum dated 27th February, 1920, from the Political Officer, Shamiya, to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

2 F.O. 371/5072/E 3801. Memorandum dated 5th February, 1920, from Political Officer, Shamiya, to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.

the British was denied the usual burial rights by the Shi'i Mu'min.[1]

From the beginning of May 1920 Mujtahids, 'Ulama, Sayids and Shaykhs converged on Karbala and Najaf for secret meetings and discussions about the future of Iraq. In mid Sha'ban, 1338 (4-5 May, 1920) a meeting was held in the house of the Chief Mujtahid and under his leadership which was attended by leading Sayids and 'Ulama, including 'Abd al-Karim al-Kaza'ri, Sayid Nur Sayid 'Aziz, Sayid 'Alwan al-Yasiri, Shaykh Sha'lan Abu al-Jun, Shaykh Ghithith al-Harjan, Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahid Sukar, Shaykh Sha'lan al-Jabur, Sayid Hadi Zwayn and an emissary from Baghdad, Ja'far Abu al-Timan.[2] According to Iraqi sources it was during this meeting that agreement was reached to rise against the British. However, little is known about what was said at the meeting and Iraqi sources[3] are vague about it. Al-Shirazi is reported to have expressed doubts about the ability of the tribes to stand up to British forces, and when those present seemed to be determined on a rising al-Shirazi is said to have added that "preservation of order and peace is more important than the revolt."[4] It was only after further assurances had been given by those present that they would try to maintain law and order to the best of their ability that al-Shirazi is said to have given his approval to their plans.[5] One wonders how "order and peace" could be reconciled with revolution, unless by a "revolt" no more was meant than an intensification of the existing political campaign. Indeed such an

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1 F.O. 371/5071/E 2111. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated March 18, 1920. Also see Cmd. 1061. Review of Civil Administration, p. 144.
2 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 96. Also see Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt, p. 103, who says that only six had attended the meeting with al-Shirazi, but do not give their names.
3 Al-Hassani, al-Bassir, Mahbuba and another writer.
4 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 97.
5 Ibid.

intensification did take place during the following month. Madhbatas (petitions) were despatched a few days after the meeting to Syria, addressed to Amir Faysal and to his brother 'Abdulla, who had in March 1920 been chosen by the Iraqi Congress in Syria to be the future king of Iraq,[1] denouncing the British administration in Iraq and inviting 'Abdulla to be king of Iraq.

News of nationalist activities in Baghdad and of the election of the Mandubin on 7 Ramadhan, 1338 (26 May, 1920) encouraged al-Shirazi to institute a similar campaign in the Middle Euphrates for the election of delegates to go to Baghdad to present a list of demands to the British authorities.[2] In a Madhbata signed by 65 persons, including the Chief Mujtahid, dated 16 Ramadhan, a delegation of seven was nominated to represent Karbala; and in a similar Madhbata dated 18 Ramadhan, signed by 120 'Ulama, Sayids and Shaykhs, a delegation of six was chosen to represent Najaf.[3] The delegates, however, probably from fear of arrest,[4] instead of going to Baghdad, wrote to the British political officer of Shamiya Division, putting forward the three demands presented by the Baghdadi Mandubin, namely, the establishment of an Iraqi elected congress to decide the future of Iraq, freedom of the press and

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1 F.O. 371/5227/E 7284. A report by Major Tayler, date May 14th, 1920. "Position on the Euphrates".

2 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, pp. 97-98, cited the letter from al-Shirazi to the people of Iraq, dated 9-10 Ramadhan, 1338.

3 Mahbuba, Past and Present of Najaf, p. 358, mentioned only five names, Shaykh Jawad Sahib al-Jawahir, 'Abd al-Karim al-Kaza'ri, 'Abd al-Ridha Shaykh Radhi, Muhsin Shilash.
See also Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt, p. 109, added the name of Sayid 'Alwan Sayid 'Abas.

4 Cited by Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt, pp. 144-145. A letter from Ja' far Abu al-Timan, dated 7 Ramadhan, 1338, to the Chief Mujtahid, informing him of the Civil Commissioner's threat to him and other two nationalists.

of movement, and the right to hold free meetings and to form associations. The letter requested a meeting with the political officer to discuss these demands.[1] The British reply took the form of a letter dated 16th June 1920 from the Civil Commissioner enclosing the statement about Cox's return to Iraq which was a few days later published in the local papers.[2] Muhammad Ridha and other activists in Karbala reacted by calling for mass demonstrations to be held in the sacred mosques of al-'Abas and al-Husayn on 4 Shawal (21 June, 1920), during which strong speeches were delivered against the British administration. These were considered highly dangerous by the British and on the following day a military force was despatched to Karbala which arrested twelve men, including Muhammad Ridha, the eldest son of the al-Shirazi, and the following: Hadi Kamuna, Muhammad Shah al-Hindi, 'Abd al-Karim 'Awad, 'Umar Haj 'Alwan, 'Uthman 'Alwan, 'Abd al-Mahdi Qanbar, Ahmad Qanbar, Muhammad 'Ali al-Tabtaba'i, Kadhum Abu Athan, Ibrahim, Sayid Ahmad al-Bir.[3] In Hilla similar arrests were made.

This British move was the turning point in the attitude of the Shi'i in the holy cities and the Middle Euphrates. The imprisonment of the son of the Chief Mujtahid was a dangerous precedent which roused strong emotions among the mass of Shi'is. A leading Mujtahid, Shaykh al-Shari'a, tried to mediate between the militants and the administration and requested in a letter

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1 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, pp. 99-100, cited the letter from the original copy in the possession of Sayid Sa'id Kamal al-Din.
2 Ibid., pp. 100-102.
3 Ibid., p. 103.

dated 25 June, 1920, the release of Muhammad Ridha as a gesture which would help to quell the rising tide of agitation. The administration was adamant and by rejecting Shaykh al-Sharī'a's request as well as several petitions from the Euphrates shaykhs,[1] it cut itself off from them. The Chief Mujtahid who had previously insisted on the maintenance of order and peace, now came out openly in favour of the use of force by issuing a Fatwa to the effect that it was the duty of the people to demand their rights. They should try to maintain peace and order but if the British refused their demands it would be legal to make use of force.[2] By then the first armed rising had already started in Rumaytha, on 30th June 1920. Najaf and Karbala soon rose also and this time, unlike the circumstances of 1918, the British forces were forced to evacuate the two cities leaving them in the hands of the 'Ulama and shaykhs.

It is very doubtful whether the Mujtahids and 'Ulama who led the independence movement had planned beforehand or shared in the planning of an armed rising. The Chief Mujtahid, al-Shirazi, was reluctant and gave his approval only when he came under increasing pressure from the militants, whose leader was his eldest son, and after the failure of Shaykh al-Shari'a's attempt, as second in the hierarchy after al-Shirazi, to intercede on behalf of the people arrested in Karbala and Ḥilla. Indeed, when al-Shirazi gave his Fatwa approving the use of force the armed rising had already begun on 30th June, when tribesmen forced their way into a prison in Rumaytha to free their shaykh. Shaykh al-Shari'a was even more reluctant than al-Shirazi and

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1 Al-Ḥassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, pp. 108-109, cited the reply of the Civil Commissioner to Shaykh al-Shari'a.

2 Ibid., p. 106. No date is mentioned, but it could not be before al-Shari'a appeals to Wilson.

continued even at a later date to seek a settlement with the British administration. Sayid Hibat al-Din al-Hussayni, another distinguished 'Alim in Karbala and a member of the religious leadership, had actually opposed Muhammad Ridha's call for mass demonstrations which led to the arrests.[1] Moreover, a large number of minor Mujtahids and 'Ulama abstained from taking any part in the political campaign, including such 'Ulama as Haji Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Mazindarani, Sayid Hasan Tabtaba'i, Sayid 'Abd al-Husayn Tabtaba'i, Sayid Muhammad Mahdi Tabtaba'i, who expressed to the British political officer their disenchantment with the activities of Muhammad Ridha.[2] What precipitated the rupture between the 'Ulama and the British administration was the attitude of the latter towards the 'Ulama. Wilson's view of al-Shirazi as expressed in a despatch of 11th June, 1919, was very unfavourable:

> The leading Mujtahid at Kerbela Mirza Mohamad Fightgi Sherazi is in his dotage and is surrounded by a gang of unscrupulous money-makers who hope to make fortunes before he dies. Incidentally and partly in consequence of this this gang is anti-British.[3]

Aylmer Haldane, the British Commander -in- Chief, was also hostile to the 'Ulama whom he described as people "who are, by nature as well as by heredity, inclined to intrigue."[4]

Yet though the religious leaders were reluctant, they played their part in the rising, for they supplied the militant leaders with the right sort

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1 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 104.
2 F.O. 371/5078/10653. From Political Officer, Karbala, to Political Officer, Hilla, dated 3rd July, 1920.
3 F.O. 371/4148/89082. From Political Officer, Baghdad, dated 11th June, 1919.
4 Haldane, Insurrection in Mesopotamia, p. 26.

of environment in which to work by stirring up the masses with ideas of independence, of the expulsion of the British, and of their duty to defend Islam. They provided in this way a form of emotional mobilization. But they made no detailed plans for armed revolt and were totally dependent for help against the British on widespread tribal backing. What they did was important, because it meant that people such as Ḥaji Muḥsin al-Shilash, a wealthy merchant in Najaf,[1] were driven by self interest to ally themselves with the independence movement and the masses. But the leadership when the rising had once begun soon passed into other hands, those of the young activists and the tribal sayids and shaykhs. On August 20, 1920 Wilson made an overture to negotiate a settlement in a letter to Shaykh al-Shari'a, who had succeeded al-Shirazi after the latter died on 13th August. Although al-Shari'a and the majority of the Mujtahids and 'Ulama in Najaf and Karbala as well as those in Baghdad and Kadhimayn were in favour of a negotiated settlement because of their increasing fear that the rising was on the losing side,[2] the

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1 F.O. 371/5227/E 7284. A report by Major Tayler, "Position on the Euphrates", dated May 14th, 1920. "A trustworthy informant, who had talked to Haji Muhsin Ibn Shallash, states that he is not an out and out supporter of the anti-British movement, but having business dealings with the leaders of the movement in Shamiyah, he wishes to please them and keep on good terms with them."

2 Al-Ḥassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 125.
Also see F.O. 371/5079/E 12859. Mesopotamia Police Report, No. 36, dated 4th September 1920. "On ... 1st September, the following were heard discussing the communication to the Shaikh Al-Shri'ah from the Civil Commissioner as published in the "Al-Iraq" of 31st August:-
1. Sayyid Hasan Al-Sadr, 2. Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Al-Sadr, 3. Sayyid Muhammad Jawad al Sadr, 4. Shaikh Abd Ali, 5. Hajji Abdul Husain Chalabi, 6. Abdul Ghani Chalabi, and other "Alims". The general tone was undoubtedly in favour of peace although they deprecated the threat which the communication carried. They hoped that the Shaikh Al-Shari'ah would receive it favourably and prayed for cessation of the devastation which they realised threatened the whole country."

activist and militant nationalists in Najaf and Karbala, such as Muhammad Baqir al-Shabibi and Shaykh 'Ali al-Mani', opposed any negotiations before a British evacuation. The tone of Wilson's letter, which contained an implied threat of punishment, also gave them reason to suspect Wilson's honesty. As a result the overture was rejected in a letter drafted by 'Ali al-Mani'[1] dated 2nd Muharam 1339 (17 September 1920), at a time when the rising was actually losing ground in Diyala, the Muntafik was by no means unanimously behind the rising and the tide was turning against the rising on the Middle Euphrates. From the militants' utterances it is evident that emotion rather than reason now predominated. Muhammad Baqir al-Shabibi, editor of the revolutionary paper al-Furat, commented on 3rd Muharam 1339 that the revolution depended on three bases, nationalism, patriotism and the Islamic Shari'a, that it had courage to face the enemy's modern machines, that it relied on God's providence instead of outside aid, and contentment instead of agriculture. The conditions for any future negotiations with the British, he maintained, should be the evacuation of British forces and an amnesty for prisoners and deportees.[2]

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1 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 21. Also see Marlowe, Late Victorian, p. 228. Wilson wrote in an official letter to the India Office, dated 16th August, 1920: "No one appears more anxious than leading mujtahids and many of the leading people in Baghdad to put an end to the disturbances which they themselves have created, but not within their power to do so."

2 Cited Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt, pp. 372-374.

The Role of the Tribes

The tribes provided the main backing for the rising of 1920. They supplied most of the fighting men and consequently suffered the most casualities. The actual armed rising lasted approximately four months, from July to October, 1920. The tribal areas affected were those of the Middle Euphrates (that is the area watered by the two channels of the Hilla and Hindiya rivers), the Diyala, the Muntafik, and the area between Baghdad and Faluja along the northern Euphrates, occupied by the Zoba' tribe. In addition there were isolated incidents in southern Kurdistan and in the area between Baghdad and Mosul. The military aspect of the rising has been fully discussed by Lieutenant-General Sir Alymer H. Haldane, the senior officer in Iraq during the months of the rising.[1] Iraqi authors, notably al-Bassir, al-Hassani, and al-Far'aun[2] have also written about the rising and its military aspects, relying chiefly on Haldane's account. Although all these accounts suffered to some extent, and particularly that of al-Far'aun, from a lack of precision and objectivity, they give the main outlines of the story so that all that is required here is a summary of the relevant points.

When the revolt erupted in June, 1920, the British forces in Iraq consisted of 7,200 British and 53,000 Indian troops, a total of approximately

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1 See his book, The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, 1920, London, 1922.

2 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question. See also al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution. See also al-Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt of 1920. Among recent books about the rising is Heroism in the Revolution of 1920, by A. S. al-Yasiri, whose family took a leading part in the rising in the Middle Euphrates, and his contribution is mainly about his family.

60,000, of whom 26,000 were non-combatants.[1] To garrison and defend adequately the disturbed tribal areas, the cities and the long lines of rail and river communications would have required much larger forces. As things were British power was represented in most of the tribal districts by only a small British or British and Indian force and a number of local levies. There is no way of ascertaining the exact number of tribesmen involved in the rising, partly because the numbers varied from one area to another and from one time to another. The following estimate, given by Haldane, can only be taken as approximate, with a fair margin of error.[2]

Area	Date	No. of armed men	Modern rifles	Old rifles
Lower Euphrates (including Rumaytha)	30.6.1920	2,500	500	1,000
"	2.7.1920	16,300	2,500	6,200
Middle Euphrates	20.7.1920	16,500	2,200	6,000
"	24.7.1920	48,100	4,630	19,795
"	30.7.1920	16,270	800	3,000
Lower Euphrates (including Rumaytha)	30.7.1920	4,350	680	1,600
Diyala Division	9.8.1920	1,600	200	100
Baghdad-Faluja	12.8.1920	7,500	900	2,050
Diyala and Kifri-Karkuk area	12.8.1920	14,300	2,800	2,990

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1 Haldane, The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, p. 64.
Also see Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Statement by War Minister, 29th June 1920, Vol. 131, Cols. 227-8.
The approximate strength of troops in Mesopotamia

	British Army all Ranks	Indian Army all Ranks
1st April 1920	11,450	57,900
23rd June 1920	9,800	55,500

2 Haldane, The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, Appendix (VI).

Area	Date	No. of armed men	Modern rifles	Old rifles
Samara	24. 8. 1920	600	175	75
"	30. 8. 1920	3,000	1,245	365
		131,020	1,630	43,175

It was imperative that the scattered and isolated British posts and forces be withdrawn whenever the danger of a powerful tribal attack was imminent. The alternative, that more troops should be called in to relieve those under pressure, was impossible to follow because it meant pinning down the British forces in a series of scattered and beleaguered outposts and the loss of all mobility. The policy of withdrawal in face of attack had one major drawback, a psychological one. When the rising of the tribes began and their attacks on British posts led either to their overrunning the British positions or the withdrawal of the British forces, the tribesmen always turned out to be the winners. These easy victories then became a major factor in rallying more tribes against the British. The British forces had the advantage of control of the rivers and of the air, thanks to the air force, and also possessed all the equipment of a modern army. But the tribes were relatively well armed, with the rifle as their main weapon. The four years of war in Iraq had provided many opportunities for the acquisition of guns, either directly from the Turks or by looting and purchase. A. T. Wilson commented that

> ... the population as a whole had contrived to provide itself with modern weapons and abundance of ammunition, to such effect that the price of a Mauser or Lee-Enfield, which before the War stood at £20 or £25, had dropped to £5 or less. British and Turkish rifles had been picked up on fields of battle or stolen on the lines of communication in thousands; ammunition

> had been accumulated on a scale hitherto undreamt of. In the quest for arms the Arab showed qualities of courage, cunning, and perseverance.... In one British camp over seventy boxes of 1.000 rounds each were dug up and stolen from under the noses of the sentries.[1]

The chief weakness of the tribes was their lack of a general command, or of a widespread organisation; events were not synchronised according to any coherent plan for defeating the British forces as a whole. Most of the tribes would fight only in their own tribal dira so that the tribal forces were immobilised and the British were able in the end to attack each unit in turn and defeat it. Moreover, the risings developed along the lines of tribal raids, rather than of a military campaign, with the result that it was difficult to sustain a prolonged war. This was largely because the able-bodied men were needed for work on the land and had families to support. The one advantage of the tribal raid was that it was effective in disrupting British rail and river communications.

