

HADITHA AL-KHRAISHA

Bedouin Warrior, Tribal Sheikh, Arab Sage



THE ROYAL ISLAMIC STRATEGIC STUDIES CENTRE

JORDAN SERIES • BOOK NUMBER 44

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

HADITHA AL-KHRAISHA

Bedouin Warrior, Tribal Sheikh, Arab Sage

by

Lamyā Al-Khraisha



THE ROYAL ISLAMIC STRATEGIC STUDIES CENTRE

JORDAN SERIES • BOOK NUMBER 44

JORDAN SERIES • BOOK NUMBER 44

HADITHA AL-KHRAISHA
by Lamya Al-Khraisha

ISBN 978-9957-635-90-9

NATIONAL LIBRARY NUMBER
(2026/3/1601)

© 2026, The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre
Amman, Jordan

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying or recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the copyright holder. Views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre or its advisory board.

Printed in Jordan

CONTENTS

Chapter One: Lineage and Character: The Making of Haditha	I
Lineage	I
Sheikh Haditha's Character	3
Sheikh Haditha's Love of Poetry and Animals	5
Battles of Sheikh Haditha	6
Al-Muwaqqar in Poetry	9
Chapter Two: Sheikh Haditha in Written Records	11
The Story of the White Mare	11
The Grudging Admiration of the British	18
Honour Even in Enmity	18
The Guest's Coffee: Honour and Mercy between Shammar and Bani Sakhr	20
Sheikh Haditha's Relationships with Other Tribes and Peoples	23
Chapter Three: The Politics that Shaped Sheikh Haditha	28
From the Golan to the Hijaz: Sheikh Haditha's Route of Sanctuary and Passage (1915–1929)	28
Sheikh Haditha's Political Commitments and Party Roles (1920–1933)	31
Sheikh Haditha's Relationship with the Ottomans and Secret Societies (1908–1920)	32
Revolts Across the Arab World (1904–1914)	38
The Emergence of Nationalism in Sheikh Haditha's Generation	40
Versailles, the Arab Question, and the Betrayal of Self-Determination (1919–1920)	44

The Arab Response to the Peace Conference	46
The King–Crane Commission (1919)	46
Aftermath: The Syrian National Congress (1920)	49
The Formation of Trans-Jordan (1916–1921)	52
The Arrival of Emir Abdullah in Ma’an (1920)	53
The Establishment of the Emirate (1921)	54
National Struggle in Trans-Jordan	54
Chapter Four: Sheikh Haditha, Jerusalem, and Palestine	56
The Palestinian Struggle	56
The Umm Al-Amad Conference (1937)	57
‘ <i>Labbayki</i> , O Palestine’: The 1948 War	62
The Medal for Military Valour (<i>Wisam Al-Iqdam Al-Askari</i>)	65
Notable Figures	65
Haditha and the Zionist Movement	66
Haditha and the Buraq Wall / Western Wall Revolt (1928–1930)	67
Chapter Five: Relationships Forged in Fire	73
Haditha’s Relationship with Haj Amin Al-Husseini	73
Haditha’s Relationship with Emir / King Abdullah I	81
Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez and Frederick Peake	89
Chapter Six: The Wahhabi Ikhwan Incursions (1922–1930)	93
The First Wahhabi Incursion (1922)	93
Emir Abdullah Moves His Camp from Amman to Al-Muwaqqar with Sheikh Haditha (1922)	97
The Second Wahhabi Incursion (1923)	100
The Third Wahhabi Incursion (1928)	107
The Attempts of Ibn Saud’s Cousin and the Last of the Incursions (1930–1932)	109
Chapter Seven: Sheikh Haditha and the Jihad Against France (1915–1929)	110
The Battle of Maysalun and the Collapse of Arab	

Rule in Syria (1920)	110
The Syrian Revolution (1925–1927)	111
Alliance, Secrecy, and Emir Abdullah’s Reliance on Haditha	112
Tribal Mobilisation and British Anxiety	116
Trans-Jordan as a Haven for Syrian Nationalists	119
Sheikh Haditha and the Second Golan Revolt (1926)	121
Battles and Resistance in Jabal Al-Druze (1925–1926)	122
Haditha’s Role in Anti-French Demonstrations in Amman (1921)	123
Bani Sakhr’s Stand Against France	124
Chapter Eight: Opposing the Fragmentation of Trans-Jordan	130
The Local Government of Salt (1920–1921)	130
Sheikh Haditha’s Role	133
Chapter Nine: Haditha as Mediator	138
Sheikh Haditha Averts Bloodshed in Sahab (7 October 1920)	138
Sheikh Haditha Mediates Between the Bedouins and the <i>Fellahin</i> (1918–1920)	141
The Koura Revolt (1921–1922)	143
The Adwan Revolt and the Balqa Alliance (1923)	145
Sheikh Haditha’s Role	147
Sheikh Haditha’s participation in the First Jordanian Economic Conference (1933)	151
Land Borders and <i>Wajhat</i>	153
Chapter Ten: From Tribe to Nation: Haditha and the Forging of Jordanian National Identity (1926–1951)	155
Sheikh Haditha’s Role in Formalising and Institutionalising Tribal Law (1921–1936)	155
The Law to Oversee the Bedouins (1929 and 1936)	160
Constitutional Development and the Emergence of National Politics (1926–1937)	160

The Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, the Constitution, and Trans-Jordan's National Charter (1928)	162
Sheikh Haditha, Legislative Councils and Parties and Senate Engagement (1928–1951)	164
The First Jordanian National Congress (1928)	164
The Second National Congress (1929)	171
The Fourth National Congress (1932)	172
The Fifth National Congress (1933)	172
Sheikh Haditha and the Executive Committee of the Jordanian People's Congress (1933)	173
The Programme and Resolutions of the Jordanian People's Congress	175
Political Parties	176
The Jordanian Solidarity Party (1933)	176
The Second Legislative Council (1931)	177
The Fourth Legislative Council (1937)	180
Member of the First National Assembly in the Senate (1947)	180
Member of the Second National Assembly During the Unity of the Two Banks (1950)	181
Statesmanship: Trans-Jordan's Relations with Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia	183
Chapter Eleven: Haditha and the 1941 Iraqi Crisis	189
From Anti-Colonial Jihad to a New Front	189
Haditha's Call to Conscience	190
Bani Sakhr in the Eye of the Storm	192
Chapter Twelve: The Chechens and the Druze	194
Sheikh Haditha's Role in Rebuilding Azraq	194
Sheikh Haditha and the Druze	196
Sheikh Haditha's Legacy	201

APPENDICES	203
Appendix I: The Law to Oversee the Bedouins (1929)	205
Appendix II: Text of the National Charter (25 July 1928)	208
Appendix III: The Programme and Resolutions of the Jordanian People's Congress	213
<i>Index</i>	217



Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisah



A painting of Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha

CHAPTER ONE

LINEAGE AND CHARACTER: THE MAKING OF HADITHA

Lineage

God ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware. (Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

And:

He it is Who hath placed you as viceroys of the earth and hath exalted some of you in rank above others, that He may try you by (the test of) that which He hath given you. Lo! Thy Lord is swift in punishment, and Lo! He verily is Forgiving, Merciful. (Al-An 'am, 6:165)

Sheikh Haditha is of the Jordanian Al-Khraisha clan, a branch (*batn*) of the Ka'abnah: the northern clans of the Bani Sakhr. Bani Sakhr is from the Hijazi tribe of Harb and the Ka'abnah are Qahtanis from the tribe of Tay'. Haditha was the son of Ali bin Abdullah bin Al-Hmaid bin Khalaf bin Salem bin Hneif bin Muhammad (Saleem Al-'Od) bin Muhammad bin Suleiman bin Hneif Al-Khraisha. His sons

that grew into adulthood are: Ali, Nayef, Nawwaf, Jamal, Mijhem, Turki, and Hakim. As for Haditha's brothers, they included Jad'aan—who left no descendants and was known as a tribal warrior (*faris*); Mshaash, who was a poet; 'Argoub, who was a warrior; Jaddu'—who left no descendants and was a tribal commander (*'aqid qawm*) and a seasoned tracker and guide with exceptional knowledge of the secrets and mysteries of the desert; and Muhammad, who was known to be a shelter in a storm. Haditha himself was the commander of the tribe's warrior forces and ranked second in age among his brothers, that is, after Jad'aan.

Most of the Khirshan (plural of Khraisha; a name said by some to have originated with an ancestor whose face was marked by scratches [*karash*] incurred in battle) live in the Muwaqqar District and Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha was born c.1882 in Al-Ghadaf,¹ a valley located approximately 25 km south of Al-Azraq. Born into a family of noble lineage, his father, Ali, was the Sheikh and leader of his people and had studied in Damascus in Al-'Anbar school where he was sent by his father, Sheikh Abdullah, to receive his education. Haditha himself did not attend school but grew up under the tutelage of his father, who was his educator and teacher. He acquired knowledge and chivalry through his father, and through travels with his tribe which was a nomadic Bedouin tribe. This had a great impact in instilling in him knowledge of Arab countries, their peoples and their conditions, in addition to their customs, and traditions. He travelled throughout the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and Iraq and developed an unsha-

¹ Othman, Dr Hasan Saleh and Al-Shobaki, Hamed Ahmad, *Rijalaat ma' Al-Malik Abdullah*, Ministry of Culture Publications, Jordan, 1995, p.159.

keable sense of belonging to his homeland and his *Ummah*, which explains why throughout his life he was willing to sacrifice for the sake of the advancement of both.

Sheikh Haditha's Character

Professor Nayef bin Zaabin Harbi writes in his book *Qadaya wa Qudah wa Shiyam min Al-Badia* [*Cases, Judges, and Virtues of the Bedouin*]:

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, one of the sheikhs of the Jordanian Bani Sakhr tribe, was a shrewd man, and very courageous. He was also very intelligent, perspicacious and knowledgeable, and with these unique characteristics his fame and news spread among the sheikhs of the Arab tribes in the Levant and Jordan.²

Sheikh Haditha had an easy manner without affectation and was firm without harshness. These traits endeared him to those who knew him. He was known to be a man of religious devotion and Islam was the guiding light on which he depended in making his decisions and during challenging times. Strong and sound, he did not deviate from it, nor did the tests of life alter it.

Sheikh Haditha was also known to be a patient and gentle man, and restrained in his reactions. His calmness was crowned by an inclination to contemplation. He was courteous and known for weighing his words carefully and his opinion and advice were sought out by many in Arabia. The desert he grew up in inculcated wisdom in him and he drew from it deeply in all matters.

² Harbi, Nayef bin Zaabin, *Qadaya wa Qudah wa Shiyam min Al-Badia* [*Cases, Judges, and Virtues of the Bedouin*], Al-Rashid Printers, Al-Madina Al-Munawwara, 1995.