Of all the disturbed areas the risings in the Middle Euphrates were the most effective and widespread. They began in the small town of Rumaytha late in June 1920 when the British political officer at Diwaniya ordered the arrest of Sha'lan Abu al-Jun, shaykh of the Dhawlim tribe, a section of the Bani Hachim, because the tribe was showing signs of resistance to the administration and the shaykh was accused of withholding taxes. Such moves were common enough, and the assistant political officer at Rumaytha simply carried out his instructions by calling on Abu al-Jun to call at his office on 30th June, 1920,

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1 Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia, 1914-17, p. 259. During the rising an ammunition factory was built in Najaf and Diyala tribes bought arms from Persia.

whereupon he was arrested. The tribesmen were prepared for the arrest and the same day attacked the government buildings and freed the shaykh. On the following day the railway lines out of Rumaytha were attacked. This attack marked the beginning of the rising in the Middle Euphrates. By 4th July a small reinforcement had reached Rumaytha, bringing the total force under the assistant political officer to 527, who were besieged by the tribes who succeeded in cutting off the garrison from its source of supplies. It was sixteen days before, on 20th July, the British force was relieved after bitter fighting. Even then the position of the British forces was so hopeless that they were withdrawn to Diwaniya under heavy tribal attacks. This first tribal victory gave a great impetus to the move for a wider rebellion, by demonstrating the weakness of the British administration, whose political officers, scattered over a wide area, had only diplomacy, promises and money to bargain with.

During the first week of July, the British political officers in the Shamiya Division were engaged in a series of meetings with leading shaykhs in an attempt to avert a similar rising in that division. J. S. Mann, Assistant Political Officer at Um al-Ba'rur (known also as Shamiya town), commented during early July that:

> The problem was now (a) to keep the Bani Hasan from allying themselves with the disaffected Fatlah, and (b) to secure the neutrality of the Khazail and their followers the Shibl. The second aim seemed to have been attained by a conference held at Umm al Bar'rur on July 6, between Major Norbury ... and three Khazail sheikhs, when the latter undertook to support the British in return for a promise that they should eventually be put in possession of the lands which had been wrongfully transferred from them to the Fatlah by the Turks.... One of the most friendly and most influential of the Bani Hasan sheikhs, Lafta Shamkhi, was too ill to see him: the Fatlah leaders bribed

> another, Alwan al Hajji Sa'dun, with £1000, and were offering large sums, behind the Khazail, to the Shibl, ... The British Administration met these offers by an advance of pay amounting to £2000 to be given through the Khazail to the Shibl on their impending mobilisation, so that they would not be so open to influences from outside.[1]

On July 7 a meeting was held in Um al-Ba'rur between the A. P. O. and leading shaykhs, including both wavering shaykhs like Marzuq of the al-'Bayd tribe and 'Alwan al-Sa'dun of the Khaza'il and more militant shaykhs such as Sayid Nur, 'Abd al-Wahid and 'Alwan al-Yasiri. According to most Iraqi sources the shaykhs laid down the following conditions for remaining quiet:

1. Complete independence for "Iraq".
2. The cessation of hostilities in the Rumaytha and its surrounding areas.
3. The removal of British political officers and forces from the Euphrates.
4. The release of the son of the Chief Mujtahid and other prisoners from Karbala and Hilla.[2]

These demands as well as subsequent ones were not taken seriously by the administration and no reference was made to them in any British records.

The militant shaykhs, 'Alwan al-Yasiri and 'Abd al-Wahid Sukar, along with the followers of Sayid Nur and other supporters on 11 July attacked the British garrison in the small town of Abu Sukhayr and besieged the garrison. This move put pressure on the shaykhs of Um al-Ba'rur to rise

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1 Mann, An Administrator in the Making, pp. 292-293. It is most improbable that the Fatla tribe offered £1000, and there is no indication in any well informed source or person to endorse it.

2 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 116. Also see Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 214-215. Also see Al-Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt, pp. 200-201.

against the administration. Warned by Marzuq of the 'Awabid tribe, Mann, the British A.P.O., decided to leave the town accompanied by two shaykhs, Salman al-'Abtan of the Khaza'il and Rayih 'Atiyya of the Humaydat. At Kufa where he now settled Mann made another attempt on July 16 to reach an agreement with the tribal shaykhs. A meeting was held at which the leading shaykhs of both Shamiya and Diwaniya Divisions attended along with two leading Mujtahids who came from Najaf specially for the meeting. The demands made at Um al-Ba'rur were again put forward and again ignored. After a short lull, during which the besieged garrison of Abu Sukhayr was allowed to leave for Kufa, the fighting was resumed. Now Kufa in its turn was besieged by a much stronger tribal force and on 23rd July the towns of Kifl and Hindiya fell to the tribesmen without resistance. On the following day the British troops suffered their worst defeat when the tribal forces defeated a column sent from Hilla to relieve the town of Kifl. The British casualities amounted to one hundred and eighty killed, sixty wounded and a hundred and sixty who became prisoners with the tribes.[1]

The successive tribal victories, and particularly that of 24 July, and the failure of the British to make any progress whatever in putting down the rising encouraged waverers to move and led to a chain of successive attacks in the Euphrates as well as in other areas. The British forces were gradually forced to evacuate one town after another. Najaf and Karbala were voluntarily evacuated during July; on 30th July the Diwaniya garrison began to withdraw to Hilla, which during August became the last British post in the

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1 Haldane, The Insurrection in the Mesopotamia, p. 102.

Middle Euphrates. Because of tribal attacks the withdrawal from Diwaniya to Hilla took eleven days, an average of only 5½ miles a day.[1] The town of Hilla was attacked on 31 July, but it was successfully defended by the British with the help of some local shaykhs, notably 'Adai al-Jaryan, shaykh of the Albu Sultan tribe.

After nearly six weeks of uneasy calm the tribes in Samawa district began harassing the British garrison stationed at Samawa and raiding the railway connecting the town with Nasiriya. On 12 August Khidir railway station, seventeen miles south of Samawa was taken by the tribes which meant that Samawa was cut off from its source of supplies except by river, and river communications were increasingly hazardous because of the low level of the water and tribal attacks. On 3 September an attempt was made to evacuate the garrison but after heavy fighting, during which an armed train was derailed and a gunboat was grounded, the garrison (670 men) was forced to remain in Samawa under siege, which it did until 14 October when it was relieved.

The second major rising took place in the area watered by the river Diyala, north east of Baghdad. On August 8th an attack was made on the railways connecting Baghdad with Persia. This threatened communication between the British forces in Baghdad and Persia. As in the Middle Euphrates, the British political officers either left their posts or were killed. Ba'quba, Daltawa and then Shahraban fell into the hands of the tribes, and by 25th August all areas north of the river Diyala were in the hands of the

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1 Haldane, The Insurrection in the Mesopotamia, p. 138.

disaffected tribes. But unlike the Middle Euphrates rising the Diyala revolt was short lived. The British troops were reinforced from India and managed to regain control of all the Diyala area by late September.

The third major rising took place west of Baghdad along the line between Baghdad and Faluja. Shaykh Dhari of the Zoba' tribe started the rising on August 12 by killing Col. Leachman, Political Officer of Dulaym Division, and by cutting rail communications between Baghdad and Faluja. Early British attempts to retake Faluja failed and some river boats were lost. However, the attitude of Shaykh Ali Sulayman of the Dulaym tribe and Shaykh Fahad al-Hadhal prevented the spread of the rising in the Dulaym Division and Dhari was forced to seek refuge in the area between Musayb and Karbala. Early in September, when British troops advanced from Baghdad along the Euphrates to Faluja, they inflicted heavy punishment on the Zoba' tribe.

The Muntafik tribes, contrary to what might have been expected from their history, were relatively less hostile to the British. During August 1920 tension was increasing and the British authorities were anticipating trouble. To avoid a siege and the isolation of the political officers and their small garrison, they were ordered to evacuate their posts in August. Qal'at Sukar, Suq al-Shiyukh and lastly Shatra were left in the hands of the tribes. Although occasional raids on the railway between Nasiriya and Basra and on the outskirts of Nasiriya took place the Muntafik tribes seem to have been content with the control of their own tribal districts. They did not attempt to drive the British out of the whole of the Muntafik, a move which

would have greatly embarrassed the British administration.[1]

Minor clashes occurred north of Baghdad, and the railway between Baghdad and Mosul was the target for occasional raids, which failed to disrupt it. The towns of Samura and Balad during August and early September were highly volatile, but nothing important happened, and things became quieter after the collapse of Diyala's revolt in early September. In Kifri, Karkuk and southern Kurdistan, mainly inhabited by non-Arab peoples, trouble began to develop in August and September. On 28th August, Captain G. Salmon, Assistant Political Officer at Kifri was murdered, and sporadic clashes also occurred in Karkuk, Aqra and Rawanduz, but these events were not connected with the risings in Baghdad and on the Euphrates.

From the above short account it can be seen that the rising of 1920 was limited in scope. British troops, quickly reinforced by nearly two divisions from India, were able by the end of October to regain control of almost all areas lost to the rising tribes. And there then followed a round of punishments and a campaign to disarm the defeated tribes.[2] The rising was

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1 Annual Report of the Basra Division for the year 1920, pp. 1-2. Shaykh Hamud al-Suwayt, head of the semi-nomadic tribe of Dhafir who was in the British pay, afforded considerable help to the British, particularly in protecting the railway lines between Basra and Nasiriya. "Monthly subsidies to tribal Shaikhs may frequently be a waste of money but it is impossible to doubt that our payment of Rs. 1,000 per mensem to Shaikh Hamud has repaid us many times over during the recent troubles."

2 Haldane, The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, p. 298.
The following fines were collected from the tribes:
Rifles, 63,435 - all serviceable - of which 21,154 were modern.
Small arm ammunition - 3,185,000 rounds.
Cash, Rs. 817,650 (£54,112).

costly both in money and in life. The British had to increase their forces in Iraq from 60,200 on 1st July, to approximately 80,000 on 1st August, and 101,000 on 1st October 1920, at a cost of £591,700 a week.[1] The total number of British casualties (including Indians) in killed, wounded and missing, between 2nd July and 17th October 1920 was 2,269.[2] Arab casualties, according to British sources, were for the same period approximately 8,450 killed and wounded.[3]

The tribal rising as has been said earlier was not a coherent movement with a common leadership and strategy, or common causes and aims. Three factors can, however, be discerned behind the tribal upheaval, the first political; the second religious; and the third long-standing tribal traditions and discontent with present conditions. The relative importance of these three factors varied from one area to another, and from one shaykh to another, making it more difficult to make an exact assessment of just what happened.

The main political factor behind the rising was a concept of the nature of the state and of the kind of relationship which should exist between the government and the individual. It was almost unprecedented for a tribesman to think of himself in terms of membership in a state and hence for

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1 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, speech by Mr. Bonor Law, on 27th October 1920, Vol. 133, col. 1738. Also see F.O. 371/5232/E 15721. Memorandum by General Radcliffe, the Director of Military Operations, dated 7 December 1920. The annual cost in 1920 was well over £30,000,000.

2 Haldane, The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, p. 331. Also see Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, dated 25th October 1920, answer by the Minister of War, W. Churchill. The approximate number of casualties in Mesopotamia from the date of Armistice with Turkey, on 31st October, 1918, to 1st October, 1920, was as follows:

Total of killed	Wounded	Missing and prisoners
906	2,476	548

The total = 3,930.

3 Haldane, The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, p. 331.

him to demand a say in the nature of its constitution, but this is just what happened. Signs of political maturity appeared, particularly among some of the leading shaykhs in the Middle Euphrates, such as Sayid Nur Sayid 'Aziz, Sayid Hadi Zwayn, 'Alwan al-Yasiri and 'Abd al-Wahid al-Sukar. For most of the Middle Euphrates shaykhs Karbala and Najaf, the centres of political agitation, were places which they visited regularly and where some of them had a second residence, while some of the shaykhs also knew Baghdad, and during the rising some of the leading Baghdadi nationalists, notably Ja'far Abu Timan and al-Swaydi, al-Sadr, escaped from Baghdad to the tribal districts to join them. Messengers and letters were also frequently exchanged between the Middle Euphrates tribes and Hijaz and Syria. As a result of these contacts the tribal shaykhs were well informed about current political issues, such as independence and the right of self-determination. More important they were approached and addressed by the urban politicians as equals and as important figures in the nationalist movement.

The changing role of the tribal shaykhs comes out well in the official records. Nijris Ibn Ku'ud, a leading shaykh of a Dulaym tribe near the Syrian border, who was hostile to the administration is reported to have written to the British political officer in May 1920:

> ... that General Maude promised on entering Baghdad that Mesopotamia would be for the Arabs.
>
> The same promise had been repeated by various politicians at various times.
>
> We are today in the 20th Century and you cannot treat us like sheep as you do the Egyptians and Indians.
>
> The Iraqi are you say unchanged and savages and cannot manage themselves, it is we Iraqi who are the brains of the Arab nation and who freed Syria.
>
> Why do we give Armenia independence, it is because they are of your religion....

> You are given a short time to clear out of Mesopotamia if you don't go you will be driven out.
> He who takes the sword will not yield to words!![1]

Similarly, 'Alwan al-Yasiri, a leading Shamiya Sayid with a wide tribal following, was reported to have said to the A.P.O. at Um al-Ba'rur during a meeting on 5th July 1920, a few days before overthrowing the British authority in the district:

> You have offered us independence, we never asked for it, we had never dreamt of it till you put the idea into our heads: for hundreds of years the country has lived in a state as far removed from independence as it is possible to conceive; then you come with your promise of independence and every time we ask for it you imprison us.[2]

Another Sayid in Shamiya, Sayid Nur Sayid 'Aziz, was the most outstanding figure in the rising in the Middle Euphrates. He spent lavishly in financing the rising, was highly respected by other shaykhs and sayids and took part in most of the political meetings in Karbala and Najaf before the armed rising, as well as in the abortive negotiations with the British during the rising. In September 1920 Sayid Nur wrote to several Baghdadi, particularly those with military experience, asking them to take part in the armed rising where their talents were most needed.[3] He was among the first to condemn the looting and excesses committed by some tribes in Diyala district, to whom he wrote that the rising was a "Jihad" and not an excuse for looting.[4] During two short-lived negotiations with the British authorities

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1 F.O. 371/5076/E 8330. Telegram from 51st Brigade to 17th Division repeated to General Headquarters and Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 13th May 1920.
2 Mann, An Administrator in the Making, p. 292.
3 F.O. 371/5081/E 13563. Mesopotamia Police Report dated 18th September 1920, No. 35.
4 F.O. 371/5081/13338. Police Report, No. 37, dated 11th September, 1920.

at Um al-Ba'rur and Kufa, the tribal leaders included in their conditions for a cessation of hostilities the grant of complete independence to Iraq and in recognition of the importance of the tribes a tribal Sayid, Muḥsin Abu Tabikh was appointed during the rising to act as the Mutasrif of Karbala. The militant leaders in Karbala and Najaf in this way helped to endow the tribal leaders with a sense of common political purpose. In addition they published a revolutionary paper called al-Furat, whose editor was the active revolutionary, Muḥammad Baqir al-Shabibi.[1]

The kind of political consciousness that existed was nearer to a state of emotional patriotism[2] than to a well-conceived scheme for the political future of the country, and it was limited to certain shaykhs and sayids. The tribal cultivator of the soil was hardly aware of the political context of the rising. This brings us to the second factor, the religious appeal of the rising, to which the common tribesman was more susceptible.

The religious factor turned on the extent to which the shaykhs and tribesmen were willing to follow the lead of their religious guides, particularly the Mujtahids and 'Ulama, in their hostility to the British administration. The nature of shi'ism and the close link between the Middle Euphrates and the Shi'i holy towns of Najaf and Karbala, made the

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1 Cited al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, pp. 210-211. A copy of a pamphlet written by al-Shabibi, included instructions to the rising tribes, that each shaykh should educate his tribesmen that the aim of the rising was independence.

2 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 234-235. Also al-Ḥassani, Ibid., p. 174. Shaykh Ḥabib al-Khayzaran of al-'Azza tribe in Diyala joined the rising in August after a short visit to Baghdad where he was urged by the Baghdadi politicians to help in freeing Iraq.

Middle Euphrates tribes peculiarly susceptible to religious influence. The 'Ulama and their representatives carried letters to the tribes urging them to undertake a "Jihad". In Rumaytha, the first district to overthrow British power, the 'Ulama were represented by Rahumi al-Dhalimi, an active propagandist and a relative of Shaykh Sha'lan Abu al-Jun.[1] The particularly wide influence and wealth enjoyed by the tribal Sayids gave a strong backing to the Mujtahids' Fatwas, and in the Middle Euphrates the Sayids, such as Sayid Nur Sayid 'Aziz, Sayid 'Alwan al-Yasiri and Sayid Hadi Zwayn, played a major part in the leadership of the rising. Indeed, it would have been embarrassing for any Sayid to fail to respond to the call of the Mujtahids since part of his prestige was due to his Sayidship and the religious appeal that accompanied it.[2] During the rising the tribal sayids and shaykhs remained constantly in touch with their Mujtahids,[3] and in their negotiations with the British authorities they insisted on having with them some 'Ulama or their representatives.[4] Upon the common shi'i tribesmen the impact of the leadership of their 'Ulama and Mujtahids was even greater, because their word was sacrosanct and death in a Jihad was represented to them as martyrdom. It was partly loyalty to their Mujtahids that incited many tribesmen to rebel

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1 Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt, p. 45.
2 Al-Hassani, The Great Iraqi Revolution, p. 113. Sayid Muhsin Abu Tabikh tried at the beginning of the rising to avoid involvement, but once the rising achieved its first success he joined in.
3 Abdullah Fayyad, The Iraqi Revolution of 1920, Baghdad, 1963, opposite page 312, published a photo copy of a letter to Sayid Hadi Muqutar of Samawa from the Chief Mujtahid, Shaykh al-Shari'a, dated 2 Dhi al Hija, 1338.
4 Negotiations between the British officers and Shaykh at Kufa in July 1910.

against their shaykhs when the latter took a pro-British stand. It is therefore not surprising that A. T. Wilson approached the Mujtahids rather than the shaykhs in August 1920 in order to bring about an end to the rising.