Generosity among the Bani Sakhr is a characteristic that is almost universal among them. Among the Khirshan famous for generosity is Mjalli bin Ta‘aan Al-Klaib and Mithwed Al-Khraisha whose sobriquet was ‘the hill of meat’. Sheikh Haditha was renowned throughout Arabia for his generosity and, according to the testimonies of his contemporaries, was generous almost to a fault. In the 1927 book *Adventures in Arabia*, W.B. Seabrook relates that Haditha ‘had inherited wealth and the leadership of a powerful tribe, but his possessions and the number of his warriors had dwindled, because of his extraordinary generosity, which had become famous throughout the desert.’³

Haditha was known to be someone who could be depended on when the ravages of dark times fell upon the Ummah. Even in times of drought, he would share money and food with others who needed them. His home was open to guests, the needy, the destitute, and all who came to him. The Sheikh was also sought out by freedom fighters, revolutionaries, and those seeking protection (*dukhalaa*). He provided them with the safety and support they needed and was bound to protect them with his life and honour. Hundreds of swords under his command protected them, warding off their enemies, and providing them with safety. Many a person in need of security, aid, and relief found refuge in Sheikh Haditha. He offered protection to so many *dakhils* that in his time he became a byword for the ability to protect free Arabs from injustice and oppression. He was a safe haven and a fortress of security for those who fought for the independence of their homelands and those beset by life’s misfortunes.

³ Seabrook, W.B., *Adventures in Arabia*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York; 1927, pp.106.

Sheikh Haditha's Love of Poetry and Animals

Sheikh Haditha was an avid falconer and hunter, and his home was always full of falcons that were brought to him by two families from the town of Sheikh Miskin in the Houran. These migratory birds of prey came to the Levant at certain times each year and would be captured, especially in November. Sheikh Haditha gave them names such as 'Shalwa', 'Hattab', and 'Hazza'; they would rest on perches in front of his camelhair tent, and he would use them to hunt bustard which was plentiful in his area. His sons Ali and Nayef also kept falcons and would use them to hunt gazelles, whose meat Sheikh Haditha liked. The Sheikh loved horses and he had Arabian Seluki dogs; two of his favorites were named Shufti and Shufeir. Cats were often found in his tent as he often gave them some of his camel milk which was his favourite drink. Until he died, he had a herd of white camels, including more than one dairy camel. His shepherd, Musallam, would milk the camels and pour the rich drink into bowls that would hold about 5–7 litres of milk. He would bring the sheikh a bowl in the morning, and another one in the evening. The camels fed on plants and shrubs such as wormwood, sage, and saltwort, and shrubby thistle; plants that are used in traditional medicine, and so his food was healthy and wholesome.

His constant companions were his brothers Mshaash and Jaddou', his cousin Saleem Al-Sat'aan, and Mirshid Al-Bgheil. Poetry comes naturally to most Bedouins as it has been an oral culture since time immemorial. More than most tribes, the Khirshan and Tawayha (the Sheikhs of the Huweitat tribe) in particular have always been known for their poetry and for it being accompanied by the melancholy notes of the *rababah*—a lute-like instrument played

with a bow. Sheikh Haditha loved poetry and his brother Mshaash was a poet of some note.

When Muhammad bin Smeir came from Syria on a raid, he sent his scouts (*subour*) to see what the Khirshan were doing. When they returned, he asked them what they had seen and heard. They answered: 'We saw *nada al-tyour* (the training of falcons by calling to them by name), *dabh njour* (preparing coffee), and *li'b rabab* (singing poetry while playing the *rababah*).

Sheikh Haditha was accustomed to living in a large, five-compartment camel-hair tent (*beit sha'r mkhomas*). When he went to the city, he did not like sleeping in closed rooms, so he would ask for a mattress to be provided for him on the roof of the building in which he was residing. When he returned from Hajj in mid-1951 and entered Damascus, the people of the city celebrated his arrival, especially the people of Al-Meydan. He stayed at Abu Sa'eed Al-Sabsabi's house and asked that a mattress be spread for him on the roof.

Battles of Sheikh Haditha

One of the battles in which Sheikh Haditha led Bani Sakhr to victory was the Battle of Swagah in 1922, when a request for help in the form of a camel with a black cloth around its neck (*al-muqalladah*) arrived from Sheikh Hatmal Al-Zaben informing that the Huweitat were determined to descend on the area of Al-Thamad. Sheikh Haditha rode with the Khirshan and arrived at Umm Al-Rasas at night. Haditha said: 'Till morning ... you will meet them under God's sky.' In the morning it came to light that the Huweitat had gathered their sheep and prepared barricades on Al-Swagah Hill. Among the warriors of Bani Sakhr was

Sheikh Gaftan Al-Sahn, who was accompanied by a hundred horsemen. The battle took place, and the Bani Sakhr defeated the Huweitat who lost 18 men.

When the Druze and mountain Arabs from Jabal Al-Arab came to raid Bani Sakhr, a man named Sayel Al-Jabli fired upon Haditha and nearly killed him; the bullet grazed the sheikh's forehead, and he survived by a miracle. Among those who took part in the raid were Ibn Madi and Mutab from the Druze of Bani Ma'rouf.

Sheikh Haditha also participated in tribal reconciliation gatherings, including a notable meeting in Dar'a held under the supervision of both Glubb Pasha and a representative of the French authorities in Syria. The assembled tribal leaders—from Bani Sakhr, the Huweitat, the Jabaliyya, and Syrian tribes—agreed to the principle of resolving all past conflicts—including blood feuds and raids—under the principle *'al-hfaar wa al-dfaan'* effectively declaring a full amnesty for bygone conflicts. The meeting was attended by a number of tribal sheikhs from Syria and Jordan, including Al-Nuri bin Al-Wuld Ali, Mithqal Al-Fayez, 'Addoub Al-Zaben, Muhammad Al-Zuhair, and Haditha Al-Khraisha.

Sheikh 'Uwaydher Al-Zabin recounts that there was an issue between Haditha Al-Khraisha and Mithqal Al-Fayez over a plot of land. King Abdullah I summoned them and said: 'You must go and ask either Ibn 'Adwan or Ibn Sha'laan to arbitrate between you.' To this, Sheikh Haditha responded: *'Ya taweel Al-'umor*, a third of the full opinion is absent.' When the King asked who was missing, Haditha said: 'Mithqal speaks for the Fayez, and I speak for the Ka'abnah—but the third voice is 'Addoub Al-Zaben.' The Emir replied, 'Then let 'Addoub join, and we shall hear his opinion.'



King Abdullah I

A message was sent to ‘Addoub Al-Zaben, who was then in Al-Qrayyat. Once he arrived, the three convened at the King Ghazi Hotel in Amman and consulted together; then ‘Addoub proposed they go directly to the Emir. Upon arrival, he said to Emir Abdullah: ‘Invoke God’s name, O Emir.’ The Emir replied: ‘There is no god but Allah, O ‘Addoub.’ ‘Addoub then said: ‘Majid ibn ‘Adwan is a judge, and so is Nuri ibn Sha‘laan. You are a judge too, just as they are.’ The Emir was quiet for a moment then clapped his hands and said: ‘*Beini o beinkom Allah,*’ meaning he would not judge between them and would not impose a binding ruling.⁴

⁴ *Al-Sheikh Mithqal Sattam Al-Fayez* by Awwad Al-Bakhit and Omar Al-Armouti; 2009, p.292.

Al-Muwaqqar in Poetry

Sheikh Haditha settled in Al-Muwaqqar, a town about 20 km south-east of Amman, which had long enjoyed special favour with the Umayyad caliph Yazid ibn Abd Al-Malik who built a castle there known as Qasr Al-Muwaqqar. Over time it became a celebrated meeting place and destination, and poets frequented it and sang of it; among them leading Umayyad-era figures such as Al-Farazdaq and Jarir. Yazid himself continued to reside in Jordan, staying there until his death.

Al-Muwaqqar means reverence and veneration. In the Umayyad imagination, Al-Muwaqqar was not simply a place in the Balqa: it was a station of power and a meeting-ground of *wujuh*—nobles, delegations, and poets who wrote of it as a courtly destination, a marker of eminent company, and—when fortunes changed—a site remembered through longing for the men and *majalis* that once filled it.

The poet Kuthayyir ‘Azza sets Al-Muwaqqar first as a place where delegations converge upon a caliph, bearing the language of triumph:

يَزُرُّنَ عَلَى ثَنَائِيهِ يَزِيداً

بِأَكْنَافِ الْمُوقَّرِ وَالرَّقِيمِ

*They visit Yazid, though distance lies between,
At Al-Muwaqqar's edges and Al-Raqim's field.*

تُهَيِّئُهُ الْوُفُودُ إِذَا أَتَوْهُ

بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلِكِ الْعَظِيمِ

*The delegations greet him when they come,
With God's own victory; and a kingdom sublime.*

The poet Al-Farazdaq turns Al-Muwaqqar into a thres-

hold of fulfilment and honour, where arrival itself carries the weight of an oath:

فَإِنَّ مَنِي النَّفْسِ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْتُ بِهَا
وَحَلَّ نُذُورِي إِنْ بَلَغْتُ الْمُوقَّرَا

*This is the soul's desire that brought me near;
My vows are loosed once Al-Muwaqqar is here.*

بِهِ خَيْرُ أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ حَيًّا وَمَيِّتًا
سِوَى مَنْ بِهِ دِينُ الْبَرِيَّةِ أَسْفَرَا

*There dwell the best of earth, in life and after
Save him through whom mankind's faith shone
brighter.*

Jarir keeps Al-Muwaqqar tied to nobility and neighbourly standing, even as he speaks of decline and distance:

أَتَى تَحَنُّنٌ إِلَى الْمُوقَّرِ بَعْدَمَا
فَنَى الْعِرَانِكُ وَالْقَصَائِدُ رَاوُ

*How do you yearn for Al-Muwaqqar, when
The battles are gone and poems grow old again?*

هَلْ مِثْلُ حَاجَتِنَا إِلَيْكُمْ حَاجَةٌ
أَوْ مِثْلُ جَارِي بِالْمُوقَّرِ جَارُ

*Is any need like ours for you to meet?
Is any neighbour like my neighbour there so complete?*

These verses cast Al-Muwaqqar as a place made by its people: delegations assembling at history's doorstep, and poets arriving as witnesses to virtue.

CHAPTER TWO

SHEIKH HADITHA IN WRITTEN RECORDS

The Story of the White Mare

Sheikh Haditha was respected both by his fellow Arabs and the orientalist who met him on their travels. In his 1927 book *Adventures in Arabia* the American journalist, traveller, and writer W.B. Seabrook recounts meeting Sheikh Haditha through Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez.

‘We ride,’ said Mithkal, ‘to visit the *menzil* of a saint.’ And as we rode, he told me briefly the history of Haditha Pasha, sheikh of the El-[S]Khour. He had inherited wealth and the leadership of a powerful tribe, but his possessions and the number of his warriors had dwindled, because of his extraordinary generosity, which had become famous throughout the desert.

It had made him universally honored and beloved, but it was ‘poor business,’ Mithkal pointed out, for men to spend their lives following a chief who habitually gave away three-fourths of the tribal flocks they bred or stole in *ghrazzu* [*sic*]. Therefore, many of the tribe had ‘loved him and left him,’ to join some more practical leader ... He still had six hundred loyal warriors and ample flocks to maintain his honorable estate.

When we reached the El-[S]Khour *menzil*, I found Haditha Pasha—who welcomed us with courtly dignity—a tall, elderly man, of grave and noble counte-

nance, seldom smiling, with whitening beard, and the far-away look of a dreamer in his eyes.

His tent, in which we sat, was large, but scantily furnished, almost bare. Three weeks before, a neighboring friend, the Sheik Sirhan, had ventured south for honey-dates of El Ally, and the Wahabi, had plundered his caravan. When Sirhan returned, stripped, Haditha had made a division of all his own personal belongings, piled them into equal stacks, and given one to Sirhan, with several camels.

Sirhan was gone now, to mend his fortunes by doing unto others as the Wahabi had done unto him, but one of his cousins, Dirdar, who had been with him in the adventure, recounted these things to us, while Haditha was out of earshot ...

In Haditha's tent was less formality than at Mithkal's great *beit-shaar*, but a beautiful courtesy. A worn and ragged Bedouin ... who had evidently ridden far, stood outside, holding his horse's halter, and ventured a '*Salaam Aleikum*,' uncertain of his welcome. He was of a tribe unfriendly to Haditha's but not a blood-enemy. It was plain in his attitude. He stood as one who would say:

'I know that I am a man of no importance, also that you have no reason to be friendly with me or my tribe, and that I have no right to claim your hospitality; but I am weary and hungry.' There was a moment's hesitation; then Haditha rose to his full height, and replied, '*Aleikum salaam*.' Water, milk, cheese, and bread were given to him freely, and a rug was thrown in a distant corner of the tent, where he lay on his belly ... and slept ...

Haditha had a falcon, chained to a short wooden perch. He tossed it shreds of goat-flesh which it ate greedily, but it stared with unblinking eyes. Presently he unchained the bird and threw it into the air. It flew in widening circles, mounting. I tried to follow it with Mithkal's glasses. Haditha stripped off his *abba* and waved it. The bird caught his signal from that great distance, and returning, came to rest on his wrist. The falcon is used for hunting gazelle and the dove, pigeon, and other edible birds which abound on the edge of the desert; also, farther in the great desert, the bustard, a bird twice as big as a turkey, the same mentioned by Xenophon. They hunt also with a small greyhound, fleet, but scarce half the size of Europe's breed. They carry the falcon hooded, on wrist or saddle pommel, as did lords and ladies in times of chivalry.

When darkness fell, a lantern was hung on the tentpole, after we had eaten, and a man sang to the twanging of the *rabeyba*. In the after pause, our ragged, villainous-featured guest rolled over and grunted in his sleep. I said a word in praise of Bedouin hospitality, which included even such as he.

'It is a small thing,' replied Haditha, 'but it is true that hospitality is of the desert rather than the town.'

'Two years ago, I crossed to the *Engleysi* border [Iraq] on a *ghrazzu* [*sic.*], which went ill with us, and we took no cattle, and were worsted. We were three hundred horse-men, returning, and were ninety-six hours without food or water, save a little for our horses, which cannot bear thirst as a man or a camel.

We came to an encampment of no more tents than my fingers, where dwelt an impoverished sheik, Sahr Assarah, may Allah grant him better prosperity; for his sole wealth then was two camels and fifteen black goats.

‘My name he knew, though he had never looked on my face. And while my men rode to the well from which he drew, he gave me to drink in his tent, but called another to make coffee, and was gone.

Somewhat distant I heard a great, shrill bleating, Sahr Assarah, with his sons, had gone among the goats and broken of each goat a leg.’

Haditha ceased, as if the tale were finished—and indeed it was. ‘*Aiee!*’ cried Mansour; and ‘*Wellah* [by God]! Here is a thing to be remembered,’ exclaimed Mithkal; and the others said, ‘May Allah grant that sheik prosperity.’

A goat with a broken leg must be immediately killed. Sahr Assarah knew that if he began to slay his flock, Haditha would hear and forbid it ere three throats had been slit. With the goats’ legs broke, it was useless to stop the slaughter, and there was flesh for Haditha and all his famished warriors ...

[The Bedouin’s] code of honor, in some respects, is as quixotic and fantastic as that of King Arthur’s knights. Haditha embodied it, perhaps, more than any other Bedouin I met. My friend Mithkal was rich, prosperous, and worldly-wise, cynical too, in an amiable way; yet he revered Haditha as a sort of saint. Among the many stories which Mithkal told me of him, the following is most typical.

Haditha had a white mare which he loved. A

neighboring sheik named Goren, on friendly but not intimate terms with Haditha, admired the mare and was very anxious to buy it. He offered Haditha three hundred gold pounds, and when he found that Haditha would not sell the mare at any price, he offered in exchange one of his daughters noted for her beauty. Haditha refused to part with the mare. Goren then called on him formally and said: 'As we are not enemies, honor and the desert law compel me to warn you that I am going to any lengths to get your mare even if I have to steal it.' Haditha replied: 'I am warned.'

Goren bided his time in long patience. When more than a year had passed—this event occurred in 1920, according to Mithkal—Goren learned that Haditha was planning to ride into Damascus to make arrangements about the sale of some camels.

The Bedouins usually trim their beards to a short point. Goren had kept out of Haditha's sight and had let his beard grow rough and long. He stained his face with streaks of henna and rubbed it with the ashes of camel dung; next he took a dagger and inflicted on his right foot a painful but not dangerous wound, which would cause him to limp; he bound it up with an old rag so that the blood seeped through and made a spot; he then dressed himself in the garments of a beggar and took a staff.

On the morning when Haditha was to ride into Damascus, Goren took the road before him, and walked with his lame foot for miles until he was actually worn out, covered with perspiration, and in great pain. These precautions might seem theatrical

and unnecessary, but the eyes of the Bedouin are keen as a hawk to penetrate disguise or sham. Goren had therefore produced in himself a condition, even down to the details of exhaustion and pain, which was not a sham but real.

Presently, Haditha, cantering along on his white mare, overtook Goren, and as he came abreast, Goren sank into the road almost under the mare's feet. Haditha, observing the bloody bandage and the exhaustion, failed to recognize Goren because of the beard, the henna and dirt on his face, and the *kafieh* which partly covered it; he halted and dismounted to help the wayfarer in distress.

Goren moaned that he was on his way to Damascus and had become exhausted because of his wound. Haditha did the thing that any Bedouin sheik might do, under the circumstances; he lifted Goren to the back of his mare, held him in the saddle, and set out toward Damascus, himself on foot, letting the beggar ride. Goren kept silent for more than a half hour, giving his strength time to return; then he said: 'Noble sheik, your gun is heavy on your shoulders; do therefore, hang it here on the pommel.' It was a hot day and a long road, and Haditha, suspecting nothing, acquiesced. Two or three minutes later Goren dug his heels violently into the mare, and in three bounds was out of Haditha's reach. He then wheeled the horse, unslung the rifle, and returned to where Haditha stood.

'Oh! Haditha, I gave you honorable warning.'

Haditha recognized Goren and replied, greatly chagrined: 'O Goren, you did give warning!'

As Goren turned to ride away triumphantly, Haditha suddenly shouted. Goren wheeled again and returned to him. Haditha said: 'I have reflected. The mare is yours, and I will promise not to seek its return either by violence or guile, if you will promise what I ask of you.'

'I promise,' replied Goren.

It is the custom among Bedouin sheiks to demand a promise and to acquiesce in it without saying what the bargain is—depending on each other's honor. Haditha said: 'You will promise on the name of the Prophet, and I will promise likewise, that we will tell no living soul the manner in which you obtained my mare.'

'I promise, O sheik! But why?' replied Goren.

'Because,' said Haditha, 'if this tale spread from mouth to mouth in our desert, no rider would ever dare to stop and give aid to a wounded man or a beggar again, and this would be a shame greater than the loss of a thousand white mares.' Goren reflected, got down from the horse's back, put the bridle in the hands of Haditha, and said: 'I cannot steal, even after honorable warning, from such a man.'

Haditha, because of Goren's wound, helped him back into the saddle, they went together into Damascus—and remained fast friends ... the true Bedouin character ... his code of honor is higher in many respects than that of any European race.⁵

⁵ Seabrook, W.B., *Adventures in Arabia*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York; 1927, pp. 106-110, 117-120.

The Grudging Admiration of the British

Glubb described Sheikh Haditha as ‘a man of sincere religion and a high standard of honour.’⁶ In *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*, Yoav Alon writes that ‘Haditha clearly embodied the stereotypical gentleman so admired by the British. It is worth noting that Britons serving in Trans-Jordan in later years often remarked on his virtues’.⁷ Indeed, British Mandate officers with whom Sheikh Haditha came into contact with expressed their grudging admiration for the Sheikh. In a report dated 10 September 1920 CE, the British commissioner in Salt, Captain Dunbar Brunton wrote:

Haditha, in particular deserves the greatest credit for the way in which he acted as intermediary ... [He is] sensible and reliable ... is not wealthy but never begs like others and is generous to a degree. His manners are quiet and he has a great personal charm. One might term him the only real gentleman among the sheikhs of this region.⁸

Honour Even in Enmity

Sheikh Haditha was honourable even when in conflict with others. His grandson, Shayesh Nayef Al-Khraisha, relates the following story which epitomises the honourable chivalry of the people of the Badia.

In a tribal raid (*ghazu*) between the tribes of ‘Anaza and Bani Sakhr Haditha killed a prominent man from the

⁶ UKNA, Glubb’s report, June 1936, CO831/37/3.

⁷ Alon, Yoav, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*, I.B. Taurus, 2007, p.32.

⁸ Brunton, Political Report, 9 October 1920, Brunton Papers; Middle East Centre, St Antony’s College, Oxford.

‘Anaza in self-defence. The man had been calling out in the heat of battle:

‘Where is Haditha? Where is Haditha?’ wanting to kill the sheikh of the opposing side.

Many years passed and one day Haditha went out hunting with a falcon and some young men. The falcon flew off and disappeared, and did not return even after a long wait. Haditha and his men searched long and hard for the falcon through the ravines of the desert until thirst overcame them. When camelhair tents appeared in the distance, Haditha told his men to remain behind while he went and brought back some water. As Haditha approached the encampment, he called out: ‘*Assalamu alaykom.*’ At that, two men stood up and took the reins of his horse and said to him:

‘Welcome, Haditha.’

Haditha feigned astonishment and said:

‘Who is Haditha? I am just a wayfarer in search of some water.’

The men of the encampment brought Haditha’s party to them and Haditha asked about the meaning of this arrest.

‘You killed one of our men!’ they said.

Haditha quickly denied the charge, but the men did not argue. They said the matter could be solved simply.

‘All you have to do is face the Qiblah and swear by Almighty God that you did not kill our man, and to say these words: “I swear by Almighty God, I neither tore his flesh nor shed his blood.”’

The Bedouin custom was that a circle would be drawn outside the tent and the accused would stand in it and swear by God facing the Qiblah. This was

so that if the accused lied, it would not defile the sanctity (*haram*) of the home. The ‘Anaza who were sure that the man before them was Haditha, said he could swear inside the house despite the seriousness of the charge out of respect for who he was.

At this critical moment, Haditha turned towards the Qiblah and swore:

‘I swear by Almighty God, I am the one who shot, and God is the One Who took the life.’

At this a stunned silence fell upon those present, broken only by *tablil*. The family of the slain man pardoned Haditha and released him desiring God’s Countenance ﷻ and that of His Messenger ﷺ. This was a time when a man was only as good as his word and when there was honour even in enmity.⁹ And indeed after this incident there was what is termed a ‘*husna*’ between the two families whereby they take care of each other if ever the other is in need and whenever they meet.