The third factor in the tribal rising was the character of the tribes and their traditions. Among these traditions were rejection of all kinds of imposed authority from outside the tribe, the desire to avoid taxation, and the glorification of fighting. But equally, there was a strong tradition of rivalry between the shaykhs and between tribes, a habit of thinking in terms of the tribe's interests rather than in terms of the benefit of all the tribes. There was thus a pull towards action on the one hand and towards a narrow cautious reaction on the other. Some shaykhs opted for action: others saw the advantage of aloofness and even opposition to the rising. The diversity and complexity of these reactions partly explains the lack of pattern and purposefulness among the tribes. Generally a tribe and its shaykh would not openly defy authority unless convinced that they could get away with it. The weakness of the British garrisons and their failure to make any early stand plus the widespread impression that the British were evacuating Iraq encouraged some tribes to join in the rising, but others waited to see how successful the rising was before committing themselves. This explains the gradual snowballing of the rising in the Middle Euphrates. It began in Rumaytha on 30th June, eleven days later it spread to Abu Sukhayr, on 17th July Samiya town joined in, but the Samawa tribes waited six weeks and the Kifl and Hindiya tribes waited until the approach of other tribes before making any move.

The British administration, and particularly the tightening of its

hold on the Middle Euphrates discussed in an earlier chapter, had disenchanted the tribes with the British occupation. However it is necessary to emphasise two points of special relevance to the Euphrates tribes, first the inexperience of the political officers,[1] and secondly the different personal relations between the political officers and the shaykhs. Personal relations were of special importance. Mann in Um al-Ba'rur was able to win the friendship of some of the shaykhs, such as Marzuq of the 'Awabid tribe,[2] whereas Daly in Diwaniya had alienated many shaykhs by his high-handed behaviour towards them. Wilson wrote on 24th April 1920, "Daly causes me some anxiety. He is awfully efficient, but he is a hard man and a bit too hard for his Arabs who would like to be treated a little less justly and a little more kindly."[3] It was partly because of this treatment that Shaykh Haji Mukhif and Sha'lan al-'Atiyya of the Akra' and Daghara threw in their lot with the rising.

The British never lacked allies in the tribes. The political officers in accordance with the policy of alignment with the shaykhs had in many places managed to gain the support of leading shaykhs, such as 'Adai al-Jaryan of the Albu Sultan tribe in Hilla and 'Umran al-Sa'dun of the Khaza'il tribe. Both of these shaykhs had had contacts with the British

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1 Haldane, The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, p. 21.
2 Mann, An Administrator in the Making, p. 237. Marzuq tried to avoid the rising in Shamiya and he advised Mann to leave before things got worse.
3 A. T. Wilson's Paper, Vol. II. Add. Ms. 52456. A letter from Wilson to G. C. Stephenson, dated April 24, 1920.

since 1917, and once the British had control over the Middle Euphrates other shaykhs had also worked with the British in the hope of securing favours. It was reported in the Samiya diary for October 1918, "that there were few men who backed us originally who had not an axe to grind, and whose influence is based on the power we gave them, instead of there being an accession to our power by the influence they gave us."[1]

It was natural for those shaykhs who supported the British solely from short-term self interest to abandon the British once they felt that no profit could be obtained from them. For instance 'Alwan al-Sa'dun, the leading shaykh of the Bani Ḥasan tribe, who for a time received from the British a salary of 600 Rs. and acted as the government agent at Kufa with an additional salary of 300 Rs. per month, lost both his post and his salary once the British were well established in early 1919 and soon drifted into the company of the malcontented and actively supported the rising. Once the situation in the Middle Euphrates changed for the worse, in early 1920, the political officers actively resumed the policy of winning over the shaykhs by buttering their bread. In April 1920 three leading members of Ḥilla Divisional Council, 'Adai al-Jaryan, Muhammad 'Ali Qazwini and 'Umaran al-Sa'dun, who had withstood the pressure of the Mujtahids to resign, were offered as a reward, 2,000 mishara for al-Qazwini and 1,500 mishara each for Jaryan and 'Umaran. Ironically al-Jaryan was also given 100 British rifles and 100 rounds of ammunition per rifle as a reward for disarming his tribe.[2]

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1 Administration Reports, Samiya Diary, October 1918.
2 F.O. 371/5076/E 8911. Proceedings of the Divisional Council of the Ḥilla Division, held on 28th April 1920.

But this policy was bound to create jealousies and prejudices among other shaykhs. For instance shaykh Shukhayr al-Haymus, the opponent of 'Adai in the leadership of their tribe, moved strongly against the British, and was active in the rising. Similarly, when Shaykh Mukhif lost British backing which was transferred to another shaykh, the former gradually turned against the British and in the end he was imprisoned and deported.

In the Middle Euphrates the pro-British shaykhs were incapable of stemming the rising, partly because of its religious backing, which they could not publicly oppose, and partly because their hold over their tribesmen was weakening. On July 25, the Civil Commissioner reported that in Hilla Division the tribes were getting out of the control of their own shaykhs.[1] This was the result of the influence of the 'Ulama, but it was also due to maltreatment of the tribesmen by their shaykhs. Wilson argued in a despatch dated 12th August 1920:

> We have as a matter of policy backed the Sheikhs and supported their authority. They in their turn have tried to (? word omitted) too great a burden on their tribesmen with the laudable intention of improving cultivation and ensuring good crops, by extensive work on clearing canals and making bunds, and incidentally have lined their own pockets very very substantially. The Sheikhs have discovered too late that they did not possess influence that they were supposed to have over their tribesmen, and are suffering accordingly.[2]

In Diwaniya Division a pro-British shaykh, 'Alwan Jihali, of the 'Akra' tribe was murdered by his tribesmen, who later joined the rising, and by late August almost all the pro-British shaykhs had been forced to announce their support

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1 F.O. 371/5228/E 9368. From Civil Commissioner, 25th July 1920.
2 F.O. 371/5229/E 10109. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 12th August 1920.

for the rising. Even 'Umaran al-Sa'dun joined the rising once his district was in the hands of the tribes that had risen and there was no chance of British help reaching him. In Samawa town, when the British political officer was obliged to withdraw he left Sayid Taffar, a local leader who had been a long time in British pay, in control. When the rising reached Samawa Sayid Taffar nonetheless threw in his lot with the rising and helped to attack the isolated British garrison.[1]

The leadership of the tribal sayids and the directions of the Mujtahids secured this almost unanimous backing for the rising in the Middle Euphrates. Major Pully, political officer at Hilla, reported on August 6th, 1920, that "The unity of purpose and lack of dissensions between the big Shaikhs and Sarkals is curious and points to some strong controlling personality behind movement. Nearly all our Shaikhs have been drawn in."[2]

It may help to give a clearer picture of just what went on in the tribal areas to look more closely at what happened to Dhari al-Mahmud, shaykh of the Zoba' tribe in the Faluja district. When the British first occupied Baghdad they helped Dhari to bring under his control the various sections of the Zoba'. In the annual administration report of 1917 for the district of Faluja, it was reported that the Zoba' "are split up into many small sections who have inherited from the Turkish regime the idea of their independence.

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1 Iraq, Ministry of Interior, despatch from Assistant Political Officer, Samawa, dated 20th August 1920. Also see telegram from Political Officer at Samawa to High Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 14th November 1920. When the rising ended the British inflicted a severe punishment on Taffar.

2 F.O. 371/5228/E 9848. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 6th August 1920.

Naturally in many small matters it is convenient to deal with these smaller shaikhs direct, but I am doing everything possible to establish Shaikh Dhari's prestige."[1] The British administration assigned a monthly allowance of Rs. 750 to Dhari until early 1918, when the allowance was stopped. Thereafter he gradually lost favour, because the British needed him less and less. However, in June 1920, when troubles were brewing in Baghdad and the Middle Euphrates, the British political officer at Dulaym remembered Dhari and asked permission to resume the payment of an allowance to Dhari, this time of Rs. 500.[2] This request was duly sanctioned as from April 1st, 1920. By then, however, it was too late to regain the affection of Dhari. The news of the rising in the Middle Euphrates and the emissaries of the tribesmen combined to persuade him to throw in his lot with the rising. In August he marked his conversion by killing the Dulaym political officer.

The effects of Dhari's conversion turned out to be limited. Shaykh 'Ali Sulayman, head of Dulaym tribe, and Fahad al-Hadhal, paramount chief of the Beduin tribe of 'Aniza, remained loyal to the British administration, frustrated the attempted rising in the Dulaym, and even forced Dhari to leave the Faluja district.[3] Appeals from Ramadhan Shilash to Sulayman fell flat.

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1 C.O. 696/Vol. I. Administration Reports, Iraq, 1917-1918, Faluja District, p. 89.

2 F.O. 371/5230/E 12490. Copy of a memorandum dated 25th June 1920. From Political Officer, Dulaym Division, to Civil Commissioner. And reply from the office of Civil Commissioner to Political Officer, Dulaym, dated 29th June 1920.

3 F.O. 371/5128/E 980. Translation of a letter from Ramadhan Shilash to Shaykh 'Ali Sulayman, dated 19th Rabi Awal (12 December 1919).
"Your duty is to endeavour to save yourselves from the British Government as there are no ties between you and them in religion, nationality, or language. You should try to annex yourselves to the Arab Government and rise with one voice.... It is your duty to do this according to the rites of Muslim religion, patriotism, and Arab sagacity. ... "

Both the shaykhs who stood by the British were in British pay and had been left in their district in actual control of the administration, subject to only a bare minimum of British intervention. Since their tribesmen were mainly beduins and the main tax they had to pay, that on animals, was a slight one, they had few financial grievances. Moreover, the tribes were sunnis and no campaign initiated in Karbala and Najaf would have had much effect on either shaykhs or tribesmen. The rising might well have spread to this area had Nijris al-Qu'ud, a rival of Sulayman, had his way, but the end of the Dayr al-Zur affair and the collapse of the Arab regime in Syria curbed his activities and he did not play an important part in the rising.

We must now turn to the Diyala area, the home of the Bani Tamim, the 'Izza and the 'Bayd tribes. Agriculture in Diyala had suffered greatly from the war.[1] An unusually high percentage of the land was Tapu land or in the private ownership of Baghdadi notables such as the Naqib family, 'Abd al-Rahman Haydari and 'Abd al-Jabar Pasha Khayat, or of the Greek firm of Zarifi and Co.[2] This tended to reduce the share of the crops allocated to the cultivators, who were mainly tribesmen. The inhabitants were also unusually heavily taxed because the proximity of Baghdad made tax collection more efficient. Hence elements of discontent were deep rooted in the area.

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1 C.O. 696/Vol. I. Administration Reports for 1917, Daltawa District, pp. 153-4. "Disadvantages caused by War Conditions": 1. meagre supply of water, 2. interruption to agriculture by passing of troops and damaging crops, 3. defensive lines which prevented lands from cultivation, 4. excessive number of roads interrupting irrigation, as well as other difficulties common with other areas.

2 Ibid., Ba'quba District, 1917, p. 160.

The initial success of the rising in the Middle Euphrates and the widespread rumours that Britain was going to evacuate the country encouraged the tribes to throw in their lot against the British in the hope of improving their lot and of overthrowing the absentee landlords.[1] There was also some desire to settle old tribal disputes.[2] However, once the British had regained control, almost all the shaykhs who had taken part in the rising submitted and offered their loyalty and their apologies.[3]

The Muntafik's half-hearted participation in the rising was a result of two contradictory factors. The tribes and shaykhs, on the one hand, had no illusion about British military power, which had been demonstrated to them during their engagements during the war. On the other hand, they were dissatisfied with the land settlement, the continued power of the Sa'dun Tapu holders, and the failure of the British administration to effect a settlement in favour of the actual occupants of the land, the tribesmen. British strength was the main factor in holding back the leading shaykhs, Badr Rumaydh, 'Ali al-Fadhil and Khayun al-'Bayd, who had previously fought against the British and suffered accordingly. Khayun was the key figure in the Shattra area and was approached by the ringleaders in Najaf, but he remained cautious

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1 Looting was particularly widespread. See F. O. 371/5079/E 12859. Police Report, Baghdad, No. 36, dated 4th September 1920. It was reported that many of the wealthy Baghdadi notables were trying to obtain arms for the defence of their property.

2 The 'Bayd tribe attacked the 'Azza tribe while the latter was engaged with the British forces.

3 Bassir, The Iraqi Question, p. 242. The shaykhs signed a petition declaring their loyalty and regret.

and argued that the Muntafik tribes were exhausted by their internal disputes and the depredations of the landlords. Furthermore, unlike other Euphrates tribes, they had suffered greatly from the British and Khayun said that he was not at present willing to take the risk of a revolt unless adequate preparations had been made.[1] In fact Khayun seems never to have seriously thought of joining the rising. He maintained an attitude of wait and see for four weeks after the rising had begun and frustrated attempts by other tribes to overthrow the British political officer at Shattra, who managed to establish a satisfactory working relationship with Khayun and impressed upon him "that in the long run he will best serve his own interests by being a good servant of the Government."[2] But eventually even Khayun had to give in, though when he did so he first helped the political officer to leave the district unharmed. A British official in Baghdad commented on Khayun's attitude that the "Most important Sheikh in district, Khayun al 'Obaid, who owes none of his strength to us but has since the Armistice been a strong supporter of the Civil administration, particularly during the last two months, found himself unable to check rising spread of fanaticism among his tribesmen."[3]

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1 Furati, Comment on the Great Iraqi Revolution, Baghdad, 1952, pp. 22-23.
2 F.O. 371/5230/E 12038. From Political Officer, Shattra, to the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad. Memorandum, "Shatrah troubles - Ramadhan, 1920." Cited The Shaikh and the Peasants in Iraq 1917-1958, unpublished thesis by John Batatu, p. 108. Intelligence Reports, Nos. 2 and 3 of 15/1/1922 and 1/2/1922, and No. 4 of 14/2/1922.
3 F.O. 371/5229/E 10625. Copy of telegram from General Commanding Officer, Baghdad, dated 27th August 1920.

Another source of support for the administration was the merchants and landlords of the towns in the Muntafik area, whose interests were the first to suffer from any tribal upheaval.[1] They helped the British to maintain effective control over the main urban centre in the Muntafik, Nasiriya town.

Finally, a comment must be made on the reasons why the Tigris tribes remained unaffected by the spread of the rising on the Euphrates. Declining tribal solidarity arising from the system of land tenure and from the shaykh-peasant relationship, which took the place of the shaykh-tribesman relationship elsewhere, meant that there was a basic difference between tribal conditions on the Euphrates and those on the Tigris. A Euphrates tribesman conceived of the difference as consisting in the fact that the Euphrates tribes had preserved their traditional tribal characteristics, love of freedom and self-respect, whilst among the Tigris tribes Arab characteristics were weakened by their submission to Arab and non-Arab governments, and also by the effects of the urban and non-Arab communities on them.[2] But this judgement was tainted with prejudice and oversimplification. The following are some of the more important factors which directly influenced the attitude of the Tigris tribes:

First, the Tigris shaykhs were in a weak position because of their reliance on the government to maintain their land holdings, without which they would have been practically powerless. By defying the British the shaykhs

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1 F.O. 371/6348/E 2904. Secret. Intelligence Report, No. 4, dated 31.12.1920.
2 Far'aun, The Truth about the Iraqi Revolt, p. 22.

would have stood to lose a great deal.

Secondly, the land was on the whole lightly taxed and most of the burden was passed to the Sarkals and peasants. The following table indicates the difference between the Middle Euphrates, Muntafik, and the Tigris payment of taxes.

Table

Area	Cultivated land[1] in Sq. Kilometers	Population[2]	Taxes (land[3] revenue, date, Tapu and Koda)
Tigris ('Amara and Kut)	15.220	506.000	29.82.530
Muntafik	4.710	327.000	12.36.970
Middle Euphrates (Hilla, Diwaniya, Shamiya, including Najaf and Karbala)	11.510	563.000	62.88.020

Furthermore unlike the Euphrates tribes the Tigris area was less unruly and had become accustomed to payment of taxes since the early years of the British occupation.

Thirdly, like the Muntafik, the Tigris area had encountered the power of the British army and had no illusions about British strength, or about the British ability to make use of the rivers and railways which penetrated the

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1 According to Dowson, An Inquiry into Land Tenure and Related Questions, Table I.
2 F.O. 371/4152/147722. From Civil Commissioner, dated 3rd October 1919. Result in round figures of divisional census.
3 F.O. 371/5074/ Summary of receipt.

whole of the district.

Fourthly, the existence of larger tribal units and of only a small number of shaykhs made it relatively easier for the British administration to control as well as to please them. As the influential shaykhs were also usually the holders of government leases they saw the advantages of retaining a lease under British protection as compared with the dangers of having to fight for the land.

Lastly, although the Tigris tribes were Shi'i and were subject to the influence of their 'Ulama and Mujtahids, there was little leadership by sayids and little direct contact with the major centres of shi'i power, Karbala and Najaf, so that the call for Jihad fell flat.[1] However, the Tigris shaykhs could not stand the strain of active opposition to the rising and there were reports that in secret meetings they "agreed in event of sign of weakness being shown by the British Government to help its downfall."[2] But as long as the Muntafik and the Gharaf area remained half-heartedly involved in the rising there was no chance of spreading the rising to 'Amara and Kut.