The Guest’s Coffee: Honour and Mercy between Shammar and Bani Sakhr

Arab tribal leaders competed with one another in *murū’ah*—chivalry expressed through generosity, forbearance, and moral excellence. Between the period 1325–1330 AH a raiding party from the Shammar tribe, led by Gharib ibn Mu‘ayqil, attacked Bani Sakhr. Among the raiders was a very young man from ‘Anaza, the only one of his tribe in

⁹ Copied from *Al-Ra’i* Newspaper, ‘Honour Even in Enmity: The Story of Haditha Al-Khraissha with the Family of the ‘Anizi’. Source: *Ta’ss Arabic Encyclopedia*.

the group, and his mother's only son; his father had left his own people to live among Shammar and later died. As the Shammar horsemen prepared to depart, the young man's mother pleaded with Gharib: her son was inexperienced, this was his first raid, and she had tried to dissuade him but he insisted on going. Then she placed him under Gharib's protection: 'My son is in your care,' she said and burst into tears. Bound by her charge, and mindful that the boy stood alone among Shammar, Gharib felt doubly responsible for him.

The raiders moved towards Bani Sakhr and sent scouts ahead. The scouts returned delighted: they had located Bani Sakhr's camels and had not seen enough horsemen to pose a threat. Gharib, however—an experienced fighter—remained uneasy. He devised a careful plan, dividing his men into two groups: one would drive off the camels, while the other would remain hidden, ready to strike Bani Sakhr's horsemen from both front and rear. He also set two meeting points for after the fighting, the first used to assess who had regrouped; if everyone gathered there, the second would be unnecessary. Anyone missing from the second meeting, the final meeting place, would be presumed dead, captured, or wounded and left on the battlefield.

Shammar launched their raid. They won the first exchange, but their triumph quickly turned to misery when Bani Sakhr's horsemen surrounded them. The battle ended without Shammar achieving what they wanted, and they withdrew. When they assembled at the agreed point and counted their men, they discovered the young 'Anaza boy was missing. Gharib was shaken; he could not avoid risking himself to save the boy if he had been taken prisoner, whatever the cost. He asked his men to choose another

leader and return home, insisting that he would go back for the boy.

Gharib knew that if Bani Sakhr seized him, they would show him no mercy. He therefore tried to slip into one of their tents and drink their coffee before they caught him, because—by Arab custom—sharing a host's coffee placed a form of protection upon the guest. He approached their encampment, tightened the tether of his mount, and moved under cover of darkness. He heard men speaking his name: one said, 'Gharib will not abandon him'; another warned, 'Beware; he may come tonight or tomorrow night.' He waited, then slipped into Sheikh Haditha's tent and began drinking the coffee set at the entrance. The sheikh called out, 'Who is this?' Gharib answered, 'A guest.'

'Are you Gharib ibn Mu'ayqil?' Haditha asked.

'Yes,' Gharib replied.

'Have you come to ask about the boy, your companion?'

'Yes, where is he?'

Sheikh Haditha told him that the boy had indeed been there, and that they had taken pity on him when he explained that he was his mother's only son. They had been sure Gharib would come seeking him, and they had been waiting; not to take revenge for the raid, but to honour Gharib's loyalty to his companion. Sheikh Haditha added that even if Gharib had not drunk his coffee, he would have received nothing but the duties of hospitality and generosity. Gharib said this did not surprise him; yet the greatest honour would be if they would hand the boy back. Sheikh Haditha explained that the boy had met a caravan travelling to Syria and left with them, despite their attempts to dissuade him; he was tempted by the promised payment. Gharib asked permission to follow his tracks in the hope

of catching him before he reached Syria. Sheikh Haditha refused to let him depart before receiving proper hospitality, and after some back-and-forth between the two men, he agreed to suffice with an early meal. After the meal, attended by leading men of Bani Sakhr, Gharib set out and pursued the boy into Syria, then followed him on to Iraq, found him there, and returned him safe and unharmed to his mother.

Sheikh Haditha's Relationships with Other Tribes and Peoples

Sheikh Haditha was known for rising above tribal disputes and for his commitment to Islamic and Arab etiquette when dealing with the leaders of other Arab tribes. Bani Ma'rouf greatly valued the friendship between Sheikh Haditha and Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash who led the Great Syrian Revolt against French colonialism. Indeed, their friendship dated back to the Great Arab Revolt against the Ottomans. They knew him as a poet, a warrior, and someone who knew the substance of a man without being fooled by appearances. The Nejdī merchants, Al-Uqailat, used to travel to Syria, Palestine, and Egypt for trade. When passing through Jordan, they would stop to visit Sheikh Haditha and stay as his guests and enjoy his hospitality. Another relationship was the one Sheikh Haditha had with Sheikh Nouri Al-Sha'laan, who was accused by the Turkish government of having killed his brother Fahd. He was imprisoned and marked for execution, and in prison sang a *hjeini* poem that said:

البارحة العين منشله

عود الرمد الطايفة طوف

*Last night my eyes were clouded with pain,
The smoke of infection drifting like ghosts
I have no comfort but the dallah's grace,
This prison is dark; sightless and closed*

Haditha heard of Nouri's plight and contacted the Governor of the Sham who invited him to be his guest of honour for lunch. When the meal was served, Haditha would not extend his hand to eat and said: 'I will not accept your hospitality while Al-Nouri Al-Sha'laan is in prison.' The Governor said: 'He will be released as perfection of my hospitality.' Nouri was released from prison, and he and Haditha remained as close as brothers until they both passed away.

In his documentary research on Chechens and Circasians settling in Jordan, historian Professor Jawdat Nashkho writes:

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha deserves the greatest credit for building the city of Azraq¹⁰ and populating it with Chechens and giving them lands and farms. Indeed, he gave them something even more important than that: safety and security, because the neighboring Bedouin tribes refused to receive the new Chechen element or accept their presence in their midst. Nevertheless, they accepted them because of their respect

¹⁰ For more on Sheikh Haditha's Role in Rebuilding Azraq see Chapter 12.

¹¹ *Al-Urdon* [Jordan] Newspaper, No. 402; 28th March 2004, p. 4.

¹² 'Jordanian Chechen Site': <https://www.sukhneh.com/32-11-14-08-11-2014-b21>



Sheikh Nouri Al-Sha'laan

for Sheikh Haditha and his high standing in their eyes and the fact that the Ruwala, Sirhan, Khraisha, and Bani Sakhr tribes owed him allegiance, yielded to his word and were bound by his guarantees, commands, and prohibitions ...¹¹

Chechen historians have documented¹² that notables in the village of Zarqa, led by their spiritual leader Abdullah, headed east to the Azraq oasis in the early days of the twentieth century. Those lands were full of dangers due to the presence of raiders. The Chechens prepared themselves and 19 of them set out, including Hajj Abdullah, They included the scholar Jamal Al-Din Al-Kailani, Muhammad Al-Ajri (Buhtah), the father of Abd Al-Quddus, Hajj Muhammad Ja'far, and others. There were also 5 men from Sweileh: Hajj Yahya Adel, Arsbi, Beitkhan, and Aykum Al-Hajj



Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha

Ahmed, and Ojrof. This group, along with Hajj Mirza bin Salmirza, the well-known Chechen historian, moved on Thursday, 25th May 1912 CE, and arrived at the Azraq oasis the following day. There they were received by Haditha Al-Khraisha, and the Chechens explained their purpose to him. Sheikh Haditha consented that construction be undertaken in Al-Azraq and that the Chechens live there on condition that they establish a grain mill, as the Bedouins found it cumbersome to grind their grains because they had to travel to distant areas in order to do that. After the two parties reached an agreement, the group wanted to return to Zarqa, but Sheikh Haditha would not hear of it before they had hosted for a meal and been provided with a guide for the way back. Ultimately, the Chechens did not populate and build up Al-Azraq because the large number of

immigrants that were expected to arrive never did. Indeed, the foundation stone for Al-Azraq village was laid a long time after that, on 30 July 1930 CE.

The Chechens were good friends to Sheikh Haditha who was a prominent member of the Coalition Party (*Hizb Al-I'tilaf*) and was imprisoned by the Turks because of his opposition to Turkish rule.¹³ During the First World War, Turkish and German forces encircled Sheikh Haditha at a railway station, preparing to open fire and kill him. At that moment, Chechen youths acted swiftly; they disguised Haditha in Chechen dress, mingled him among their men, and slipped him through the tight cordon, after which he returned safely to his tribe. On another occasion, a detachment of Turkish troops pursued Haditha inside the town of Zarqa to arrest him; after great effort, the Chechens managed to hide him and then spirit him out of the danger zone, enabling his return to his people when the Turks had nearly seized him. The Turkish forces had strict orders to assassinate Sheikh Haditha; these incidents occurred shortly before their withdrawal from the Zarqa area.

¹³ Othman, Dr Hasan Saleh, Al-Shobaki, Hamed Ahmad, *Rijalat ma' Al-Malek Abdullah: Mu'asses Al-Mamlaka Al-Urduniyya Al-Hashimiyya*, Ministry of Culture, Jordan; 1995, p. 159.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POLITICS THAT SHAPED SHEIKH HADITHA

From the Golan to the Hijaz: Sheikh Haditha's Route of Sanctuary and Passage (1915–1929)

Sheikh Haditha entered the struggle against unjust Turkish practices in 1915, specifically on 29th Rajab 1333 AH, when he and three of his relatives actively participated in the first meeting that took place in the town of Jubata Al-Khashab in the Golan, in the home of the mujahid Ahmad Mreiwed. Mreiwed was from the prominent Marawdeh tribe of Balqa in Jordan. The meeting, which turned into a national conference, was attended by an elite group of leaders and sheikhs from the Levant. In his papers, Sheikh Turki Al-Kayed of the Obeidat mentioned that the number of attendees exceeded one hundred men.

The meeting focused on confronting the governor of Syria Jamal Pasha's repression, and developing a plan to smuggle those wanted for trial from Damascus to Jordan and from there to the Hijaz or to Iraq. Four men took on the responsibility of safely delivering the Free Men of Syria (*Ahrar Suria*) to the Hijaz and saving them from Jamal Pasha's gallows, and the task of each one was within his region and circle of influence. The responsibility of delivering the Free Men of Syria from Jubata Al-Khashab to Damascus to Dar'a fell on Ahmad Mreiwed. And delivering them from Dar'a to Al-Muzayreeb to the Yarmouk River to Kafr Soum fell on Fadel Al-Mahamid who was from the

tribe of Harb. And from Kafr Soum to Irbid to Zarqa to Al-Muwaqqar fell on Kayed Al-Mufleh of the Obeidat. And from Al-Muwaqqar to Al-Jawf to the Hijaz fell on Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha.¹⁴

In his book *Images of Heroism (Suwar min Al-Butoulah)*, Jordanian historian Suleiman Musa writes¹⁵ that, in 1915, Jamal Pasha began sending Arab men into exile to Anatolia. Jalal Al-Bukhari and Izzeddine Al-Tanukhi fled and took refuge with Ahmad Mreiwed in Jubata Al-Khashab. The Turks learned from their spies about this, and Mreiwed feared for the lives of his two guests, so he accompanied them with a number of armed men to the Houran and from there to the village of Kafr Soum, where they stayed with his friend, the sheikh of the Obaidat, Sheikh Kayed Al-Mufleh Al-Obaidat. From there, they travelled to Zarqa and then to Al-Muwaqqar, where they were received by Sheikh Haditha who then sent Sheikh Farhan Al-Khraisha to be Bukhari and Al-Tanukhi's guide to Al-Jawf.

A few days later, a second group of men sought protection from Sheikh Haditha: the poet Omar Hamad, Ahmad Al-Khatib, Emir Taher Al-Jaza'iri, Abdel-Ghani Al-Areisi, Aref Al-Shehabi, and Tawfiq Al-Bassat. They went through the same route the first group went through but they mistook the area of Al-Hazeem—where the Sirhan tribe was—for where Sheikh Haditha was staying. Instead of giving them sanctuary, the sheikh of the Sirhan, Hamad bin Bali, stripped them of their money and horses; and the men were left to go on foot and continue to look for Sheikh Haditha. They finally found him and told him what had

¹⁴ Obeidat, Mahmoud; *Sheehan* Newspaper 9th March, 2002.

¹⁵ Musa, Suleiman, *Suwar min Al-Butoulah* [Images of Heroism], Hashemite Press, 1968, Amman, Jordan, pp. 108-109.

happened to them. Upon hearing how they had been treated, he shouted: ‘They will repay two horses for every horse they seized; a thousand Mejidi coins for every coin, and ten swords for every sword.’ Haditha then sent one of his men to Hamad bin Bali, who then apologised and returned all that had been taken from the men, claiming that he had thought them Druze with whom he was at enmity.

Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Qattan related in his memoir:¹⁶

Ahmad [Mreiwed] grew up a free-spirited rebel, defiant toward the Turks and others who had imposed their dominance over the land. He joined the *Al-Fatat* Society, and at the outbreak of the First World War, he began actively assisting those fleeing the oppression of the Ottoman Unionists, helping them join the Arab Revolt under the leadership of Sharif Hussein. In 1915, a group of leaders condemned to death by Jamal Pasha sought refuge in his home. Among them were Jalal Al-Bukhari and ‘Izz Al-Din Al-Tanoukhi. Ahmad escorted them to Houran, and from there to the village of Kufr Soum, where they were received by Sheikh Kayed Al-Mufleh, leader of the Obeidat clan. From there, they continued on to Al-Muwaqqar, where they were received by Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha—may God have mercy on him—one of the most excellent, refined, and politically astute sheikhs of Bani Sakhr.

As for the leaders of the Syrian jihad for independence, especially those who fought the Battle of Maysalun—some

¹⁶ Qattan, Ibrahim, *Al-Muzakkarat wa Al-Rihlat lil Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Qattan*, Ministry of Culture, Amman, 2007; p. 116.

of whom fled to Jordan, Palestine and Egypt—the French Superior War Council sentenced them to death on 9 August 1920.¹⁷ Sheikh Haditha received them and defended them with his life and provided them with everything he could to help them continue the struggle.

Sheikh Haditha's Political Commitments and Party Roles (1920–1933)

Sheikh Haditha was a founding member of Trans-Jordan's first political party, the Arab Independence Party¹⁸ which was established in 1920. The party was part of the broader Arab independence movement that sought to unite Arab lands and resist foreign influence. The emergence of the Arab Independence Party, among other political movements, contributed to the development of a distinct Jordanian national identity, even as it held pan-Arab aspirations. Sheikh Haditha was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Jordanian Solidarity Party established in March 1933, and a member of the Executive Committee and Permanent Office of the Trans-Jordan National Congress that same year. The Trans-Jordan National Congress's emergence reflected a push for greater autonomy and self-governance in Trans-Jordan which was still under the British Mandate at the time. It called for an independent Arab government in Trans-Jordan led by an Arab prince, a representative body, and restrictions on land sales to Jews. Sheikh Haditha attributed the inability of Jordanians to resist colonial domination to the restrictions imposed by the British–Jordanian Treaty of 1928. As he put it:

¹⁷ Khawand, Masud, *The Geographical History Encyclopedia [Al-Mawsou'ah Al-Tarikhiyyah Al-Jughrafiyyah]*, Tenth Vol.: Syria, Hanyad Institute, p. 10.

¹⁸ <https://kingabdullah.jo/en/page/king-abdullah-bin-Al-hussein-1882-1951>

‘We in Trans-Jordan are like a newborn placed under a guardian who withholds from him milk, clothing, warmth, and care, then says to him: “live and sleep and take your share of your property and the other means of your life.”’¹⁹

Sheikh Haditha’s Relationship with the Ottomans and Secret Societies (1908–1920)

Sheikh Haditha applied to join the Committee of Union and Progress (*Jam‘iyyat Al-Ittihad wa Al-Taraqqi*) which in its early days called on the Ottoman Sultan to institute constitutional reforms and lift the injustice against the places under Ottoman rule. At that time, there was a secret society opposing the Ottoman Sultan Abdul-Hamid, and it included an elite group of free men and intellectuals from Arab countries and all parts of the Ottoman Empire. The Committee of Union and Progress accepted Sheikh Haditha’s request, and invited him to take the oath imposed on those seeking to join it. They requested that he be blindfolded, and that he place his hand on the Holy Qur’an and say a scripted oath. Sheikh Haditha refused to be blindfolded and said:

‘I asked to join the Committee of Union and Progress. Are union and progress built on blind credulity or on the light of guidance?’

The members consulted and made an exception that the sheikh could swear the oath with his eyes open. Then Haditha refused to put his hand on the Holy Qur’an as he took the oath which stipulated loyalty to the Committee of Union and Progress and abiding by its decisions and

¹⁹ *Al-Karmil* Newspaper, No. 1725, 3rd January, 1932, p. 2.

implementing the orders of its leaders. Haditha asked them to allow him to take the oath in his own way. The members consulted again and assuming that he was an illiterate Bedouin with no real belief in rules and laws allowed him to swear an oath as he pleased. Haditha stood up and recited the following oath:

‘People (*ya qawm*), deal straight, we will deal straight, deal with us treacherously, we will respond in kind.’

A few years later the Committee of Union and Progress deviated from its founding principles and began calling for the Turkification of Arab countries. Sheikh Haditha’s caution with his word proved judicious as he refused to pledge loyalty except in his own way, which conditioned his commitment to them on their commitment to the Arabs. Thus, the sheikh was free of his bond and did not break his oath when he stood against them and supported the popular revolutions against them.²⁰

In response to the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress, there was established the Ottoman-Arab Brotherhood Society (*Jam‘iyyat Al-Ikha’ Al-‘Arabi Al-Othmani*) which began publishing a newspaper titled *Al-Ikha’* on 21 January 1909 CE. Within two months, however, the martial authorities dissolved the society and suspended its publication. The paper’s editor, Shafiq ibn Ahmad Al-Mu’ayyad Al-Athm (b. 1857 CE), was later accused of high treason and of maintaining ties with France and was executed in May 1916 CE. Despite its brief existence, the society and its journal played a formative role in the early emergence of nationalist sentiment in Greater Syria.

²⁰ Yousef Ghishan, *Al-Dustour* Newspaper, No. 15495, June 24, 2007.

In autumn 1909 CE, Abdul Karim Al-Khalil founded the literary forum *Al-Muntada Al-Adabi*, which was shut down by the Committee of Union and Progress after six years. The Forum published a monthly journal titled *Lisan Al-'Arab*, edited by Ahmad Izzat Al-A'zami Al-Baghdadi. Thereafter, Arabs began forming underground political associations such as *Al-Jam'iyyah Al-Qahtaniyyah* and *Jam'iyyat Al-'Ahd*.

Finally, Arab students in the West established the *Young Arab Society (Jam'iyyat Al-Arabiyyah Al-Fatat)* in 1911 CE, which would go on to play a pivotal role in the Great Arab Revolt and the Faisali administration in Syria.²¹ Sheikh Haditha was part of the party of notables that attended the coronation of King Faisal I ibn Al-Hussein. Haditha also attended the meeting between King Faisal and the Trans-Jordanian delegation where King Faisal expressed appreciation for the role that the Trans-Jordanian tribes played in Syrian independence, especially Bani Sakhr and the Huweitat.

Under the Ottoman's repression and centralised control, Arab opposition took on new forms of political activity, often secretive or cloaked in general cultural and social aims. The first known Arab clandestine organisation of this period, *Al-Jam'iyyah Al-Qahtaniyyah*, was founded in late 1909, and Emir Adel Arslan was among its earliest members.

The ideas and principles of *Al-Jam'iyyah Al-Qahtaniyyah* quickly spread across most Arab provinces. Its revolutionary activities expanded throughout Syria, ultimately drawing in the majority of nationalist forces. By 1914, the

²¹ Al-Gharaibeh, Abdel-Karim. *Tarikh Al-Arab Al-Hadith* [Modern Arab History], Damascus University Press, 1960; p. 269.

society had emerged as a key player in the anticipated political movement, in partnership with *Jam'iyat Al-'Abd*.

As for *Jam'iyat Al-Arabiyyah Al-Fatat* (the *Young Arab Society*), it was an underground organisation based on the Young Turks model but with the purpose of protecting Arab rights. It was founded in 1909 and in 1913, it moved its headquarters from Paris to Beirut, and the following year to Damascus. The original founders of the *Young Arab Society* were Arab students who felt offended by what they perceived as the Young Turks' Turkish nationalist agenda and Turkish domination over ethnic groups within the Ottoman Empire. The original intention behind establishing *Al-Fatat* was not secession of the Arab regions from the Ottoman Empire, but rather equal rights with Turks within the empire.²²

In early 1913, some of *Al-Fatat's* high-ranking members decided that a congress of Arab societies should be held in Paris. The aim was to disseminate *Al-Fatat's* ideas. The resolutions of the Arab Congress centred on the administrative autonomy of the Arab provinces, the adoption of Arabic as an official language in the empire and the institution of democracy to save the Ottoman Empire from 'decay'.²³ *Al-Fatat* had a profound impact on the course of the Arab nationalist movement as its primary goal was the liberation of Arab lands from Turkish—or any other form of foreign—control.

In 1915, and in response to Governor Jamal Pasha's harsh centralisation policies and repression of Arab nation-

²² Tauber, Eliezer, *The Formation of Modern Iraq and Syria*, New York: Routledge; 2013, p. 92.

²³ Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*, New York: Columbia University Press; 1988, p. 143.

alists, including executions and exiles, *Al-Fatat* intensified its clandestine efforts and reached out to Emir Faisal, seeking his leadership for a revolt using Arab soldiers stationed in Syria. Emir Faisal visited *Al-Fatat* members in Damascus in March 1915 and was soon inducted into the organisation. Together with members of *Al-‘Abd*, they formulated the Damascus Protocol, which was a crucial document outlining demands for an independent Arab state in exchange for revolting against the Ottoman Empire. It was given to Prince Faisal bin Al-Hussein to present to the British. It defined the proposed borders of this unified Arab nation, which covered much of the Middle East, and included requests for a defensive alliance and economic preference for Britain, forming the foundation for the Arab understanding of the subsequent Hussein-McMahon Correspondence. Thus, the Damascus Protocol solidified Prince Faisal’s commitment to the cause, ultimately leading to the Arab Revolt launched by Sharif Hussein in June 1916 with British backing.

After the Sharifian Army entered Damascus in December 1918, Emir Faisal’s government began operating with strong influence from *Al-Fatat*, whose member Ali Rida Al-Rikabi was appointed governor of Damascus. He coordinated with *Al-Fatat*’s central committee to administer the country, and this marked the beginning of *Al-Fatat*’s political domination of Emir Faisal’s government.²⁴ Faisal aligned closely with *Al-Fatat*, which opposed European intervention, while internal divisions emerged among its members: some rejected all foreign control, others favoured limited British involvement, and a third group supported Ame-

²⁴ Tauber, Eliezer, *The Formation of Modern Iraq and Syria*, New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 11.

rican oversight. *Al-Fatat* created the *Istiqlal* (Independence) Party in early 1919, and Sheikh Haditha was a member. It was created to engage publicly without exposing *Al-Fatat*'s secret structure, but tensions persisted as key figures like Rikabi and Yasin Al-Hashimi often acted independently of the central committee, undermining cohesion within Faisal's administration.