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1 F.O. 371/5081/E 13338. Mesopotamia Police Report, No. 37, dated 11th September 1920, cited a translation of a pamphlet distributed in 'Amara. "To all Sheikhs of tribes and fellow countrymen. This is to inform you that the Arabs have weakened the power and prestige of the British forces. You must have heard of the gallantry of the Euphrates tribes; .... while you were asleep in the bed of ignorance. Where are the Albu Muhammad, Bani Lam, Azairij, Albu Diraj, Sawahed, Sudan and others of our countrymen? Where is their Arabian chivalry, religious zeal, and love of country?"

2 F.O. 371/5229/E 10109. From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to India Office, dated 17th August 1920.

Chapter 9

The Creation of an Arab State

The rising fell like a bombshell upon Whitehall. The Prime Minister said in bewilderment in the House of Commons on 22 July, "I do not know the reason for the recent attacks".[1] Amidst increasing demands for evacuation and against a background of war weariness and reluctance to accept further commitments in Iraq, the departments concerned began to reassess their policies and to seek the reasons behind what they regarded as a sudden and inexplicable outbreak.

The War Office in a letter dated 22 July 1920 suggested to the India Office that the causes for the rising were primarily local and that the civil administration in Iraq ought to have given an earlier warning that trouble was coming.[2] The India Office took a different stand, attributing the rising to outside causes and arguing that conditions in Iraq were merely contributory. On 2 August the India Office asked Wilson to account for the rising. Wilson's reply came in two telegrams, dated 5 and 12 August 1920. In the first Wilson put the blame on outside influences, the "steady inflow of propaganda from Syria and to a less degree from Turkey, supported by ample funds" and on the reduction of the British forces, whose weakness demonstrated during the Dayr al-Zur clashes had given an impetus to armed resistance.

Meanwhile, the announcement of terms of peace with Turkey had, as anticipated, an unfavourable effect on public opinion,

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1 Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 22nd July, 1920, Vol. 132, col. 624.
2 F.O. 371/5229/10440. "Note on the Causes of the Outbreak in Mesopotamia" by the Department of the India Office Concerned. The date as entered was 26 August 1920.

> and enabled extremists to rally to their cause much useful material in the form of ex-Turkish officials and large body of public opinion, who wished for maintenance of Turkish Empire, and resented acquisitions of Greece. Coming as it did at beginning of Ramzan, and synchronized with our evacuation of Enzeli and Resht, and reports of Bolshevik success in other parts of the world, it gave extremists an opportunity ... to represent us on the one hand as pursuing an anti-Islamic policy, and on the other hand as rapidly growing weaker.
>
> At this point other foreign influences commenced to make themselves felt, notably U. S. Consul and other United States citizens who, I have every reason to know, make it their business to convey to extremists in detail all references in English Press unfavourable to local and Imperial policy of H. M. Government, notably articles from the "Times" which are freely referred to by extremists in their public speeches and conversations. In this connection we know that £7,000 in Turkish gold reached extremists in Kerbela during May and June....
>
> I do not think rebels have any agrarian grievances; taxation is light and harvest good; were there any such grievances, area of disturbances would not be limited as now to Shia districts within reach of Najaf and Kerbela.[1]

But in Wilson's second telegram, written after the rising had spread to Faluja and Diyala, which were inhabited mainly by Sunni, Wilson gave further reasons for disaffection with his administration. He now argued first that the administration had moved too fast and was too efficient for the people, secondly that unavoidable consequences of the war such as high prices and shortages had led to discontent, thirdly that forced labour was bitterly resented ("The Arabs would rather risk a flood, an act of God, than do heavy work on flooding banks"), fourthly that the landed interests "who reject the idea that landlords have duties as well as rights" had become disaffected, fifthly that the difference of race and religion between the administration

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1 F. O. 371/5228/E 9849. From the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 5th August, 1920.

and the people counted for something though it was "used more as an excuse than as a cause itself", sixthly that the influence of the Shi'i 'Ulama had been exerted against the British, and seventhly that the collection of taxes and particularly of the land revenue had caused widespread resentment (a comment which contradicted his earlier telegram in which he had referred to the lightness of taxation). Finally Wilson rehearsed some of the outside reasons already given in his first telegram, President Wilson's fourteen points, the influence of Syria, and the delay in deciding the future of the country. Wilson now accepted that the administration had made a number of mistakes, including relying upon shaykhs who exploited their tribesmen and the use of aeroplanes against the recalcitrants. He also added that "It is held by many here, both British and native, that I made a mistake in not dealing with prominent agitators here drastically before the movement had reached its present dimension."[1]

In both telegrams Wilson failed to give any recognition to the legitimate aspirations of the people for independence and failed to recognise the responsibility of his administration for the alienation of a large proportion of the effective political leadership of the country. The India Office, relying on Wilson's telegrams, came to the conclusion that the centre of trouble was outside Iraq:

> 1. Instead of the War Office looking to Mesopotamia, Mesopotamia should be looking to the War Office for assistance; and the Foreign Office, India Office and War Office Intelligence Branches should combine to seek the focus of this conspiracy.

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1 F.O. 371/5229/E 10109. From the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, 12th August, 1920.

2. We must recognise that we are fighting in Mesopotamia not a constitutional question as to the future government of Mesopotamia, but for the very existence of civilisation in the Middle East...

3. The only means whereby we can combat the ultra-extremists is by securing the support of the pro-British nationalists. These must be organised under one head. There are two possible heads, Feisal and Saiyid Talib. Sir A. T. Wilson alternatively supports either.... The events of the next few days may show which horse we should back. Possibly we may run both, Saiyid Talib as Governor of Basrah and Feisal as Arab "King" at Baghdad.[1]

The India Office enlisted the services of Major N. Bray, senior intelligence officer in the India government, to investigate the causes of the rising. Major Bray's findings were incorporated in two reports, "Mesopotamia. Preliminary Report on Causes of Unrest"[2] dated September 1920, and "Mesopotamia. Causes of Unrest."[3] dated October 1920. His conclusions were quite unrealistic. He held that the rising formed part of an international conspiracy embracing Germany, Soviet Russia, the Kamalists and the pan-Islamic societies, with the Bolsheviks as the master minds behind it. Its aim was the destruction of the British Empire, and the disaffected Iraqis, including notably the 'Ahd society, were merely instruments of this conspiracy. In Bray's second report he suggested a counter measure in Mesopotamia. This was that an attempt should be made to separate the pan-Arabs from the Turkish nationalists, and indirectly from the whole anti-British conspiracy.

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1 F.O. 371/5229/E 10440. "Note on the Causes of the Outbreak in Mesopotamia", India Office, dated August 26th, 1920.
2 F.O. 371/5230/E 12339.
3 F.O. 371/5231/E 12966.

> As a direct means of doing this it would be well worth considering the practicability of detaching the pan-Arab elements from the Turkish Nationalists through the medium of the El 'Ahd Society of which Jaafar al Askari is a member.... Tabit Abd an Nur, whose son was a prominent member of the society is now in Paris and still maintains that the 'Ahd would prove a valuable help to us in pacifying Arabia.
>
> The pan-Arab party in Mesopotamia is as sincere and ardent in its desire for independence as the Egyptian Nationalists. The majority of this party favour development under British control, they have been persuaded that the independence they hoped for was being denied them. If we can enlighten them as to our honesty of purpose there would appear to be good grounds for hoping we might detach them from the Nationalist-Bolshevist control.[1]

Foreign Office officials disagreed with Bray's analysis and put more emphasis on the local factors behind the rising. However, they came to substantially the same conclusion, namely that an attempt should be made to win over the Arab nationalists. Clayton wrote in a minute dated 26 August 1920 on the India Office Memorandum "Cause of Outbreak in Mesopotamia".

> In my opinion external influences and subversive propaganda seldom incite orientals of the lower classes (especially the peasantry) to extreme action on an extended scale, unless the ground is prepared by the existence of grievances (real or fancied).... The situation is not unlike that which obtained in Egypt in the spring of 1919, and these remarks are based on experience there. It is therefore, essential to take immediate steps to find out and remove the "local" causes while seeking for the focus of any "external" conspiracy which may exist.

Clayton went on to propose the fostering of a "nationalist" party to take over the government, subject to British advice and control.[2] Similarly, Mr. Cornwallis, Director of the Arab Bureau, drew up a note on 12 October 1920,

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1 F.O. 371/5231/E 12966. "Mesopotamia. Causes of Unrest." by Major N. Bray, Special Intelligence Officer attached to the Political Department.
2 F.O. 371/5229/E 10440. A minute by Major Clayton, dated 26.8.1920.

criticising Major Bray's memorandum, and argued that the Arabs had genuine grievances and that their co-operation with outside forces was a transitory phenomenon:

> I have had their views expounded to me over and over again by the chief extremists, both Syrian and Baghdadi. Their cry was always the same "Give us our independence and your practical support. Independence is our life for which we have fought and we will continue to fight for it against all who deny it." They had only the one idea and though they were one and all averse to any outside helper except themselves, they were honest enough to warn us of their intention if we failed them. That was at the beginning. Later when they became convinced that we intended to exploit Mesopotamia for ourselves, they turned to the Turkish Nationalists, who were only too ready to receive them and so became mixed up in the great conspiracy.
>
> I do not, however, believe that their connection with it is lasting or sincere....
>
> I believe it to be true to say that the rising in Mesopotamia is a direct result of our policy and that it has merely been hastened and strengthened by an alliance with those forces which are working for the disintegration of our Empire....

Cornwallis went on to argue that the British government could still regain the confidence of the majority of the Arabs by pursuing

> ... a liberal and generous policy and ... since the alternatives seem to be either a complete relinquishment of all we have won or the maintenance of a large and costly army at a time when the British public is clamouring for economy, it is one that will have to be faced.[1]

Young of the Foreign Office endorsed these views and argued that there was urgent need for unified control of Middle East affairs to put an end to the contradictory postures of the India Office and the Foreign Office.[2]

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1 F.O. 371/5230/E 12339. "Remarks on "Preliminary Report on Causes of Unrest in Mesopotamia", dated 12.10.1920.

2 Ibid. A minute by H. Young on the above, commented that Bray, because of his special attachment to the India Office might have "felt bound to take the line of defending the India Office against any possible attack, and it

Contd.

When Cox arrived at London early in July for consultations before his eventual return to Baghdad as High Commissioner, he expressed alarm at the state of mind created by a section of the press and by the hostile attitude of the public to any further commitments in Iraq. Cox was then, early in July, convinced that the outburst at Rumaytha was merely a local affair instigated by extremists in Najaf and Karbala and "that it was not due to any specific hostility to the British or to the Baghdad administration." He opposed any scheme involving withdrawal from the country or even from part of it. In a long memorandum dated 24 July 1920 Cox set out the case for the continuation of British control over Iraq. He emphasised the old arguments about the vital importance of Iraq in the defence of the British Empire and as a route to India and the hinterland of the Persian Gulf. As to Mosul he wrote:

> I can only contemplate with the greatest dismay the suggestion that we should withdraw from Mosul. Such a course would greatly prejudice our position in Baghdad and our prestige throughout Mesopotamia. I regard the maintenance of our present position in Mesopotamia as a factor of enormous importance to our general interests in the Middle East and India. From an economic point of view I think it is common knowledge that the possibilities of Mesopotamia in oil, cotton, and wheat make it a country of great promise. I understand that it is estimated that it will produce in the near future 2.000.000 cwt. of cotton and 1.000.000 tons of wheat. Oil is, of course, an uncertain quantity, but the prospect is at any rate sufficient to attract to Mesopotamia the interest and capital of very large concerns.

When he came to the financial aspects of the Mesopotamia administration, which provoked the main criticisms of British commitments in Iraq, Cox argued that apart from the army the administration was self-supporting. Moreover, he

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is probably for this reason that he passes very lightly over local discontent and faults in administration."

envisaged a change in the position of the army. With the creation of an Arab state a local force could be raised to replace the British forces and increasingly this might be financed by local taxation. Indeed, three years would see the accomplishment of this objective. In the same memorandum Cox came to the defence of the civil administration and of A. T. Wilson.[1]

The weight of Cox's views and of those of the Foreign Office pointed in the same direction and eventually resulted in Cox being sent to Iraq to create an Arab state. Cox's instructions were indeed drawn up very much on Foreign Office lines:

> 1. That the precise form of the Government to be created, in which the sovereignty of the Arab State will be vested (subject to such limitations for the time being as may be prescribed in the Mandate) will be a matter for the free choice of the peoples of Mesopotamia, ... Similarly the choice of a ruler (if they decided in favour of a monarchy) will be left to them.
>
> 2. That the Arab Government must accept the Mandate ...
>
> 3. That the personnel of the Government must from the first be as completely Arab as possible, i.e., it must be composed as far as, and as soon as, practicable of Arab Ministers of State for each Department, British assistance being rendered in each case by a Secretary who will be an employee of the Arab Government. Subject to the following reservations:-
>
> 4. That the control over such British garrison as must be maintained in the country during the period of the Mandate will be with the British representative.
>
> 5. That His Majesty's Government as Mandatory will be responsible for the conduct of the foreign affairs and relations of the State.
>
> 6. That so long as it remains necessary to maintain a British garrison in Mesopotamia wholly or partly at the expense of the British Exchequer, it is essential that H.M. Government

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1 F.O. 371/5231/E 13975. Appreciation of Mesopotamia-Persia Situation by Sir P. Cox, dated 24th July, 1920.
See also Lady Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, pp. 526-527.

should be in a position to exercise effective supervision over the finances of the State....

....

8. That in all matters in which any difference of opinion may arise the Arab Government will, in the last resource, act upon the advice formally tendered to it by the High Commissioner on behalf of His Majesty's Government.[1]

Lord Curzon, as Foreign Secretary, in a note dated 11 September 1920, drew the attention of the India Office to the need for Cox to endeavour as soon as possible to associate some leading Arabs with the new government in an attempt to bring about an early separation between the Arabs and the Turks.[2] And on 17 September the India Office instructed Wilson to announce immediately the return of Cox to Iraq as High Commissioner to implement the new policy of the British government that an Arab state should be created as soon as possible.[3]

On 11 October 1920 Cox arrived at Baghdad and a day or so later he assumed his new responsibility as High Commissioner and lost no time in forming the first Council of State. The Naqib of Baghdad, 'Abd al-Rahman, a staunch supporter of the British administration, was invited on 23 October 1920 to be president of this Council and it was arranged that the invitations to members of the council and the distribution of their duties should appear to emanate from the Naqib in an attempt to give the Council "a national and

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1 F.O. 371/5229/E 10752. "Appointment of Sir Percy Cox as High Commissioner: Instructions of His Majesty's Government." Revised Draft, dated August 28th, 1920.

2 F.O. 371/5229/10440. From the Foreign Office, September 11th, 1920, on behalf of the Foreign Secretary to the India Office.

3 F.O. 371/5230/E 11630. From the Secretary of State for India Office to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 17th September, 1920.

not a British façade."[1] Besides the president, the Council consisted of eight members, each of them a head of department. They were the following:

The Naqib	President
Sayid Talib	Minister of the Interior
Sasun Hisqayl	Minister of Finance
Ja'far al-'Askari	Minister of Defence
Mustafa Alusi	Minister of Justice
'Izzat Pasha Karkukli	Minister of Public Works
Sayid Muḥammad Mahdi Tabtaba'i	Minister of Education and Health
'Abd al-Latif Mandil	Minister of Commerce
Muḥammad 'Ali Fadhil	Minister of Auqaf

Sasun Ḥisqayl was a leading member of the Jewish community. Al-Alusi was a member of a leading Sunni family and had held the position of Qadhi, Ja'far al-'Askari, and Governor of Aleppo under the Faysal regime in Syria and was a leading member of the 'Ahd society. 'Izzat Pasha was of Turkish origin and was a former Turkish general and a leading personality in Karkuk. 'Abd al-Latif Mandil was a wealthy notable in Basra and a friend of Sayid Talib. Muḥammad 'Ali Fadhil was an ex-deputy and a citizen of Mosul. The only Shi'i was Sayid Muḥammad Mahdi Tabtaba'i, from Karbala. In addition 12 notables and shaykhs were appointed as members of the Council without portfolios.[2] The Council of State was completely subordinated to the High

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1 F.O. 371/5231/E 13471. From the High Commissioner, Baghdad, 26th October, 1920.

2 Report by His Majesty's High Commissioner on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the 'Iraq. For the period from October 1st, 1920 to March 31st, 1922, pp. 3-4.

Commissioner and a British Adviser was attached to each Ministry to tell the Minister what to do. The High Commissioner was the ultimate authority in Iraq, since he could amend or reject any decision taken by the Council of State. The Arab Ministers were not permitted to act without the approval of the British Advisers, and in the case of differences between an Arab Minister and an Adviser, the decision was to be referred to the Council of State at its next meeting. During the interval the Adviser would report upon the issue to the High Commissioner and presumably the Council would try to follow the wishes of the High Commissioner. An Adviser had the right to attend the meetings of the Council of State whenever an issue related to his department was discussed.[1] There was no doubt where the real power lay and that the Arab Council of State was mere window-dressing.[2]

Once an Arab Council of State had been formed the question of an Arab ruler became urgent, first because of the need to complete the façade of the Arab government and secondly because a sovereign was needed to contract with the British government a treaty to replace the draft Mandate. The future ruler required two qualifications, first that he should be acceptable to the majority of the population and secondly that he should have the confidence of the British government and accept its conditions, namely those

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1 Ireland, Iraq, Appendix VI. "Instructions for the Council of State".
2 F.O. 371/5231/E 14588. From the High Commissioner, Baghdad, 16th November, 1920. A further step in dressing-up the new administration was to move the Council into the former Turkish government buildings and to invent a new flag to replace the Union Jack, because without these changes, Cox argued, the "general public will continue to have some ground for not being entirely convinced of seriousness of intention of H.M. Government."

laid down in the Mandate.