Jam'iyyat Al-'Ahd (The Covenant Society) was founded in 1913 in direct response to the Turkification policies of the Committee of Union and Progress. The society gained traction among Arab officers within the Ottoman army and called for Arab independence and later supported Sharif Hussein's Arab Revolt and Emir Faisal's Syrian rule. The group advocated for Iraq's independence under Emir Abdullah and envisioned eventual unification with Syria, maintaining conditional cooperation with Britain.

After King Faisal's fall in 1920, *Al-'Ahd* weakened and disbanded, but it was briefly revived in 1930 following the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, only to dissolve again after Iraq gained full independence in 1932. Its most prominent founder was the distinguished Egyptian officer Aziz Ali Al-Masri. He established the society in Istanbul in 1913 after returning from Tripoli with a group of young Arab military officers.

Both *Al-'Ahd* and *Al-Fatat* were meticulous in selecting their members to ensure secrecy. Their high level of organisation meant that the Ottomans remained unaware of their existence until the end of the war. Members safeguarded their oath of secrecy, refraining even under torture, imprisonment, and threat of execution from revealing the identities of their fellow members.²⁵

²⁵ Musa, Suleiman, *The Arab Movement: A History of the First Phase of the Modern Arab Renaissance (1905–1924)* [*Al-Harakah Al-Arabiyya: Sirat Al-*

Emir Faisal soon discovered the ideological common ground between himself and members of both *Al-Fatat* and *Al-‘Ahd*, eventually joining both societies. The same was true of Sheikh Haditha. The members maintained that they would not take up arms against the Ottoman state unless firm guarantees were secured ensuring Arab independence. They were determined that their revolt should not result in merely exchanging one foreign domination for another.

Sharif Hussein’s negotiations with Britain adopted *Al-Fatat* and *Al-‘Ahd*’s covenant during his renewed discussions with the British in July 1915.²⁶ The most important clauses of the covenant were:

1. British recognition of the independence of Arab lands in Asia as a single, sovereign Arab state;
2. Abolition of all special privileges and foreign concessions granted to foreigners;
3. Conclusion of a defense treaty between Britain and a new independent Arab state;
4. British priority and preferential treatments over other states in future economic projects in the region.²⁷

Revolts Across the Arab World (1904–1914)

Several revolts erupted across the Arab world during this time, the most significant being:

The sweeping and complex **Yemeni uprising** in the

Marhala Al-Ula li Al-Nahdah Al-Arabiyya Al-Haditha (1905–1924)], 3rd ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Nahar, 2002, p. 23.

²⁶ Khawand, Masud, *The Geographical History Encyclopedia [Al-Mawson‘ah Al-Tarikhiyyah Al-Jughrafiyyah]*, 10th Vol.: Syria, Hanyad Institute, p. 38-9.

²⁷ Musa, Suleiman, *Al-Harakah Al-‘Arabiyyah: Sirat Al-Marhalah Al-‘Ula li-l-Nahdah Al-Arabiyyah Al-Hadithah*, 1905–1924, 3rd ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Nahar, 2002, p. 39.

1920s following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. North Yemen declared independence and became the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen under Imam Yahya Muhammad Hamid Al-Din. This absolute monarchy lasted from 1918 to 1962, maintaining isolationist policies until a 1962 military coup established the Yemen Arab Republic. The transition was marked by internal power struggles and challenges, including resistance from various local elites and tribes.

The 1920 Iraqi Revolt, which was a major uprising against British occupation following World War I. This revolt was fueled by various factors including British colonial rule, economic grievances, and the desire for an Arab government. It saw significant success in the early stages, with attacks on British forces, but was ultimately suppressed.

The Nejd revolt, which was a conflict in which the Ottoman government attempted to use Sharif Hussein's help against rising rebellions in the region, but secretly plotted to eliminate him through the Turkish military governor in the Hijaz. The Ottomans also sought to enlist Sharif Hussein to support their war effort against the Allies, promising him independence in return. Sharif Hussein's response to the Ottoman betrayal was to launch the Great Arab Revolt against Ottoman rule, fueled by the promise of independence.

The Houran and Jabal Al-Druze uprising, which was a series of revolts and rebellions against Ottoman and French rule in the Houran region and Jabal Al-Druze (also known as Jabal Al-Arab) in what is now Syria. These uprisings, primarily led by the Druze community and figures like Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash, were fueled by a desire for autonomy, resistance to foreign domination, and a rejection of imposed

political and economic systems. These uprisings played a crucial role in the broader struggle for Syrian independence and contributed to the eventual establishment of a Syrian state.

The Jordanian **Kerak Revolt**, which began in Kerak under the leadership of the mujahid and martyr Qadr Al-Majali. It was a significant precursor to the Great Arab Revolt of 1916. It was ultimately suppressed by Ottoman forces, but it served as a catalyst for broader Arab resistance against Ottoman rule, paving the way for Arab populations across the empire to rise up against Ottoman authority during World War I.

The Emergence of Nationalism in Haditha Al-Khraisha's Generation

Modern nationalist concepts began to crystallise in the Arab World in the nineteenth century and began to emerge practically in the first half of the twentieth century. The 'Eastern Question'—the Ottoman Empire's political and economic instability from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries—led to strategic competition between the European powers at that time. Capitals searching for wealth, raw materials, and extensive commercial markets vied for control of the main trade routes and corridors, especially since it was becoming clear that the world was on a collision course with serious transformations. In light of the rise of America and the Ottoman Empire's imminent fall, Europe's privileges in the Ottoman states were able to take hold and they were able to work towards penetration and control. Documents from the nineteenth century draw a clear picture of the covert race for influence and control between the French, the British, and the Germans. Wajih

Kawtharani argues that European consulates, in addition to European merchants, began to form powerful communities that enjoyed powers independent of the Ottoman authority; they were like states within the ailing empire. Reports from French consulates and letters from economists and heads of chambers of commerce indicate great interest in Syria's resources. They also reflect great accuracy in monitoring religious, sectarian and tribal movements and the relationships between influential figures. There was great interest in the different sects in Syria and the areas of conflict and agreement between them. The French worked actively against the British who, at that time, were the biggest threat to France's ambitions in Syria.

France, and then Britain, succeeded in attracting social currents, and in the early twentieth century political leanings amongst Syrians were split between the French project, which was dressed up in nationalist liberation garb, and British policies, which were opposed to the Ottomans. The political associations and parties that were founded at the beginning of the twentieth century were divided in their positions between the following axes:

One: A French axis, whose men sought the independence of Syria and Lebanon in a single state administered directly by France.

Two: A British axis, with Arab sensibilities and slogans, working for the independence of Iraq under a British Mandate.

Three: The Ottoman axis, which demanded standing with Turkey by appealing to loyalty to Islam. It also demanded administrative independence and reforms in terms of rights and education, among others.

Four: An Arab axis, which demanded independence and

the establishment of an Arab state that would unite Greater Syria and the Arabian Peninsula in a modern state, and realise the Arab peoples' aspirations for unity.

After World War I, most of the parties of the Ottoman axis joined this Arab axis. This included: *the Young Arab Society (Jam'iyat Al-Arabiyyah Al-Fatat)*; the *Qahtaniyyah Society*; the *Covenant Society (Al-'Ahd)*; some members of the *Ottoman Party for Administrative Decentralization*, and the members of the Arab Congress²⁸ of 1913 which was held in Paris. In 1916, after Sharif Hussein bin Ali launched the Great Arab Revolt, all these associations and the national and tribal figures that were members in them stood by Sharif Hussein. This included Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha among others.²⁹

²⁸ Also known as: the Arab National Congress; the First Palestinian Conference; the First Arab Congress; the Arab-Syrian Congress.

²⁹ Other notables include: Major General Ali Khulqi Al-Sharayri; Commander Muhammad Al-Fawwaz Al-'Azzam; Deputy Governor Najib Al-Sa'd Al-Batayneh; Sheikh Kayed Mufleh Obeidat; Commander Muhammad Ali Ajlouni; Sheikh Qadr Al-Majali; Second Lieutenant Ahmad Sidqi Al-Jundi; the mujahid Muhammad Subhi Abu Ghneimeh; First Lieutenant Tareq Al-Jundi; the poet Mustafa Wahbi Al-Tall ('Arar); First Lieutenant Adeeb Wahbeh; Mahmoud Abu Ghneimeh; Second Lieutenant Abdul Rahman Al-Jamal; Second Lieutenant Nasser Al-Fawwaz; Muhammad Haafiz; Captain Muhammad Ali Al-Bashir; Commander Mahmoud Abu Ras; Second Lieutenant Ahmad Al-Tall; Sheikh Quweider Al-Sulayman; Sheikh Muhammad Al-Salih; Khalid Al-Qassas; Muhammad Dhiab Al-Zou'bi; the mujahid Jalal Al-Qutb; Sheikh Turki Al-Kayed; the activist 'Abd Al-Mahdi Al-Shamayleh; Sa'id Al-Sulaybi, member of the Syrian National Congress; Sulayman Al-Khalil; Mitri Al-Zureiqat; Sheikh Sulayman Al-Soudi, member of the Syrian National Congress; Commander Abd Al-Qadir Al-Tall; barrister Barham Al-Samawi; Isa Madanat, member of the Syrian National Congress; Naji Deeb, member of the Syrian National Congress; Sa'id Abu Jaber, member of the Syrian National Congress; Abd Al-Mu'ti Al-Murafi, member of the Syrian National Congress; Khalil Al-Talhouni, member of the Syrian National Congress; Abd Al-Rahman Rusheidat, member of the Syrian National Congress; Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez; Abd Al-Majeed Al-Dalqamouni, and Mishwih Abu Al-Laban.

Dozens of national figures and tribal leaders expressed their solidarity with the nationalist leaderships that spearheaded the formation of the early nuclei of resistance, particularly those centred in Damascus, under the command of the prominent mujahid leader, Ahmad Mreiwed. Civilians such as writers, intellectuals, and students were introduced to the nationalist societies, particularly *Al-Fatat*, through their teachers in schools in Damascus, most notably the prestigious 'Anbar School—which Sheikh Haditha's father had attended when young. The educator and mentor, Misbah Howla, played a prominent role in cultivating a sense of national consciousness in his students. Among the most distinguished of these Jordanian students were Muhammad Subhi Abu Ghneimeh and Mustafa Wahbi Al-Tall (known as 'Arar), both of whom were instrumental in advancing the cause of Arab national liberation.

When the *Young Arab Society* eventually transformed into a political organisation under the name *Hizb Al-Istiqlal* (the Independence Party), several figures from Trans-Jordan joined its ranks, including Sheikh Haditha.³⁰ After the fall of King Faisal's kingdom, the leadership of the *Istiqlal* Party took refuge in Jordan, and assumed the reins of government at the political and military levels, from 1920 until 1924. In 1924 Emir Abdullah expelled them from Jordan under British-French threats, due to their activity against the French Mandate and its forces. The military wing of the

³⁰ Others included: Rashid Al-Khuza'i, leader of Jabal Ajloun; Naji Al-Azzam, leader of the Wasatiyya district; Turki Kayed Obeidat, leader of the Kafarat district; Sulayman Al-Soudi, leader of the Sarw district; Mahmoud Al-Funayyish, of the Bani Ubayd clan; Mithqal Al-Fayez, Sheikh of Bani Sakhr; Salim Al-Hindawi, leader of the Nu'aymah and Edoun area; Sa'id Khayr, from Amman; and Tahir Al-Juqah, from Amman.

Istiqlal Party was able to attract an influential group of Jordanian officers into its ranks.³¹

Sheikh Haditha had profound political awareness during a formative and turbulent period in modern Arab history: the era of Western colonialism and the establishment of the Zionist project in the heart of the Arab world, and the Sheikh had clear and active stances against both. His political career was formed by clandestine circles, conditional loyalty, and a pan-Arab vision. He engaged the Committee of Union and Progress on his own terms, moved through secret societies into the *Istiqlal* Party, and supported the Faisali project. Threading these worlds together, he clung to a single creed: Arab rights first; and with this he judged empire, party, and policy, standing firm even when the reckoning was exile and danger.

Versailles, the Arab Question, and the Betrayal of Self-Determination (1919–1920)

The 1919 Peace Conference in Versailles

In January 1919, the victors of the First World War met in Paris for the Peace Conference. From the very opening, new nations expressed their aspirations to autonomy and independence. In December 1918, Sharif Faisal I bin Al-Hussein realised that the secret agreements concluded among the Allies in Saint Petersburg were indeed real, and that France was displeased with his appointment as the representative of the Hejaz at the Peace Conference. Nevertheless, Faisal succeeded in presenting the Arab cause before the conference in February 1919, where the Arab delegation deman-

³¹ Obeidat, Mahmoud; *Al-Dawr Al-Urduni fi Al-Nidal Al-Suri (1908-1946)*: *Al-Nidal Al-Mushtarak [The Jordanian Role in the Syrian Struggle: A Joint Struggle (1908-1946)]*, Al-Ahliyyah Publishing, 1997, pp. 14-18.

ded recognition of the sovereignty and independence of the Arab peoples, basing their case on President Woodrow Wilson's principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. Faisal also submitted a proposal to ascertain the wishes of the Arab populations directly. This was opposed by Clemenceau and the Zionists, but received the support of President Wilson. It was decided that an American commission of inquiry would be sent to determine whether the populations of these regions accepted the proposed British and French mandates, and thus the King-Crane Commission was dispatched to determine Arab public opinion.

At the same time that British officials were pressuring Sharif Faisal to accept the terms of their agreement with the French regarding Syria, they also pressed him to meet with Chaim Weizmann, who assured him that the Zionists did not seek to establish a Jewish government in Palestine, but only wished to contribute to the development of the country through settlement. The two men met in January 1919, and Faisal agreed to sign an agreement with Weizmann, making his consent conditional upon Great Britain's fulfilment of its promises regarding Arab independence. He wrote this condition in his own hand directly onto the text of the agreement, stating it in unequivocal terms. Since this condition was never fulfilled, the agreement lacked any legal validity; its sole value lies in illustrating the extent to which Faisal I was willing to explore cooperation between Arabs and Jews—provided it did not compromise Arab independence.^{32/33}

³² Antonius, George, *Yaqzat Al-Arab (Arab Awakening)* 3rd ed., Beirut, Dar Al-'Ilm lil-Malayeen, 1987; p. 369.

³³ Khawand, Masud, *The Geographical History Encyclopedia [Al-Mawsou'ah Al-Tarikhiyyah Al-Jughrafiyyah]*, 10th Vol. : Syria, Hanyad Institute, p. 46.

The Arab Response to the Peace Conference

There was widespread Arab dismay regarding the conference. Arab leaders submitted a proposal to Sharif Faisal recommending the formation of a national council, and swift elections were held in Arab areas. The result was the convening of a national assembly in Damascus in 1919, later named the General Syrian Congress.³⁴ King Faisal famously said: ‘The mandate is a meaningless word. The nation has rejected it absolutely, to the extent that not a single soul who values life will accept it ... Its acceptance is a stain that can never be erased.’³⁵

The King–Crane Commission (1919)

The French and the British opposed and refused to participate in an international commission to survey the wishes of the populations in the former Ottoman Empire regarding their future governance, while also fearing increased American involvement in a region they both aspired to control. The Americans proceeded independently, dispatching a delegation at their own responsibility, which came to be known as the King–Crane Commission, named after the two men heading it: Dr. Henry King and Mr. Charles Crane. They were accompanied by three advisors—Albert Lybyer, George Montgomery, and William Yale—as well as Captain Donald Brodie, who served as treasurer. Lybyer served as the General Technical Advisor, Montgomery as a Technical Advisor for the Northern Regions of Turkey, and Yale as a Technical Advisor for the Southern Regions of Turkey.

³⁴ Abu Subaih, Subhi, *Al-Mumtaz fi Tarikh Al-Arab Al-Hadith*. Vol. 2, p. 50.

³⁵ Zubyayn, Muhammad Taysir, *Muhammad Taysir Zubyayn (1901–1987): Selected Works*, Beirut: Al-Mu’assasa Al-Arabiyyah lil-Dirasat Al-Nashr, 2002, p. 141.

The commission began its work in Jaffa on 10 June 1919 and spent six weeks in Palestine and Syria, completing its report on 28 August 1919. During this time, they visited nearly forty cities and districts, conducted extensive investigations, received more than 1,800 petitions, and met with numerous delegations. The report—which is considered one of the most important documents³⁶ regarding the region in the twentieth century—presented several key conclusions which can be summarised as follows:

- The unity of Syria, including its three regions: Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria proper; with Lebanon granted a measure of independence within the framework of unity.
- Syria does not welcome a mandate, but is open to foreign ‘assistance’.
- The great majority of the population of Syria sincerely desire to have Emir Feisal as ruler, who was ‘hailed by the Damascus Congress’ as having ‘merited their full confidence and entire reliance’. And that Emir Faisal ‘is tolerant and wise, skillful in dealing with men, winning in manner, a man of sincerity, insight, and power.’
- If a mandate were unavoidable, it should be assigned to the United States in Syria and to Britain in Iraq; the French mandate is rejected.
- The Commission found that only the Jews were in favour of Zionism, and that they constituted no more than ten per cent of the population of Palestine. While differing in certain particulars—such as the

³⁶ <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919ParisVI2/d380>

- time for the establishment of the Jewish State and the extent of its religious character—they were united in the purpose of making Palestine a national home for the Jewish people. They also agreed that Great Britain should be entrusted with the guardianship of Palestine, as it would assist them in attaining their ends by facilitating immigration and permitting the purchase of land. The Commission further noted the existence of a Zionist consensus looking toward the displacement of the population of Palestine, after dispossessing them of their land, even if such dispossession were to be effected by purchase. The Peace Conference was warned against ignoring the sentiments of the Palestinians and of the Arabs generally.
- The King-Crane Commission also noted that: With the best possible intentions, it may be doubted whether the Jews could possibly seem to either Christians or Moslems proper guardians of the holy places, or custodians of the Holy Land as a whole. The reason is this: the places which are most sacred to Christians—those having to do with Jesus—and which are also sacred to Moslems, are not only not sacred to Jews, but abhorrent to them. It is simply impossible, under those circumstances, for Moslems and Christians to feel satisfied to have these places in Jewish hands, or under the custody of Jews. There are still other places about which Moslems must have the same feeling. In fact, from this point of view, the Moslems, just because the sacred places of all three religions are sacred to them, have made very naturally much more satisfactory custodians of the holy places than the Jews could be. It must be believed that

the precise meaning, in this respect, of the complete Jewish occupation of Palestine has not been fully sensed by those who urge the extreme Zionist program. For it would intensify, with a certainty like fate, the anti-Jewish feeling both in Palestine and in all other portions of the world which look to Palestine as 'the Holy Land'.

Accordingly, the commission made the following recommendations:

1. That only a greatly reduced Zionist program be attempted by the Peace Conference, and even that, only very gradually initiated. This would have to mean that Jewish immigration should be definitely limited, and that the project for making Palestine distinctly a Jewish commonwealth should be given up.
2. Palestine can be included in a united Syrian State.
3. The holy places can be cared for by an International and Inter-religious Commission, somewhat as at present, under the oversight and approval of the Mandatary and of the League of Nations.

These recommendations were met with strong opposition from the French, the British, and the Zionists. Even President Wilson showed little interest in the report and did not act upon its findings. In fact, he did not permit its publication until December 1922, by which time Britain and France had already imposed their mandates over Arab lands.

Aftermath: The Syrian National Congress, 8 March 1920

The Syrian National Congress was a representative assembly of Syrian Arab leaders, convened in Damascus, that

proclaimed the independence of Greater Syria and declared Emir Faisal ibn Al-Hussein king of an independent Arab constitutional monarchy. Meeting in the aftermath of the First World War and the collapse of Ottoman rule, the Congress rejected European mandates and asserted Syria's right to self-determination. Its resolutions directly challenged the Franco-British arrangements of the Sykes–Picot Agreement and the emerging French claim over Syria. Although it marked a high point of Arab nationalist aspirations, it was short-lived. French military intervention culminated in the defeat of King Faisal's forces at the Battle of Maysalun in July 1920 and the imposition of the French Mandate over Syria.

The recommendations of the King–Crane Commission aligned closely with the demands of the General Syrian Congress, but the Peace Conference ultimately ignored both. This deepened Arab resentment, and a wave of protests swept the region. In response, the Congress reconvened on 7 March 1920 and declared the independence of Greater Syria. Later that month, a group of Iraqi nationals in Syria held a separate congress in which they declared Iraq's independence and its union with Greater Syria. It became increasingly apparent to the public that Emir Faisal had met with grave disappointments at the Peace Conference in Paris, notwithstanding his efforts for a time to withhold them from general knowledge, and the occasional assurances of hope he gave while awaiting the arrival of the King-Crane Commission.

In this atmosphere of apprehension, a number of notables proposed forming a national council. The proposal came from members of a newly constituted body styled the Arab Independence Party (*Hizb Al-Istiqlal Al-Arabi*), in

effect the former *Al-Fatat* in altered form. Sheikh Haditha was a member and on 5 February 1919, in Damascus, the *Al-Fatat* society declared that secrecy was no longer required, and announced that it would henceforth pursue its political activities openly under the new designation. Membership rapidly increased, and its adherents came to be generally known as *Istiqlaliyyun*.

For the creation of this council, elections were conducted not only in the districts of Syria under Arab administration, but also in the western coastal region occupied by French forces since their landing in Beirut on 6 October 1918. The French established their authority throughout the coastal zone, under M. Georges Picot, appointed as the first High Commissioner of France. He divided the coastal area into three governments: that of Greater Lebanon (comprising Beirut and its three districts: Tyre, Sidon, and Marjayoun—together with Tripoli, certain dependencies, and Mount Lebanon); that of the Alawite Territories (with Latakia as its centre); and that of the Sanjak of Alexandretta (the districts of Antioch, Bilan, and Qurn Khan). Upon Picot's departure to France, General Gouraud succeeded him, becoming High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief of the occupation forces in Syria.

The congress was designed to include equal representation from all parts of Syria. Certain delegates, however, elected in the French-occupied coastal districts (*Sabil Suriya*), were prevented by the French authorities from proceeding to Damascus. Consequently, the inaugural session was attended by sixty-nine delegates out of the total of eighty-five, among them Christian members.