The plebiscite in the winter of 1918-1919 had been the first serious attempt to find an acceptable head of state, but its results were indecisive. Although there was a noticeable desire for an Arab ruler and several names were mentioned, none of the names was accepted by a majority. In London Lawrence proposed in November 1918 the appointment of a son of the Sharif of Mecca, but this suggestion was strongly opposed by the British administration in Baghdad. A. T. Wilson and later the Bonham-Carter Constitutional Committee preferred government by a British High Commissioner. As the future of Iraq had not been agreed upon in Whitehall the question was deferred until after the grant of the Mandate. However, A. T. Wilson, after a rather sudden change of mind, telegraphed on 31 July 1920 in favour of Faysal:

> Will H.M. Government consider possibility of offering him Amirate of Mesopotamia? Objections entertained on this to Amir have hitherto been primarily that no suitable person could be found. We have always regarded Feisal as booked for Syria. Nothing that I have heard during the last few months has led me to modify my views of unsuitability of Abdulla and our experience of last few weeks in Baghdad makes it fairly clear that no local candidate will be successful in obtaining sufficient local support to enable him to make good. Feisal alone of all Arabian potentates has any idea of practical difficulties of running a civilised government on Arab lines. He can scarcely fail to realise that foreign assistance is vital to the continued existence of an Arab State. He realises danger of relying on an Arab army. If we were to offer him the Amirate of Mesopotamia not only might we re-establish our position in the eyes of Arab world, but we also might go far to wipe out accusation which could otherwise be made against us of bad faith both with Feisal and with people of this country, if H.M. Government eventually decides drastically to restrict its commitments in this country there would be better prospects of it being done with Feisal here than by any other possible arrangement.[1]

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1 F.O. 371/5038/E 9252. Copy of a telegram from Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to Foreign Office, dated 31st July, 1920.

In August a Cabinet committee discussed Faysal's possible candidature. The Prime Minister and Lord Curzon, who had just returned from France, reported strong French objections to any plan to install Faysal in Iraq and as a result it was agreed not to pursue the issue any further. The British government, however, maintained their right to revive the issue if in future there should be a popular demand for Faysal in Iraq.[1] Hence the original draft instruction to Cox which contained a specific reference to Faysal's candidature was revised, leaving the question of the future ruler in Iraq open.[2] This change was more in line with Cox's own views, as set out in his July 1920 memorandum:

> It will be remembered that Sir E. Bonham Carter's held the view, with which I agree, that it would smooth our path from the point of administration if the creation of an Emir could be postponed for some years, and if the British representative could fill his place in the meanwhile. On the other hand, I gather the opinion prevailing here is that, without the creation of a definite head, the idea of sovereignty in the Arab State would be difficult to interpret.... Sir E. Bonham Carter's Committee has expressed the view that Mesopotamia itself contains no eligible candidate. In the case of any aspirant from outside, the two or three have been mentioned, such as Abdulla, son of the Sheriff, and Ibn Saud. The objections which could be forwarded in either instance seem to me at present insuperable. At the same time I keep an open mind ... but my own opinion is that if a Head of the State is sine qua non, the State should be established as a republic with an elected president....[3]

In Baghdad Sir Percy Cox came to favour Faysal. In a telegram to

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1 F.O. 371/6349/E 583. From the High Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 26th December, 1920.
2 F.O. 371/5229/E 10758. Mesopotamia. Appointment of Sir Percy Cox as High Commissioner: Instructions of His Majesty's Government. Draft Instructions and Revised Draft Instructions, dated 28th August, 1920.
3 F.O. 371/5231/E 13975. "Note on the Mesopotamia-Persia Situation by Sir Percy Cox." July 24, 1920.

his government on 26 December 1920 Cox suggested Faysal as the most suitable ruler for Iraq:

> As regards the people of this country, I am doubtful if the Congress will ever reach a result on the question of the ruler, and believe that majority would prefer to have the question decided for them, or at any rate that we should give them a lead; ...

Cox pointed out that French opposition could be met by the manner in which Faysal was chosen and he went on to propose a suitable method.[1] In addition Cox's views were ardently supported by Gertrude Bell.[2]

Cox's support for Faysal inclined the government in London to favour Faysal too, but before committing themselves the British government took the opportunity of Faysal's presence in London for discussions about Anglo-Hijaz relations to sound him out first. Lord Curzon asked Mr. Cornwallis, a friend of Faysal who had been closely associated with him during the war and in Syria, to meet Faysal and in a purely confidential and apparently personal talk to raise the possibility of Faysal's candidacy for the throne of Iraq. Curzon decided beforehand what Cornwallis was to say in the interview. Cornwallis was to emphasise the informality of the talk, then to explain Britain's need to avoid offending France or to let anything come

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1 F.O. 371/6349/E 583. From the High Commissioner, Baghdad, dated 26th December, 1920. Also F.O. 371/6349/E 277/100/93. From the High Commissioner, Baghdad, January 2nd, 1921.

2 Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, Vol. II, p. 581. In a letter dated 25 December, 1920. "I have been feeling a good deal lately how much the Arabs who are our friends want us to give them a lead. They constantly come to me, not only for advice on immediate conduct but in order to ask about the future: "But what do you think, Khatun?" ... I feel quite clear in my mind that there is only one workable solution, a son of the Sherif and for choice Faisal: very very much the first choice...."

between Britain and France. Then, as to the throne of Iraq, Cornwallis should point out that although the British government could not impose any particular ruler, they could still facilitate the candidature of any one whom they backed, provided that he should fulfil two conditions, first that he should accept the Mandate and secondly that he should abstain from any hostile action against France in Syria. Then Cornwallis was to suggest that Faysal should offer himself as a candidate and speaking for himself should lay down the path Faysal must pursue. First Faysal was to return to Hijaz; secondly he was to secure his father's agreement with the British government about their mutual interests in the area; thirdly he was to discuss with his father his candidacy for the throne of Iraq. If his father agreed, Faysal should then go ahead and declare his candidacy for the throne of Iraq without notifying the British government or seeking its formal approval. The last step was essential, Cornwallis should explain, so that Faysal should appear to be independent and not a pawn of the British government.[1] On 7 January 1921 Cornwallis met Faysal and afterwards made the following report. Faysal, Cornwallis reported, appreciated Britain's special relationship with France and maintained that he had no intention whatsoever of causing any trouble between the two powers. As regards the proposal that he should be a candidate Faysal, however, made difficulties.

> As regards your proposal about myself I am deeply grateful but I must reject it definitely. My father who really wants Abdulla to go to Mesopotamia would never approve and he and all

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1 F.O. 371/6349/E 583/100/93. Instructions to Mr. Cornwallis from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs regarding his interview with Amir Faysal, January 7th, 1921.

> the people would believe that I was working for myself and not for my nation, in agreement with the British. I will never put myself forward as a candidate....
>
> I would only go to Mesopotamia if H.M.G. rejected Abdulla and asked me to undertake the task and if the people said they wanted me. In such a case both my father and Abdulla would agree for they could not go against the wishes of the people. But I will not take the initiative. I was turned out of Syria. How could I allow it to be said that I had sought another throne at my brother's expense....
>
> As regards what you say concerning the attitude of the British Government, I will speak for myself and I think I can guarantee that my words represent also the opinion of Abdulla.
>
> Before the Arab revolt my father asked only for British help and guidance and that is still our policy to-day. In principle I would be prepared to accept to act up to the terms of the Mandate ... but I could not be expected to give my full consent to it before I had even seen it. I would only consent to go to Mesopotamia after I had been fully informed about the form of Government which H.M.G. ... there and after I had satisfied myself that it was being set up in the spirit which marked our earlier relations. I have little doubt that it would be so but I will accept nothing blindly.
>
> I would give any guarantee required not to intrigue against the French and, more, I would prevent anyone else from doing so... [1]

In the same interview Faysal emphasised his unselfishness and that his only concern was for the Arab cause and for a good relationship with Britain. Cornwallis was very much impressed by what Faysal said at the interview and argued in Faysal's favour at the conclusion of his report:

> There appear to be two courses open now. Firstly, to arrange for Abdulla to go to Mesopotamia.
>
> Secondly, to instruct Sir P. Cox quietly and unostentatiously to engineer the election for Feisal.
>
> The former is probably the easier but I believe that in the long run we should gain by adopting the latter for Feisal is by far the better man and will serve us loyally and well. [2]

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1 F.O. 371/6349/E 583/100/93. Note of an interview with Amir Faysal on 7th January, 1921 by Cornwallis, dated 8th January, 1921.
2 Ibid.

Cornwallis's interview with Faysal proved to be decisive. Two days after the interview Cox received a telegram from the Foreign Office to the effect that

> H.M. Government are not opposed in principle to Feisal's candidature, provided it is acceptable locally, but they see serious objection to any procedure involving intervention or what may be regarded as intervention by British Government pending spontaneous expression of wishes of Mesopotamia State. We must be careful not to encourage Feisal to adopt any line of action suggestive of British instigation. Inevitable result would be to arouse suspicions of French Government.

The despatch suggested an alternative course of action, namely that Cox should follow the steps discussed by Cornwallis in his interview with Faysal.

> So far as French difficulty is concerned, procedure suggested seems calculated to place us in most favourable position possible. We could hardly be accused of promoting Feisal's candidature if his name was not even put forward until after Abdullah's claim had been considered and rejected by Iraq State; whereas, if Abdullah be chosen, the difficulty with France, which is largely personal to Feisal, will not arise, or will arise in much smaller degrees.[1]

The rest of Whitehall soon agreed to accept the candidature of Faysal. The War Office in a memorandum dated 14 February 1921 balanced the pros and cons of his candidature and came down definitely in his favour.[2] On the same day Churchill resumed responsibility for the Colonial Office to which on 1 March all Middle East affairs were transferred, so eliminating the long-criticised duality of control. Churchill, with the help of prominent pro-Sharifian officials such as Lawrence and Young, put the final touches to Faysal's nomination and the constitutional basis of the new Iraq, at the Cairo

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1 F.O. 371/6349/E 557/100/93. From the Secretary of State for the Foreign Office to the High Commissioner, Mesopotamia, 9th January, 1921.
2 F.O. 371/6349/E 2279/100/93. "The proposed Kingdom of Mesopotamia", a War Office Memorandum dated 17th February, 1921.

conference between 12 and 22 March 1921.

Rivals to Faysal were not lacking. Among them was Sayid Talib, who since his return to Iraq in February 1920 had actively supported the British administration. Knowing that the British were searching for a ruler for Iraq, he sought to build up his image as a future king and openly offered himself as a candidate. Captain I. N. Clayton reported on 22 August 1920 a conversation with Talib in which Talib reported that he had received numerous offers of submission from the shaykhs of the Albu Muhammad and the Bani Lam, who addressed him as "Your Majesty", and also offers of support from many Christians and Jews. Talib had commented, however, that although he was convinced that he could run the country with popular backing "he wished to do so at our request and not as elected by the people."[1] Talib was shrewd enough to realise that without the blessing of Britain he had no chance. On the other hand, two factors worked against him; first his history, which inspired little British confidence, and secondly the fact that Talib was not liked by the nationalists whom the British were aiming to appease.[2] Nevertheless Talib continued to press his candidacy. He began to claim that he had the support of the Naqib, while his position as Minister of the Interior and the sympathy of his adviser, Mr. Philby, encouraged him to hope for British backing. However, once the British government had decided to support Faysal, Talib's position in Iraq became a source of inconvenience for

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1 F.O. 371/5230/E 12461. Note by Captain I. N. Clayton reference conversation with Sayid Talib, 22nd August, 1920.
2 F.O. 371/5082/E 15602. Mesopotamia Police Report, No. 42, October 16th, 1920, reported the strong opposition to Talib from the nationalists.

the British authorities and Cox determined to get rid of him. On 14 April Talib, in a speech at a dinner party at his house where the correspondent of a leading London newspaper and the French and Persian Consuls were present, threatened the use of force if the British government did not adhere to its declared policy of neutrality in the election of the new ruler of Iraq. This speech gave Cox the pretext he needed for ordering Talib's arrest and his subsequent deportation on 16 April 1921.[1] It was Talib's bad luck that on the one occasion when he tried to be consistently loyal to the British he was sent into exile again.

Shaykh Khaz'al of Muhammara was another contender for the throne and his argument as early as December 1918 was that:

> H.M. Government are apparently looking for an Amir for Mesopotamia. No suitable candidate is forthcoming. Nine-tenths of inhabitants of Mesopotamia are Shiah. Amir must also be a Shiah. I am a native of Iraq, born and bred on Shatt-el-Arab. I have proved loyalty.... As Amir I shall be the necessary figurehead for Arab State, and shall in all matters act in accordance with wishes and orders of High Commissioner, and act as I have done in the past...[2]

But the Civil Commissioner advised against Khaz'al, mainly because his selection would have a bad effect on the Sunnis, who were the most influential people in Iraq.[3] Later, in April 1920, Khaz'al for a second time approached the Civil Commissioner and spoke at length about his services to the British government and added that he was still waiting for a fit reward,

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1 Report by the High Commissioner on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the 'Iraq. For the period from October 1st, 1920 to March 31st, 1922, pp. 6-7.
2 F.O. 371/3421/212092. From Political Officer, Baghdad, 22nd December, 1918.
3 Ibid.

presumably his appointment as Amir of Iraq. But as soon as he was informed about the British government's real intentions Khaz'al was intelligent enough to avoid making trouble, and left the way open to Faysal.[1] Outside Iraq, Ibn Sa'ud was naturally hostile to any plan which would strengthen the rival Hashimite family, and in October 1920 he wrote to Sir Percy Cox, insisting that all the trouble in Iraq was emanating from the Sharif of Mecca and his sons. He offered his assistance in putting down the unrest in Iraq,[2] but his move did not deter Britain from supporting Faysal.

The Cairo conference called to discuss Britain's policy in the Middle East met in continuous session from 12 to 24 March 1921. As regards Iraq the conference, through its Military and Political Committees, dealt both with ways and means of reducing expenditure and military commitments and with the selection of an Arab ruler. The Political Committee consisted of Churchill as Chairman, Sir Percy Cox, Major H. Young, Miss Gertrude Bell, Colonel T. E. Lawrence and Mr. R. Badcock (secretary). Ja'far al-'Askari and Sasun Hisqayl, members of the Arab government in Iraq, were available to attend meetings when required. The Committee was favourably disposed towards a Sharifian settlement and unanimously agreed upon Faysal as the most suitable ruler for Iraq. However, in order to preclude the accusation that Faysal's

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1 F.O. 371/5074/E 5281. From the Military Governor and Political Officer at Basra to the Civil Commissioner, 7th April, 1920.

2 F.O. 371/6351/E 6185/100/93. Intelligence Report No. 11, 15th April, 1921. On April 5th "Shaikh of Muhammarh in private audience with Cox pressed his desire to come forward as a candidate for the Amirate.... Cox advised him as a friend to relinquish the idea."
See also F.O. 371/5066/E 14158. From Sir Percy Cox, Kut, dated 10th October, 1920.

candidacy was contrived by the British, to strengthen his hand among the nationalists, and to avoid active French opposition it was agreed that the British government should not make its support public. A detailed plan and timetable was drawn up to prepare the stage for Faysal's accession as a result of an apparently spontaneous expression of public feeling on his behalf.[1] Faysal was now more willing to go to Iraq, and his previous objections, as reported by Cornwallis, apparently, as Churchill put it, now "no longer represents the fact distinctly".[2] 'Abdulla's claim to the throne of Iraq was disposed of when an alternative throne was found for him in Trans-Jordan.

The conference made drastic plans for the reduction of the British garrison in Iraq and for a subsequent cut in expenditure. After an exchange of telegrams between Churchill and the British government, the British Prime Minister, in a letter dated 22 March 1921, gave the green light to Churchill to implement the Cairo decisions about Iraq.

> Cabinet devoted exhaustive consideration to your proposals this morning. They were much impressed by collective force of your recommendations, ... It should not be difficult to reconcile procedure suggested by you, which is generally accepted with due regard to our engagements and relations with the French; and it was thought that order of events should be as follows:-
>
> Sir P. Cox should return with as little delay as possible to Mesopotamia, and should set going the machinery which may

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1 AIR./8/37. Report on Middle East Conference held in Cairo and Jerusalem. 12th to 30th March, 1921. Annexure. See Appendix VI.

2 F.O. 371/6350/E 4830. Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs summoned to meet in Cairo during March 1921, by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Telegraphic Correspondence. No. 5. Mr. Churchill to the Prime Minister, 18 March 1921.

result in acceptance of Feisal's candidature and invitation to him to accept position of ruler of Irak. In the meantime, no announcement or communication to the French should be made. Feisal, however, will be told privately that there is no longer any need for him to remain in England, and that he should return without delay to Mecca to consult his father, who appears from our latest reports to be in a more than usually unamiable frame of mind. Feisal also will be told that if, with his father's and brother's consent, he becomes a candidate for Mesopotamia and is accepted by people of that country, we shall welcome their choice, subject, of course, to the double condition that he is prepared to accept terms of mandate as laid before League of Nations, and that he will not utilise his position to intrigue against or attack the French. Your remark in an earlier telegram of series that acceptance of mandate by Feisal does not preclude subsequent readjustment of relations between mandatory and Mesopotamian Government is concurred in, although it does not appear to be necessary at this stage to talk about a treaty.

If above conditions are fulfilled, Feisal would then from Mecca make known at the right moment his desire to offer himself as candidate, and should make his appeal to the Mesopotamian people. At this stage we could, if necessary, communicate with the French, who, whatever their suspicions or annoyance, would have no ground for protest against a course of action in strict accordance with our previous declarations. We trust that this procedure will commend itself to you and Sir P. Cox, and that you will act accordingly.[1]

In April 1921 Lawrence met Faysal on his way back from London and reported to him the conference decision and the steps to his accession to the throne of Iraq. Faysal accepted the general framework of the Cairo conference plan but, according to Lawrence, he had certain reservations:

He will accept mandate condition if he is allowed in his first public statement in Irak to add qualifying clause accepted by His Majesty's Government, by which modifications in mandate may be made, after ratification of organic law, by negotiation between duly constituted Government of Mesopotamia and British Government.

Faysal asked for the loan of Cornwallis (from the Egyptian government) to

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1 Ibid. Telegram from Prime Minister to Mr. Churchill, Foreign Office, 22 March 1921.

accompany him to Iraq as an adviser and a middle man between himself and the British administration. He also asked that he should be consulted about future British personnel policy in Iraq.

> He regards people of Irak as not fitted yet for responsible Government, and if he is left at the mercy of local people in all things there will be a disaster. He will require British help sometimes against his own people, and he hopes his opinion on permanent garrison will be taken eventually.[1]

Churchill in a telegram dated 19 April 1921 gave his general consent to Faysal's terms,[2] and Faysal in return professed himself gratified.

Faysal's accession to the throne of Iraq, after a slight change in the timetable, went according to the British plan drawn up at the Cairo conference. On 29 June 1921 Faysal arrived at Baghdad and on the 11th of the following month, the Council of State issued the following resolution:

> On the proposal of the President, the Council of Ministers, at their meeting of the 11th July, 1921, passed a unanimous Resolution declaring His Highness Amir Faisal King of 'Iraq provided that His Highness's Government should be a constitutional, representative and democratic Government, limited by Law.[3]

So as to fortify the Council's resolve by a direct and public assent of the people, Cox asked that the Ministry of the Interior should arrange a sort of referendum by which the representatives of communities and towns should

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1 F.O. 371/6350/E 5409/100/93. Enclosed in telegram from Field-Marshall Viscount Allenby to Earl Curzon, dated 15 April 1921.
2 F.O. 371/6350/E 4830/100/93. From the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Colonel Lawrence, c/o the British Agent and Consul General, Cairo, dated 19 April 1921. Also see F.O. 371/6351/E 5124/100/93. Telegram from Col. Lawrence to Mr. Churchill, Cairo, 22 April 1921.
3 Report by the High Commissioner on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the 'Iraq. For the period from October 1st, 1920 to March 31st, 1922, p. 8.

record their views of the Council of State resolution in the following form:

> We, the undersigned residents of Nahiyah/Mahallah in Qadha/Town of , in the Liwa of have heard, understood and fully considered the above Resolution of the Council of State: and it results that express themselves in agreement therewith, and profess their allegiance to Amir Faisal while have signified their dissent.
>
> Signatures. [1]

The Arab government and the British advisers and officials threw their weight on the side of Faysal;[2] and any deviation from the printed formula was prohibited. Nevertheless, riders were added in Baghdad by the nationalists, who added two conditions, first, freedom from any foreign control, and secondly, the meeting of a Constituent Assembly within three months. Cox, in a countermove, encouraged the pro-British elements in Baghdad to add a demand for the continuation of the British mandate. Sulaymaniya, the Kurdish division, did not take part in the referendum.[3] The official result was 96 per cent in favour of Faysal. No doubt this figure exaggerated the extent of popular backing, but nevertheless there was a decisive majority in Faysal's favour. On 23 August 1921, at a formal reception, Faysal's accession to the throne of Iraq was proclaimed.

Faysal's position as King of Iraq proved to be both difficult and exacting. On the one hand he had to please the British and on the other he wanted to conciliate the leaders of the independence movement and preserve his

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1 Report by the High Commissioner on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the 'Iraq. For the period from October 1st, 1920 to March 31st, 1922, pp. 8-9.
2 Graves, The Life of Sir Percy Cox, pp. 297, 300-301.
3 See Appendix VI. The Results of the Referendum.

nationalist image.

The immediate problem which faced Faysal was the need to define the basis of his relations with the British government and the lines of his personal relations with the High Commissioner in such a manner as not to damage his prestige and make him appear a mere British instrument. Before his official accession to the throne he asked the British government to allow him soon after his coronation to make a public pronouncement about the future relations between his new country and Britain. Faysal hoped that a treaty relationship would replace the mandate regulating the relations between the two countries.[1] This led to a dialogue between Faysal and the British government which contributed greatly to the constitutional form of the new state of Iraq. Churchill replied to Faysal's request on 9 August 1921 that Faysal should not make such a statement because, argued Churchill:

> These relations will be defined in the Organic Law which is to be drafted here by a committee the first sitting of which will take place on August 15th. Their recommendations, which will have to be submitted to the Mesopotamian Assembly when it is elected, will be communicated to you at the earliest possible moment. The principle has already been accepted that H.M. Government and Feisal will eventually "contract out" of the mandate and that the special position in Mesopotamia of H.M. Government will then be recognised in a treaty. This treaty will replace such provisions relating to our position in Mesopotamia as must in the first place be inserted in the Organic Law. Until then I fear that the situation cannot be defined and Feisal cannot exercise plenary sovereign functions.... In the Organic Law it will be necessary to incorporate some modus vivendi which will leave the power with you in the last resort even in internal affairs, H.M. Government remaining solely responsible for foreign affairs....[2]

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1 F.O. 371/6352/E 8903/100/93. Telegram from the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 31 July 1921.

2 F.O. 371/6352/E 9854/100/93. Telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the High Commissioner, dated 9 August 1921.

In response Faysal argued that he could not accept the throne on such a basis and until a satisfactory settlement had been reached Faysal asked that his coronation, which was to take place about 20 August, should be postponed.[1] Faysal argued that Lawrence had led him to believe, during their talks before his arrival in Iraq, that the mandate would be replaced within a year or less by a treaty. Furthermore, Lawrence had assured him that he would be given liberty to exercise his power as King subject to the advice of the British representative. Thus he interpreted Churchill's reply as a change in British policy which, if passed unchallenged, would render his position vis a vis his people and the British government most difficult. Faysal took exception, in particular, to the manner in which the future constitution of Iraq was to be promulgated. First that it was to be drafted by the British government rather than by the representatives of the people of Iraq. Secondly, that the constitution was to make reference to his relations with the British government and to recognise the position of the High Commissioner as the ultimate authority in the internal affairs of the country. Faysal proposed instead:

> (a) To prepare an organic law which would refer only to form of government in country without reference to relation between Iraq and Great Britain.
> (b) Simultaneously to prepare treaty which will safeguard interests of Great Britain and Arabs...
> (c) In the meantime to inaugurate working arrangements which will not offend susceptibilities of people and which while in no way injuring British interests will preserve his own prestige.[2]

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1 F.O. 371/6352/E 8903/100/93. Telegram from the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 14th August, 1921.
2 F.O. 371/6352/E 9854/100/93. Telegram from the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 16th August, 1921.

Such an arrangement, Faysal argued, would maintain the semblance of independence and not weaken his position in the eyes of his people. He accepted the need to be guided by the wishes of the High Commissioner, but saw no need for a written or public statement.[1]

In an expressive and frank discussion with Sir Percy Cox Faysal put his case for a treaty relationship with Britain and for more British confidence in him:

> Apart from my personal ideas in direction of Arab nationality I am an instrument of British policy. His Majesty's Government and I are in same boat and must sink or swim together.
>
> Were instrument to fail and in consequence they left Iraq I should have to leave too. Having, so to speak chosen me you must treat me as one of yourselves and I must be trusted as H.M. Government trust you: and if you wish me and your policy to succeed it is folly to damn me permanently in public eye by making me an obvious puppet as might be, even though as you say it would be only a matter of a few months or even weeks. Much more is it to your interests to show at once that I am really king, that I am trusted and that you are ready to support me. I undertake to be guided by your advice in all important matters....[2]

Cox's views were the determining factor in deciding the British government to make concessions to Faysal. Cox was apparently impressed by Faysal's argument and his sincerity and in his telegram to Churchill dated 17 August 1921 Cox argued:

> Respective attitudes of H.M. Government and Feisal seem prima facie widely divergent but I really do not think there

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1 Ibid.

2 F.O. 371/6352/E 9854/100/93. Telegram from the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 17 August 1921.
See also C.O. 730/4/41499. The same telegram.
See also Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, p. 593, in a letter dated May 1921, concurred in Cox's views.

> is much in it. Our control over finance and Foreign relations is agreed to by him and for some time to come we shall have actual control over all effective military force. On his part he agrees to consult High Commissioner fully and be guided in general by his advice. The provision that ultimate power in internal affairs must be reserved to High Commissioner and that something to this effect should be included in organic law is where shoe pinches for him. The inclusion of such a provision ... would I agree with him place King vis-a-vis his subjects too much in a position of a puppet.
>
> I informed you ... that mandate as at present understood seemed to be out of date and suggested we should inform League of Nations to that effect and tell them we were going to substitute a treaty.... Having as it were created a wave of enthusiasm for Arab nationalism it is most important for us and to our advantage that we should move with the wave and carry the people of Iraq with us.... Therefore as far as our position and policy here is concerned, I should be inclined to take our courage in both hands and give Feisal position he presses for....[1]

Three days later on 20 August Churchill telegraphed to Cox the government's consent to Faysal's propositions, namely that the constitution should be framed in consultation with the people, but would not be authorised without Cox's endorsement, and that the treaty should be framed in such a way as to embody all Britain's rights and obligations derived from the mandate and also "that we will be protected in certain important questions of finance".[2]

The turn of events in Iraq late in 1920 and early in 1921 suggested to the people of Iraq that though the rising had been ineffective in military terms it had played a significant part in securing political changes along the lines envisaged by the various leaders of the rising, partly because of the conciliatory approach of the British government. The Arab Council of

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1 Ibid.
2 F.O. 371/6352/E 9854/100/93. Telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the High Commissioner for Mesopotamia, dated 20th August, 1921.

Ministers was formed in October 1920. In February 1921 the first group of nationalist deportees was released from Hinjam. In May 1921 there was a general amnesty, subject to very few exceptions, for all who had taken part in the rising. And finally the accession of Faysal to the throne of Iraq gave the impression that independence had been secured. The militarily-defeated independence movement thus began to feel a sense of victory. Faysal added to this illusion by pressing the British government to let him give the impression that he was an independent sovereign. Both the British and Faysal hoped that a treaty relationship would ease relations between the nationalists and the British, but this in the end did not happen. The treaty framed by the British was a mere disguise for the mandate, while the nationalists wanted the complete abrogation of the mandate and its replacement by a simple treaty of alliance.

The new regime at once took steps to conciliate certain social groups, the ex-officials and the effendis, and the ex-officers, particularly those outside Iraq. Doors were opened for the jobless affindis, including those who had joined the rising in the summer of 1920.[1] Furthermore, the

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1 C.O. 730/1/14659. Intelligence Report, No. 7, Baghdad, 14 February 1921. Shaykh Ahmad al-Da'ud, a leading figure in the Baghdad rising said freely to the High Commissioner after his release from Hinjam that "His reason for associating himself with the extreme Nationalist movement was mainly personal dissatisfaction and pique at the treatment he had received at the hands of the Administration in connection with his position in the Auqaf."
In the Ministry of the Interior in December 1921 the number of Arabs employed was 420, British 74, Indians 150, others 22.
C.O. 730/5/48631. Intelligence Report, No. 20, Baghdad, 1 September 1921. The representatives of Mosul and Basra for the coronation ceremonies declared that "the sole object of every Baghdadi was to obtain a post in the government."
The Lisan al-Arab, newspaper, No. 47, dated 27 August 1921, criticised the Baghdadis as job hunters and money seekers.

Council of Ministers in February 1921 modified the pension law so as to increase their allowances.[1] Similarly the ex-officers were helped to return to Iraq. In February arrangements were made for the repatriation of 396 officers and their families. These officers were granted pensions and loans and within two years most of them had been absorbed in the new army[2] or in other official occupations.[3]

The new regime was unsatisfactory to the Shi'i 'Ulama and Mujtahids. The British had learned the lesson of the rising and were determined to limit the influence of the Shi'i 'Ulama. Najaf and Karbala were placed in a single administrative unit severed from the adjacent tribal areas and the fact that many of the Shi'i 'Ulama were not Ottoman nationals was made the excuse for not consulting them or incorporating them in the political machinery. Only a few Shi'i were included in the Council of Ministers and the government departments, for which the Shi'i lack of education was partly responsible, although that was not the way the Shi'i saw the matter. Moreover, the Shi'i 'Ulama in Najaf and Karbala were to some extent demoralised by the failure of the rising, while the death of Shaykh al-Shari'a in December 1920 left them for a while without a recognised head.

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1 F.O. 371/6350/E 4091/100/93. Intelligence Report, No. 7, dated 14 February 1921, Council of Ministers meeting on 1 February.

2 Iraq Government Gazette, No. 14, dated Baghdad, 31 July 1922. Royal Iradah was given for the appointment of 81 Iraqi officers of different ranks. See also Iraq Government Gazette, No. 23, dated 15 December 1922. Royal Iradah was given for confirmation of the ranks of 418 Iraqi officers.

3 F.O. 371/6350/E 3824/100/93. Intelligence Report, No. 6, dated Baghdad, 31 January 1921. Ja'far al-'Askari opposed the return of Maulud Muklis and Yasin al-Hashimi to Iraq on political grounds.

Nevertheless a year later the political movement in the holy places began to regain momentum, notably as a result of raids led by al-'Ikhwan, followers of Ibn Sa'ud, on the Shi'i Muntafik in early 1922. They opposed the proposed treaty between Iraq and Britain and issued a Fatwa against both it and participation in the election of the first Constituent Assembly which was to ratify it. Faysal gave the Shi'i 'Ulama and Mujtahids nominal recognition, but in a matter of a few years mistrust prevailed between the two.[1] Faysal feared that an increase in the Shi'i Mujtahids's political power would subject him to their control.[2] In collaboration with the hard-line nationalists the Shi'i religious leaders emerged once again as the main force against the treaty and the continuation of British influence in Iraq.

The hard-line nationalists were the remnant of the independence movement which had developed between 1918 and 1920. The broad-based alliance between the elderly landed notables, the affindis and ex-officials, the ex-military officers both within and outside Iraq, the intelligentsia, and the Sunni and Shi'i men of religion, was shattered by the emergence of the new regime. The affindis and ex-officers were gradually absorbed into the new administration, filling the numerous jobs created by it. The elderly notables were confirmed in their social ascendency, which had previously been

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1 Ministry of the Interior. Secret report by the Police, dated 4 April 1923. The Shi'i 'Ulama were doubtful about Faysal "They said (he) worked for the High Commissioner; they had tested him and knew."

2 F.O. 371/6347/E 12182/100/93. From a telegram from the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 20 September 1921. Cox reported that Faysal in a talk about Kurdistan emphasised the need to include the latter in Iraq to balance the Shi'i majority.

threatened by the British and Indian newcomers. The relations between the Shi'i and Sunni changed as the threat from the common Christian enemy receded, and the old Shi'i - Sunni animosity and jealousy returned, ending the short-lived honeymoon between the two.[1] What was left of the independence movement in the urban centres and particularly in Baghdad were the intelligentsia, mainly relatively young Sunnis from landed and middle-class families, the Shi'i religious leaders whose attitude was greatly influenced by their Mujtahid and 'Ulama in Karbal and Najaf, plus some of the militant Iraqi officers who had returned from Syria, such as Maulud Mukhlis and Rashid al-Khuja. These nationalist forces were regrouped into new parties, the National party (Hisb al-Watani) and the Renaissance party (Hisb al-Nahdha). Permission for the establishment of these parties was requested as early as August 1921 but permission was reluctantly granted only after the publication in July 1922 of the Law of Associations and after long delay.[2] The two new parties did not differ in programme; both were hostile to the proposed treaty and to British influence in the administration of the country. The leaders of the National party were Ja'far Abu al-Timan, a militant leader in the rising of 1920; Maulud Mukhlis, one of the leading

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1 C.O. 730/1/14659. Intelligence Report, No. 6, dated 31 January 1921. "There is a tendency among the Sunnis of Baghdad, even among those who held advanced Nationalist views, to favour the candidature of a Turkish prince for the position of Amir of the 'Iraq ... they hope, provide them with a guarantee against Shiah predominance."
See also Ministry of the Interior. Copy of monthly report from Kadhimayn Police, No. 26, dated 11 March 1923, where the animosity between the Shi'i and Sunni was reported to be on the increase.

2 C.O. 730/4/46069. Intelligence Report, No. 19, dated 15 August 1921. The Naqib and some other ministers feared that to refuse al-Sadr permission to form a party would lead to the formation of a secret one.

participants in the Dayr al-Zur incident and in clashes with the British; Bahjat Zayn al-Din, an educated Baghdadi who had previously been a member of the Haras party; Hamdi al-Bachachi, a member of the 'Ahd party and a lecturer in the College of Law in Baghdad, who had been active in the 1920 rising; 'Abd al-Ghafur al-Badri, who had fought in the Hijaz war and was a member of the 'Ahd party, and who published the Nationalist paper al-Istiqlal (the Independence) in September 1920; Muhammad Mahdi al-Bassir, a young educated nationalist from Hilla, who had been active during the rising; Sayid Ahmad al-Da'ud, an official in the Auqaf Department; and Shaykh Mahdi al-Khalisi, a prominent Shi'i religious leader in Kadhimayn. The Renaissance party was led by Sayid Muhammad al-Sadr, a prominent Shi'i from Kadhimayn who had been very active in the rising. The other members of the party were less prominent and had only a short political career.[1] A third party, Hisb al-Hur (the Independent party), was created at the instigation of the British and revolved around the Naqib's family. Among its members were those who had been actively pro-British during the rising such as 'Abd al-Majid al-Shawi, Fakhri al-Jamil and Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi, all members of wealthy notable families. The policies of the nationalist parties were supported by some of the local papers, notably al-Istiqlal, al-Mufid, Lisan al-'Arab.

Faysal, a newcomer in Iraq with no party of his own, sought the support of the pro-British elements and the nationalists. The former were primarily the High Commissioner's supporters with the result that Faysal felt

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1 Al-Bassir, The Iraqi Question, pp. 408-409, 439-451, mentioned the names of the prominent member of the three parties.

the need of nationalist support. Yet Faysal's acceptance of a show of independence and the fact that he had been an advocate of Arab nationalism, hampered his relations with the nationalists because he was expected by the majority of politically-minded people to live up to his pretensions. Hence he was torn between the real Faysal, the instrument of British policy and Faysal the actor, who wanted nationalist support. When the tempo of nationalist opposition to the treaty increased to the stage where there was danger of a rising Faysal wrote on 20 August 1922 to the High Commissioner absolving himself from responsibility and asked that either the High Commissioner resume authority or that he, Faysal, should have a free hand. At that juncture the High Commissioner decided to move and he moved quickly. The sudden illness of Faysal probably saved his throne and at the same time put all the authority into the hands of the High Commissioner, who promptly ordered the arrest of the leading member of the nationalist parties and advised some of the leading Shi'i 'Ulama to leave Iraq lest they should be deported. The nationalist parties were dissolved and the pro-nationalist papers were suppressed. The recalcitrant tribes in the Middle and Lower Euphrates were sternly repressed. Faysal was also reprimanded by the High Commissioner for his lack of action and it was made clear to him that the British government would not in future tolerate his connections with the nationalists or any move against the treaty. Faysal had either to offer apologies or to resign, and he preferred to apologise. Consequently, Faysal signed a letter drafted by the High Commissioner and dated 11 September 1922 declaring his appreciation of the High Commissioner for his "prompt policy and necessary measures ... in order to maintain public interest and preserve order

and peace."[1] Early in October 1922 the Naqib formed a new Cabinet, which on 10 October ratified the treaty between Iraq and Britain, subject to the approval of the National Assembly. So ended the first round in the long contest between the nationalists and the British with Faysal in between.

A last word about the tribes is necessary. The rising in the summer of 1920 was fatal for traditional tribal institutions. Its failure marked the end of an era in tribal history, and subjected them to the forces of disintegration. Most probably the maintenance of tribal institutions would have been a barrier to modernisation, but the new regime, like the previous ones, failed to offer a substitute beneficial to the tribesmen. For convenience the new regime utilised the shaykhs, preserving the subservient ones and weakening the recalcitrant, turning all of them into government agents dependent on the government. Land tenure, as in the past, was the most effective weapon of the regime, which bestowed leases and title deeds on friendly shaykhs and continued the process of converting the tribal shaykhs into tribal feudal lords, alienated from their tribesmen, who were now destined to become peasants.

> The country is in a state of transition. In some cases the Shaikh is a leader only in name and Government deals directly with the sectional chiefs, in others the Shaikh is paramount over a tribe or a confederation and the sectional leaders come rarely into contact with the executive authority. But as a rule even the paramount Shaikh depends on the backing of the central Government, without which he is powerless. When he attempts to enforce orders, for the execution of which he is nominally responsible, his tribal influence dwindles and vanishes, while, if he sets himself to gain or preserve local

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1 Ireland, Iraq, p. 361 cited the letter.

> prestige, he is apt to become a menace to the State. On the whole he is anxious to fulfil the services required of him, and if he be actuated mainly by a desire to maintain his own position, under present circumstances care should be taken not to alienate his allegiance.[1]

Furthermore, the new regime, mainly as a result of British influence, introduced some leading shaykhs into the government. Later these shaykhs were also elected to the National Assembly, since each National Assembly except the first was virtually appointed rather than elected. Inevitably only those shaykhs who adhered to the regime were allowed to enter the Assembly, whose membership was regarded as a reward for services rendered rather than as a recognition of the ability of the members to serve their local communities.

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1 Report by the High Commissioner on the Finance, Administration and Condition of the 'Iraq. For the period from October 1st, 1920 to March 31st, 1922, p. 12.

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Appendix I

The Constitution of The Buraq Quarter of Najaf,

Under The Rule of The Four Shaikhs.

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, and whose help we seek.

We write this document in order to secure unity and cohesion amongst ourselves, i.e., we the inhabitants of Buraq quarter, and our names are at the end of this document.

We have assembled ourselves and become united and of one blood, and follow one another should anything happen to our quarter from other quarters. We will rise together against an outsider who is not from us, whether the result be to our advantage or to our disadvantage, and the conditions of our union are as follows:-

(1) If an outsider is killed, the murderer has to pay 5 litres, and the remainder of the blood money to be paid by the whole tribe.

(2) If anybody from our union is killed, half of the fasil is for the murdered man's family, and half for the union.

(3) If anyone kills anybody from his own tribe, and the tribe has responsible head, the murderer must leave the place for seven years, and anybody who aids him is also to be dismissed for the same period. The fasil is 30 liras in gold, and the farshah, 5 liras and 10 silk garments. One-third is to be given to the union, and two-thirds to the relatives, payable in two instalments.

(4) One who wounds anyone from his own tribe, and the wound results in bleeding, has to pay one lira.

(5) One who aims at his friend with his rifle, without firing, is to surrender his rifle.

(6) One who wounds another, and the wound results in his illness, has to pay 5 liras, surrender his weapon, and leave the town for a short period, and whatever extra is paid, one-third of it will be given to our commander, Kadhim Subbi, and two-thirds to the union.

(7) Should harm befall one of us who steals, loots or fornicates, we not only not responsible, but also not his friend.

(8) If any one of us is arrested for our doings by the Government, or imprisoned, all his expenses will be paid by us.

The above is for all of us. We are united with Kadhim, whether he is in the town or not, and on this condition we all put our signatures, and we all agree to it, and God is our witness.

Signed by Saiyid Hadi, Saiyid Mansur and many others.

Iraq. Ministry of Interior, Baghdad.

"Reports of Administration For 1918 Of Divisions and Districts of the Occupied Territories in Mesopotamia, Vol. I", p. 111.

Appendix II

RECEIPTS

Main Headings	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Land Revenue and General Taxes on Agricultural Produce, Sheep, etc.	25,55,976	21,86,555	79,34,295	217,47,430+	198,27,290
2. Customs.	18,34,497	57,64,400	67,38,000	65,00,000	220,24,000
3. Judicial.	1,18,528	1,05,820	1,57,720	3,46,500	5,00,000
4. Medical.	-	-	17,400	95,800	3,50,000
5. Education.	-	3,330	3,500	15,000	1,82,000
6. Posts.	-	-	-	-	32,75,650= (received from the public 8,00,000).
7. Telegraphs and Telephones.	-	-	-	-	20,74,500 (received from the public 2,25,000).
8. Jails: charges for labour supplied.	-	3,600	20,109	1,02,000	2,84,200
9. Departmental Receipts, Government Stationery Depots, Newspapers, Transport, &c.	-	-	1,54,500	4,31,650	9,40,870
10. Miscellaneous; including principally fines, also refunds, &c.	59,641	44,545	2,26,524	74,800	78,000
Totals	45,68,642	81,08,250	152,52,048	293,13,180	495,36,510≠

+ Inclusive of revenue grains supplied to Army valued at 60 lakhs.

= The accounts of a small Civil Post Office maintained for local needs prior to 1919 were sent to India.

≠ Excludes contribution for levies from military.

Appendix II

EXPENDITURE

Main Headings	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Headquarters Administrative Expenditure, including salaries of gazetted officers, secret service, subsistence allowances, cost of sea passages, telegrams, stationery, depot and press, &c.	5,54,230	11,83,425	24,18,253	33,90,100	81,26,270
2. Political Officers, Revenue Establishments.	5,55,392	9,19,085	51,89,233	93,21,690	78,17,470
3. Customs.	1,11,898	3,85,800	5,80,350	6,75,000	17,40,550+
4. Judicial.	1,20,207	1,27,295	2,14,983	3,73,000	8,92,320
5. Medical.	61,345	87,180	1,39,887	4,63,750	28,75,600
6. Education.	-	23,530	35,500	1,80,000	9,89,250
7. Police.	1,99,146	2,86,975	8,90,163	12,04,080	19,36,940
8. Public Works.	-	1,05,450	4,61,400	8,74,700	66,11,720
9. Jails.	20,126	44,460	98,517	1,67,400	7,47,830
10. Posts.	-	-	-	-	31,46,500
11. Telegraphs.	-	-	-	-	14,26,450
12. Survey.	-	-	-	-	1,44,230
13. Land Settlement.	-	-	-	-	1,00,460
14. Irrigation.	-	-	-	-	52,25,000
15. Agriculture.	-	-	-	-	7,16,270
16. Levies.	-	-	-	-	32,02,890=
17. Transport.	-	-	-	-	50,62,280
18. Stores	-	-	-	-	2,24,500
19. Land Acquisition	-	-	-	-	12,01,250
Totals	16,22,344	31,63,200	100,28,286	166,49,720	521,87,780

+ Includes refunds of Rs. 12,00,000 for goods imported and subsequently exported.

= Nett: excluding services on account of military.

Note: Financial Year is from 1st April to 31st March.

Quoted from:

[Cmd. 1061] Review of Civil Administration 1914-1920.

(1)

Rates of Revenue on Flow Lands.

Division.	District.	Turkish rates of Land Revenue (without cesses).						British rates (1918-19).						Rebates granted (1918-19) Shaikh/Sarkar.	Remarks.
		Shitwi.			Saifi.			Shitwi.			Saifi.				
		Miri.	Sanniyah.	Tapu.	Miri.	Sanniyah.	Tapu.	Miri.	Sanniyah.	Tapu.	Miri.	Sanniyah.	Tapu.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.		
Baghdad ...	Baghdad ...	33⅓	36	20	33⅓	36	20	33⅓	36	20	33⅓	36	20		
	Kadhimain ...	33⅓	33	20	33⅓	33	20	33⅓	36	20	33⅓	36	20		
Hillah ...	Musaiyib	...	36	20	...	36	20	...	36	20	...	36	20		
	Karbala ...	20	20	20	20	36	20	20	...	...	...	...	...	Shitwi ½ Saifi ½	*Batta and Khawasalmaidan.
	Hillah ...	*60 & 44	36	20	60 & 44	36	20	†33	†36	...	*...	...	...		†Less 10% if collected through Shaikhs, *i.e.*, 1/10th of gross demand.
	Hindiyah ...	33	44	20	50	44	20	33⅓	...	...	50	...	...		
	Diwaniyah ...	40	36	20	40	36	20	‡25	36	18	...	...	...	...	‡5% to Shaikhs as rewards, etc.
Samawah (Euphrates) ...	Rumaithah ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
	Samawah ...	40	36	20	40	36	20	*20	*20	20	...	...	...	...	*1/10th (cost of collection) to Shaikhs.
	Shinafiyah ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Shamiyah ...	Najaf ...	20	...	20	...	...	...	33	...	...	...	*37	20	4 ...	*4% to Shaikh or Saiyid.
	Kufah ...	33	...	20	50	...	20	...	...	...	...	...	...		
	Abu Sukhair ...	40	44	20	40	44	20	†33⅓	...	20	33⅓	...	20	11 ...	†4% gratuity.
Dulaim ...	Hit ...	...	...	10	...	...	...	...	...	10	...	...	...		
	Ramadi ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40	*40	...	...	...	...	...	*4% of gross divided between Shaikh and Ikhtiyar.
	Fallujah ...	...	36	20	...	36	20	...	36	20	...	36	20		
	'Anah ...	all karads.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	(All land Tapu).	
Samarra ...	Tikrit ...	20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
	Samarra ...	20	36	20	33⅓	36	20	...	36	20	...	36	20		
	Balad ...	20	36	20	33⅓	36	20	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Ba'qubah ...	Daltawah ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
	Ba'qubah ...	20	36	20	20	36	20	...	36	20	...	...	...		
	Shahraban ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
	Dali 'Abbas ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Khaniqin ...	Khaniqin ...	...	36	10	...	36	10	...	...	10	...	...	...		
	Qizil Robat ...	10	...	10	...	...	...	10	...	10	...	...	...	...	Miri Daim.
	Mandali ...	20	...	10	20	...	10	*20	...	10	*20	...	10	...	*1/25 refunded to Sarkal.
Harkuk ...	Kifri ...	...	25	10	...	50	10	...	...	...	...	36	10		
	Kirkuk ...	10	27½	...	40—47½	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Kut ...	Kut ...	20	25	20	20	25	20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Shitwi 1/5th.
	Bughailah ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
	'Aziziyah ...	20	...	20	20	...	20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
	Badrah ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Saifi 1/5th.
	Hai ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
'Amarah ...	'Amarah ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Farming system.
	'Ali Gharbi ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
	Qal'at-Salih ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Nasiriyah ...	Nasiriyah ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
	Qal'at Sikar ...	Shitwi 1/10th		Saifi 1/5th			...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Shitwi 1/5th.
	Shatrah ...	...		Saifi 1/5th			...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Saifi 1/5th.
	Suq esh Shuyukh ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Qurnah ...	Qurnah ...	Shitwi 1/10th		Saifi 1/5th			...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Fixed Jarib tax.
	Hammar ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Basrah ...	Basrah ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Ditto.
	Zubair ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	

Note.—The rates, where not shown, are presumed to be the same for Shitwi and Saifi.

(1) - Revenue Circulars, Nos. 1-22. Dated 10th January to 25th November, 1919. p. 7
Baghdad, Government Press, 1920.

Appendix IV

Signatories of the Combined Sunni and Shi'i Declaration in January, 1919.

1. Shaykh Sa'id Naqshabandi - Sunni, religious authority.
2. Sayid Ibrahim Hawi - Sunni, landed notable.
3. Ahmad Shawaf - Sunni, notable family.
4. 'Abd al-Karim al-Sayid Haydar - Shi'i, agent of Sayid Isma'il Sadr.
5. 'Abd al-Rahman Pasha al-Haydari - Sunni, head of one of the leading notable families, five of his houses have been requisitioned for billets.
6. 'Abd al-Wahab al-Na'ib - Sunni, brother of (1), judge of Peace Court.
7. Jawad al-Maslawi - Shi'i, auctioneer.
8. Ahmad al-Dhafir Haji 'Abbas - Shi'i, 'Alim (religious authority).
9. Sayid Isma'il al-Wa'idh - Sunni, notable family.
10. 'Abdulla al-Shawi - Sunni, notable family, president of Court of Appeal at Kadhimayn under the Turks.
11. Mahdi Khanaq - Shi'i, contractor.
12. Tahir Muhammad Salim - Sunni.
13. Kadhim al-Haj Da'ud - Shi'i, relative of (39).
14. Sulayman al-Sunnawi - Sunni, clerk of the Qadhi in the Shari'a Court.
15. Sayid Muhammad Husayn - Shi'i, small merchant.
16. 'Abdulla Salim al-Haydari - Sunni, was Naqib of Karbala under the Turks.
17. 'Abd al-Wahab al-Sayid Yahya - Shi'i, small merchant.
18. Mula Qasim - Sunni, was Mudarris al-Wilaya and his father has a leather shop.
19. Sayid Husayn al-Sayid 'Isa - Shi'i, small merchant and landowner.
20. 'Abd al-Amir al-Sayid Haydar - Shi'i, small merchant.
21. Haji 'Abd al-Husayn Kubba - Shi'i, notable family.
22. Sayid Sadiq al-Sayid Ja'far - Shi'i, small merchant.
23. Ahmad Charchafchi - Shi'i, merchant, notable family.
24. Haji Muhammad Hasan al-Jawhar - Shi'i, landowner.
25. Muzahim Muhammad Nuri Pasha - Sunni.
26. Khalid al-Shabandar - Sunni, young man, relative of Haji 'Ali Alusi.
27. Dhafir al-Zahawi - Sunni, notable family and landowner.
28. Ahmad Munir - Sunni, Khatib in the 'Adhamiya Mosque.
29. Muhammad Salih Bachachi - Sunni, was a member of the Court of First Instance under the Turks.
30. Sayid 'Abd al-Ridha al-Sayid Yahya - Shi'i, merchant.

31. Muhammad al-Mustafa al-Khalaf - Sunni
32. Haji 'Abd al-Ghani Kubba - Shi'i, notable family and landowner.
33. Ja'far Abu al-Timan - Shi'i, merchant.
34. 'Abd al-Baqi - Sunni, Mutawalli of the 'Adhamiya Mosque.
35. Muhammad Yaghlamachi ibn Sultan Agha - Sunni, landowner.
36. Muhammad Nafi al-Urfali - Sunni, notable family and landowner.
37. Hamid ibn 'Abd al-Ridha - Shi'i.
38. Hamid ibn Musawi - Shi'i.
39. Muhammad Rashid al-Sayid 'Isa - Shi'i, landowner.
40. Sayid 'Ali al-Sayid Husayn Shikara - Shi'i, small merchant.
41. 'Abd al-Latif al-Mudallal - Sunni, bath owner.
42. Sayid Muhammad al-Sayid Husayn - Shi'i, small merchant, sells oil.
43. Darwish 'Ali Haydar - Shi'i, small merchant.
44. Husayn al-Haji 'Alawi - Shi'i, small merchant.
45. Haji 'Abd al-Husayn al-Bahrani - Shi'i, small merchant.
46. 'Ali al-Suzurnan - Sunni, his father was an official in the Commercial Court.
47. Hamdi Bachachi - Sunni, notable family, landowner.

The Sunni pro-British Counter Declaration

1. Qasim Pasha al-Khudhayri - biggest Muslim merchant in Baghdad.
2. Mula Mustafa al-Naji Ibrahim - rich merchant.
3. Muhammad al-Khudhayri - merchant.
4. Haji Khalil Ibrahim - merchant and brother of (2).
5. Ibrahim Ahmad Swaydi - notable family.
6. Ahmad al-Shatab - merchant.
7. Muhammad Haji Sahib - merchant.
8. 'Abd al-Jabar Ghulam - head of the Mukhtars of Baghdad.
9. 'Ali al-Husayn - head of granary owners of Baghdad.
10. Sayid Mustafa Barazanji - notable Kurdish family.

Pro-British Counter Petition of Sunni Ashraf

1. 'Abd al-Rahman Jamil Zada.
2. Fakhr al-Din Jamil Zada.
3. Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi.
4. 'Abd al-Majid al-Shawi.
5. Musa Chalabi Bachachi.
6. Salih Milli - employed by the civil administration in the Waqif Department.

7. 'Abd al-Karim Chalabi - employed by the civil administration in the Education Department.

F. O. 371/4150/129679, January 1919.

Appendix V

Names of the Members of the Iraqi Congress in Damascus, 8th March 1920.

From Baghdad

Military Officers

1.	Ja'far 'Askari	Sunni, Arab, served in the Hijaz.
2.	Tahsin 'Ali	" " " " " "
3.	Sa'id Madfa'i	" " " " " "
4.	Isma'il Namiq	" " " " " "
5.	Faraj 'Amara	" " " " " "
6.	Sami al-Urfali	" Turk, joined after the Armistice.
7.	Sabih Najib	" " " " " "
8.	Bakar Sidqi	" Kurd " " " "

Civilians

1.	Naji Swaydi	Arab, sunni, official, was in Syria in 1918.
2.	Tawfiq Swaydi	" " Lawyer, came to Syria in 1918.
3.	Ahmad Rafiq	" " came to Syria after Armistice.
4.	Rashid Hashimi	" " Writer, came to Syria after Armistice.
5.	Mahmud Adib	" " " " " " " "
6.	'Abd al-Latif Falahi	" " Turkish officer, came to Syria after the Armistice.
7.	Tawfiq Hashimi	" " Turkish officer, came to Syria after the Armistice.
8.	'Izzat al-Karkhi	" " ex-officer, served in the Hijaz.
9.	Ridha Shabibi	" shi'i, came to Syria in 1919.
10.	Muhammad Bassam	" sunni, Basra origin, rich merchant, living in Syria.
11.	Nouri al-Qadhi	" " Lawyer, came to Syria after the Armistice.
12.	Hamid Sadr al-Din	" " ex-Turkish officer, Lawyer.
13.	Nadhif al-Shawi	" " " " came after the Armistice.

From Mosul

Military Officers

1.	'Ali Jawdat	Arab, sunni, served in the Hijaz.
2.	Jamil Madfa'i	" " " " " "
3.	'Abdulla Dulaymi	" " " " " "
4.	Ibrahim Kamal	" " " " " "

Civilians

1. Maki Sharbati	Arab,	sunni, writer, came to Syria after Armistice.
2. Thabit 'Abd al-Nur	"	Christian, escaped from Turkish prison and joined Faysal in 1918.
3. As'ad Sahib	"	sunni, man of religion, living in Damascus.
4. Haji Muhammad Khayr	"	" merchant.

Appendix VI

THE REFERENDUM[1].

The following table shows the results of the Referendum up to date:-

ELECTION RESULTS.

(Election of His Highness Amir Faisal as King of 'Iraq.)

Name of Liwah.	No. of Madhbatahs In favour.	Against.	Remarks
Baghdad	157	-	68 out of 157 madhbatahs made it a condition that 'Iraq shall be independent of any foreign sovereignty, and that a National Congress shall be convened in three months. Sixty-six out of the sixty-eight are from Baghdad City. Of the total 157 eighty are from Baghdad City.
Dulaim	26	-	In 16 of these madhbatahs the leading shaikhs and personalities of the Liwah accept Amir Faisal's kingship, provided he will accept British supervision.
Basrah	47	-	The Mutasarrif states that the majority at first refused to vote until they knew whether the concessions asked for would be considered and the continuance of the British mandate assured.
Diyalah	41	-	Nil.
Hillah	41	-	Out of these, thirteen madhbatahs, signed by leading shaikhs and personalities, clearly state that Amir Faisal's kingship will be accepted provided the British mandate shall continue.
Karbala	28	-	Nil.
'Amarah	7	-	In five of these madhbatahs the leading personalities of the Liwah accept Amir Faisal's kingship on the condition that

1 C.O. 730/4/46069. Intelligence Report, No. 19, 15 August, 1921.

Name of Liwah.	No. of Madhbatahs In favour.	Against.	Remarks.
			the British mandate will continue, and that advice from British Officers on administrative matters will not be dispensed with.
Mosul	68	-	Out of these: Six madhbatahs insist on the rights of the Kurds and other minorities, being safeguarded. Seven insist on the continuance of the British mandate in addition to the protection of Kurdish rights. Ten make the following conditions:- (1) Continuance of the British mandate and the following of British Officers' advice on Civil and Military matters. (2) Recognition of the Kurdish tongue in Government Offices and Primary Schools. (3) Protection of legal, civil and political rights of the Kurdish population. (4) Kurdish 'Iraqis reserve the right to join Turkish Kurdistan or otherwise when the question of granting independence to the latter is considered. More madhbatahs follow from this Liwah.
Kirkuk	20	21	The madhbatahs of this Liwah are not yet complete. The twenty in favour have no conditions. The unfavourable madhbatahs mostly announce that the people are not Arabs and prefer to wait and see what independent Kurdistan is going to be like. A few ask for a Turkish prince. The favourable madhbatahs are all from Arbil sub-Liwah.
Muntafiq	-	-	Madhbatahs not yet received.

The following account of the method employed in the Referendum at Basrah has been submitted by the Assistant Mutasarrif to the Ministry of the Interior:-

In accordance with your request I beg to record for your information the method adopted in the Basrah Liwah for preparing the election Madhbatahs in the

case of His Highness Amir Faisal.

(1) On receipt of your orders the division was divided into certain number of election areas and a Committee of notables and influential people was formed and approved for each area, with the Mutasarrif as General Inspector for the Division and each Qaimmaqams and Mudir acting as an Inspector for his area. The day of election was notified to the inhabitants of each electoral area and all men of 20 years and upwards were invited to attend at their respective election offices to vote.

(2) At the fixed time and date the Committee assembled at their respective headquarters and sat down round a table. Each committee was supplied with a Register in the following manner:-

Name.	No. of persons for whom voted.	Signatures or seals of persons in favour of H.H.	Signatures or seals against H.H.

(3) At the time appointed, people came, in turn, and after the Committee had explained to them the position the Register was opened before them. They filled in their names and put down the number of men for whom they came to vote, which after having been checked and approved by the Committee was signed. The work in this manner lasted from 3 to 7 days, according to the size of the area and when all votes were recorded the Committee added up the columns and signed the Register to the effect that the votes were taken in their presence.

(4) Having done this the Committee filled in the printed Madhbatahs for the number of votes recorded in their respective registers and signed or sealed the Madhbatahs and submitted them in duplicate, with the individual Registers, to the Inspecting Officers who in their turn submitted them to the General Inspector with a covering letter giving their remarks.

(5) When all Madhbatahs had come in, a covering Memo. was written by the Mutasarrif and endorsed by the Adviser and submitted to the Ministry as instructed.

(6) H.E. Shaikh Khaz'al Khan had formed a committee for his tribesmen in the Mesopotamian Territories and took down the signature of each individual of his people - some of course, signed for themselves and on behalf of their people - and submitted the Madhbatahs to the General Inspecting Officer.

(7) As the election was for a democratic Government, it was thought advisable to take the votes of all the inhabitants and not only those of the notables and influential people.

The Mutasarrif states that Shaikh Khaz'al's tribesmen elected H.H. the Amir Faisal as king of the 'Iraq on condition that his Government accepted the British mandate. The Assistant Mutasarrif, in conversation with the High Commissioner, spoke very highly of the assistance rendered by Shaikh Khaz'al.

The following account of the signing of the referendum papers in Hillah Division is of interest:-

The Adviser summoned at Abu Sukhair a meeting of some 3,000 people; several extremists from Najaf were present. One of these, a young 'Alim made a long

speech praising the British Government, saying how all knew we would carry out our promises and asking that we should now do so by giving the country absolute freedom. His speech fell flat, as the Mishkhab and Shamiyah areas are among those which insist on the maintenance of British control. The official referendum paper was signed without demur, none of the signatories asking for any additional clauses.

Similarly at Umm al Ba'rur a meeting of about 1,500 persons was assembled. As soon as Salman al Dhahir and his Khaz'il relations had signed, the rest at once attached their signatures.

Most of the Shamiyah and Mishkhkab shaikhs told the Adviser that their obedience to Faisal depended on his not attempting to run the country without the assistance of H.M.G. - "with the mandate, the protection and support of H.M.G." were the words used. From Faisal's speeches they took it for granted that this was his view also.

At the Diwaniyah meeting the shaikhs of Dagharah, Budair and 'Afaj were present, besides those of Diwaniyah. Several refused to sign unless the words "under British protection" were added.

The Adviser had by this time received a telegram from the High Commissioner informing him of the anti-British additions which had been made to the allegiance formula in Baghdad and advising him that if a spontaneous demand for a pro-British addition arose (as from private information the High Commissioner knew to be probable) there was no objection to it. The Adviser was therefore able to assure the Diwaniyah meeting that they might add to the Madhbatah any words they wished. The permission was providential as many of the leading shaikhs would not have signed without the additional phrase.

Hillah town, Musaiyib and Hindiyah had signed before the arrival of the High Commissioner's telegram, and therefore without knowing that they might add to the formula, and the same was the case at Tuwairij, Kifl and Shinafiyah. Hillah district and Janbu'iyah, signing after the High Commissioner's message was communicated to them, have added the words "conditional upon Faisal's Government accepting a British mandatory and its help."

The Adviser, Ba'qubah, reports that as soon as the High Commissioner's announcement of the resolution of the Council of Ministers appeared, public opinion veered round in favour of the Amir. For a moment the intrigues of Saiyid Muhammad Sadr had a disturbing influence; Ba'qubah town wavered and there was some talk of adding a proviso that the British mandate should be renounced. There was also a small amount of propaganda in favour of the Sanusi. Finally the madhbatahs were signed without additions. At Mandali, the Naqib, Saiyid Elyas, who had been a supporter of Saiyid Talib, abstained from signing. At Khaniqin, where there is a large Kurdish element, there was a certain hankering after inclusion in a Kurdish state, but opinion was not unanimous and after a heated discussion, Wali Agha of the Bajlan succeeded in winning over the other members of the committee of notables, which had been summoned to Ba'qubah, in favour of inclusion in the Arab state. The committee then returned to Khaniqin to obtain the signatures of other ashraf and tribal leaders. The case of the village of Sa'dah, which is the property of the Naqib, was interesting. The inhabitants begged to be excused from signing, on the ground that the Naqib would

be displeased if they voted for Faisal. It was explained to them that Faisal had been nominated by the Naqib himself in Council, whereupon they asked for three days to consider the matter. During this respite they sent to Baghdad to ask what were the Naqib's wishes and on receiving his answer they all signed.

Kirkuk. - After the Adviser's message had been read to the Kirkuk Council (see No. 18, para. 16) they unanimously decided to vote for Faisal and give a lead to outlying districts, but unofficial meetings held in various private houses negatived this decision. On July 23, at a meeting held in the house of the Mufti, it was decided to issue a Fatwah against Faisal as no true Moslem, but a Yazidi (sic), adding that if he became king they would demand union with Kurdistan. This was followed next day by the notice referred to in Report No. 18, para. 16, which is given in Appendix 3. In private conversation with the Adviser, Kurdish and Arab chiefs declared that they would vote in accordance with the desire of the British Government, but that they did not want Faisal or an Arab Government. There was however a certain element bent on creating trouble and it was probable that the Turcoman element would prefer to stand in with the Turks, in fact when the allegiance papers were returned after signature two mahallahs of Kirkuk town were found to have asked for a Turkish ruler. The results of the referendum in the Liwah are as follows:-

(1) Kirkuk town	. .	64	pro-Faisal	2,786	anti-Faisal.
(2) Kirkuk district	. .	197	"	720	"
(3) Altun Keupri	. .	nil	"	1,500	"
(4) Tauq	. .	nil	"	10,000	"
(5) Mulhah	. .	nil	"	15,000	"
(6) Shu'an	. .	nil	"	1,263	"

The numbers given in the case of (4) and (5) seem to be inflated and an enquiry is being made.

The Kurdish areas all ask for a Kurdish government, but the idea of Kurdish unity is remote from them, for they are averse from inclusion in the existing Kurdish province of Sulaimani.

A second notice was posted up in the town on the night of July 31. See Appendix 4.

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" 1910	" 35
" 1911	" 36
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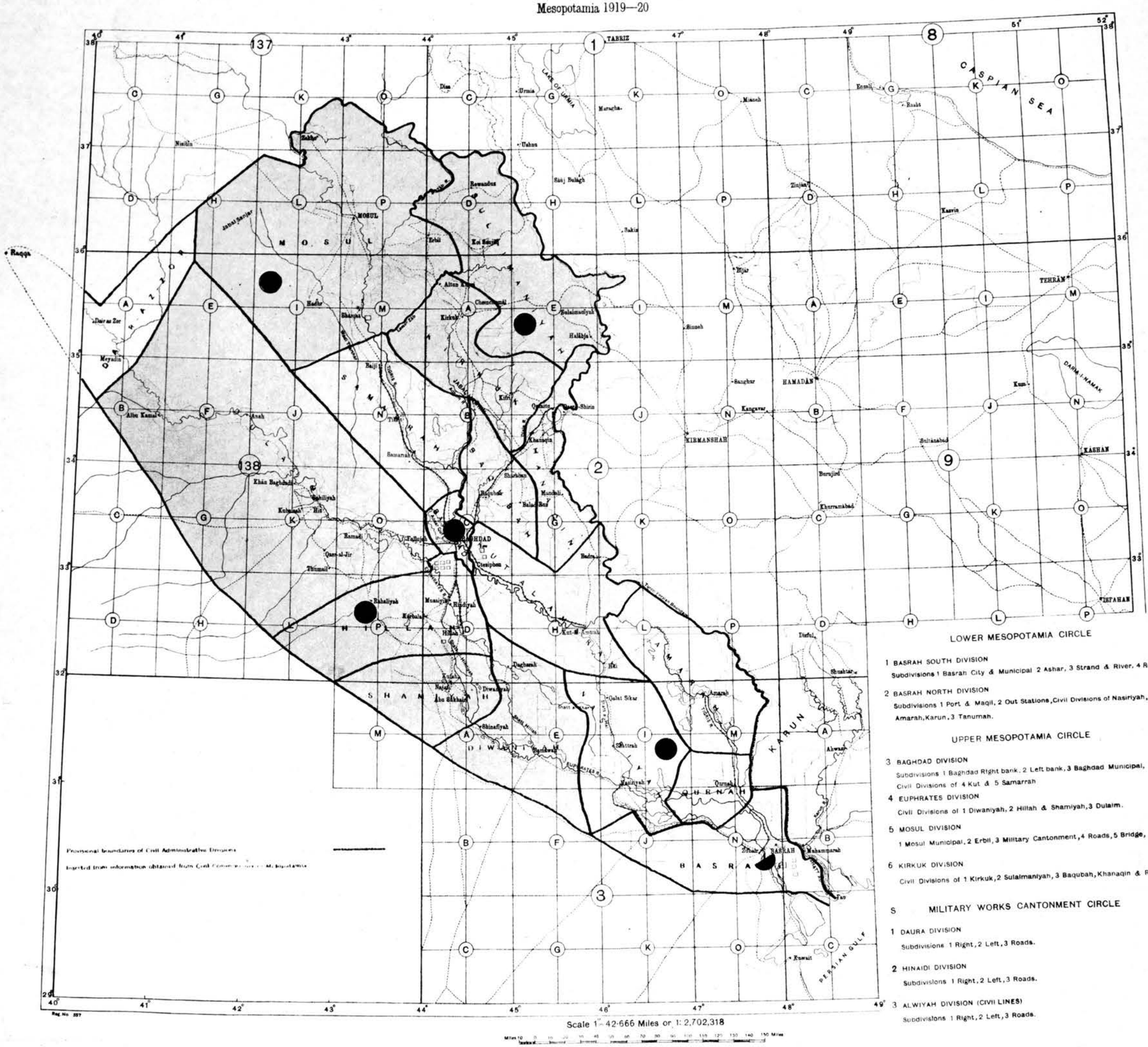
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