The congress reached unanimous agreement on ten resolutions:

1. The recognition of the independence of Syria, inclusive of Palestine, as a sovereign state under Emir Faisal as king, and the recognition of the independence of Iraq.
2. The annulment of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration, and any division of Syrian territory or the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.
3. The rejection of political tutelage as contemplated in the proposed mandatory system, coupled with readiness to receive foreign assistance for a definite period, provided such assistance be compatible with national independence and Arab unity; preference being accorded to the United States, failing which to Great Britain, and absolute refusal of any assistance, direct or indirect, from France.

Once the resolutions became known, celebrations spread through the districts of Syria outside French control, honouring Faisal and endorsing the work of the congress.³⁷

The Formation of Trans-Jordan

The emergence of Trans-Jordan was the result of a determined national struggle waged by its people in the aftermath of the First World War and was inseparable from the leadership of Emir Abdullah ibn Hussein who embodied the continuity of the Arab Revolt and the Hashemite commitment to independence and unity. Under his leadership, Trans-Jordan became a refuge for Arab nationalists and a centre of resistance to foreign domination. Tribal leaders

³⁷ Khawand, Masud, *The Geographical History Encyclopedia [Al-Mawsou'ah Al-Tarikhiyyah Al-Jughrafiyyah]*, 10th Vol.: Syria, Hanyad Institute, p.47-9.

rallied around the Emir, recognising in him a legitimate Arab authority capable of defending national dignity. Sheikh Haditha was among those who aligned themselves with his leadership. With the collapse of Ottoman rule and the frustration of Arab aspirations under the mandate system, the land east of the Jordan River became a refuge for Arab freedom fighters and a frontline in the defence of Arab independence. Tribal leaders, including Haditha, played a central role in this process, mobilising men, resources, and political support in defence of Arab unity. Trans-Jordan thus emerged as a land of steadfastness, where loyalty to the Hashemite project and resistance to foreign domination shaped the foundations of the modern Jordanian state.

The Arrival of Emir Abdullah in Ma'an (1920)

The arrival of Emir Abdullah ibn Al-Hussein in Ma'an in November 1920, as a leader of the Arab Revolt and a symbol of Hashemite legitimacy, marked a decisive moment in Jordan's national history. Due to both his religious and political legitimacy, the Emir was welcomed by the tribes and notables of Trans-Jordan, who viewed his presence as a continuation of the struggle for Arab independence following the defeat at Maysalun. His declared intention to liberate Syria from French occupation resonated deeply among the tribes, who viewed him as the natural leader of the post-war Arab struggle. Notables, including Sheikh Haditha, responded to the Emir's call, offering political support and mobilisation. Ma'an became the first centre of Hashemite authority in Trans-Jordan, and the Emir's arrival signalled the beginning of an organised national framework for the struggle, as his presence transformed scattered resistance into a coherent national movement.

The Establishment of the Emirate (1921)

The establishment of the Emirate of Trans-Jordan on 11 April 1921 under the leadership of Emir Abdullah represented a historic achievement for the people of the country and for its national leaders. Through political foresight and steadfast leadership, the Emir succeeded in securing a framework of self-rule that preserved the country's unity and protected it from external threats, including French ambitions in Syria and Zionist designs on Palestine. Emir Abdullah governed not through force alone, but through consensus, relying on the loyalty and cooperation of tribal leaders to consolidate state authority. Emir Abdullah's political wisdom enabled Trans-Jordan to navigate a precarious regional environment, preserving its independence while continuing to support Arab causes. The Emirate thus became a nucleus of stability and resistance, laying the groundwork for the modern Jordanian state.

National Struggle in Trans-Jordan

National struggle in Trans-Jordan can be divided into four stages:

The first stage began with the arrival of Emir Abdullah in Ma'an. The goal during this stage was to expel the French from Syria. This plan failed because Britain and France were working together against the Emir; and the Emir and the people of the country lacked financial means.

The second stage began after the establishment of the Emirate. The goal during this stage was to unite Trans-Jordan and Syria. It was hoped that the British could influence France, but the latter insisted on ruling Syria directly, and so this goal was not achieved.

The third stage was marked by the goal of preserving

Trans-Jordan's independence. Trans-Jordan actually enjoyed a large degree of autonomy during the years 1921–1923, but the scarcity of financial resources and internal unrest encouraged the British to diminish that independence. They exerted financial control and subjected the military to British officers. The men who worked for independence played a significant role during this stage, as they made Trans-Jordan a base for the struggle in Syria, but the British expelled them to please France.

The fourth stage was that of the national struggle to break free of Britain's financial control on Trans-Jordan. It must be said here that Emir Abdullah was well aware that the Zionists were doing everything they could to make the Balfour Declaration apply to the entire Mandate region in Palestine and Trans-Jordan; and he knew that the Arabs could not resist Britain and France by force of arms. The Emir was sympathetic to the national movement, but he also did not want to take any positions that would result in the political destruction of the country and its being subjected to the Balfour Declaration stipulating the establishment of a national homeland for the Jews. The opposition was aware of the difficult position the Emir was in and so it demanded that the British not prevent him from exercising his constitutional rights in the country.³⁸

³⁸ Al-Musa, Suleiman, Al-Madi, Munib. *Tarikh Al-Urdon fil Qarn Al-'Ishtirin* (1958–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, pp. 320–321.

CHAPTER FOUR

SHEIKH HADITHA, JERUSALEM, AND PALESTINE

The Palestinian Struggle

The situation in Palestine preoccupied all Arabs and, like many other Jordanian tribes, the Bani Sakhr sacrificed for it and offered martyrs to the cause of the Holy Land. Many members of Bani Sakhr were martyred while defending this great cause and indeed, one of the first people to be martyred on the land of Palestine was Khaled Mjalli Klaib Al-Khraisha.

Yoav Alon recounts in *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*:

Nomadic tribes, hitherto thought to be immune from national ideology, showed increasing signs of sympathy for the Palestinians ... The Bani Sakhr particularly worried observers. Reacting to the economic crisis in Trans-Jordan, members of the Ka'abna branch sought employment in Palestine and were deeply affected by the confrontational events there.³⁹ Their shaykh, Haditha Al-Khraisha, who had already supported the Syrian rebels in the mid-1920s, also contributed to the Palestinian struggle.⁴⁰

³⁹ Bocco, Riccardo, and Tell, Tariq M. M, 'Pax Britannica in the Steppe: British Policy and the Trans-Jordan Bedouin.' In *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan*, edited by Eugene L. Rogan and Tariq M. Tell, 108–27. London and New York: British Academic Press, 1994. p. 125.

⁴⁰ Alon, Yoav, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*, I.B. Taurus, 2007, p. 121.

In 1919 a tribal reconciliation event, attended by the notables of Bani Sakhr and the tribes of Al-Balqa, turned into a political meeting in which the attendees issued a statement protesting against the agreements requiring the partition of Arab countries. They also rejected Jewish immigration to Palestine. This was before Jordan's founding king, King Abdullah I, arrived in Jordan. Jordanians were in a state of confusion and anxiety regarding the British colonial position, especially after the Battle of Maysalun and the French occupation of the Sham. Therefore, in 1920, Prince Faisal called for a national conference which was attended by Trans-Jordan's most prominent sheikhs. These included Haditha Al-Khraisha; Suleiman bin Tarif; Auda Abu Tayeh; Zahir Al-Thiyab Al-Fayez, and Mutlaq Abu Al-Ghanam. They signed a document opposing the partition of Palestine and giving it to the Jews. They also emphasised the necessity of stopping Jewish immigration to Palestine. In order for things to return to normal, the signatories made it clear that they would be willing to sacrifice.

The Umm Al-Amad Conference (1937)

On 2 June 1937, Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez of Bani Sakhr called for a national conference in the village Umm Al-Amad, located 16 km south of Amman, to discuss the situation in Palestine. The conference was convened for the leaders and notables of Trans-Jordan, with the knowledge and approval of King Abdullah I ibn Al-Hussein, to deliberate on a range of pressing political and security concerns. These included: the growing penetration of British influence in the country; measures to prevent Jewish immigration into Trans-Jordan; the sheltering and protection of

Palestinian revolutionaries residing in the encampments of the Jordanian tribes; the provision of sanctuary to Syrian revolutionaries based in those same encampments—among them Shukri Al-Quwwatli, Sultan Basha Al-Atrash, and their companions; and the provision of practical assistance to the Palestinian people in the form of arms, financial support, and provisions.

The Accredited British Representative, Alec Kirkbride, requested that the Prime Minister attend the conference, but the members refused his attendance. Many attended the conference, including: Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, Sheikh Karim Al-Nahar Al-Manaseer, Sheikh Salim Abu Al-Ghanam, Sheikh ‘Adhoub Al-Zaben, Sheikh Majid bin Adwan, Sheikh Hamad bin Jazi, Sheikh Abdullah Abu Rbeiha, and Sheikh Muhammad Auda Abu Tayeh. Sheikh Haditha gave an extemporaneous and fiery speech that was interrupted several times by enthusiastic applause. At the end of the conference, the door was opened for volunteers to join the mujahids in Palestine. The first volunteers were Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, Nayef Haditha Al-Khraisha, Dari Mshash Al-Khraisha, and Mjalli Khaled Klaib Al-Khraisha, who was one of the first men to be martyred on the soil of Palestine. Barakat Traad Al-Khraisha was the commander of a volunteer company, Rfeifan Khaled Al-Khraisha was the commander of an infantry company, and Hamad Abu Dkheina Al-Khraisha was the commander of the first Armored Company.

The participants reached an agreement affirming their categorical rejection of the deepening of British influence in the country, and emphasised support for the Palestinian people against oppression and injustice, and to aid to them in the form of money, arms, and provisions. The confer-

ence members then met Emir Abdullah, in the presence of the British accredited representative, Kirkbride, to submit to His Highness the following message:

We ask the Almighty to support the Hashemite Throne and pray that He grant it succour. We inform our Sovereign that the Conference of the Arab Tribes and Jordanian Districts, which expressed the sentiments of the Arabs in all lands, entreats Your Highness to exert your personal and official influence with the responsible statesmen of Britain, in your capacity as heir to the Great Arab Revolt, to vindicate the rights of the Arabs and to implement Palestine's legitimate national demands. We are compelled, by the provocation now occurring through aggression against the Arabs of Palestine, in contravention of the laws and of England's official promises to the Arabs, to hasten to the aid of our brethren without hesitation, as Arab custom requires, whose foremost principles are chivalry and aid. When an Arab is summoned by honour, he would sell his very soul for the sake of a stranger; how much more so for the sake of his own kin and his own people. May God prolong the life of our Sovereign, the Exalted Emir of the country.⁴¹

The conference's participants also sent the following telegram to the British authorities:

To the Secretary of State for the Colonies, via the accredited British representative in Amman;

⁴¹ Khreisat, Muhammad Abdel-Qader, *Al-Urduniyyun wa al-Qadaya al-Wataniyya wa al-Qawmiyya* [Jordanians and National and Pan-Arab Causes], Ministry of Culture, Amman, 2020, p. 318.

To the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, via the accredited British representative in Amman:

The Conference of the Arab Tribes and Jordanian Districts, convened on the desert frontier in Trans-Jordan, has resolved to demand that His Majesty's Government put an end to the assaults committed by the military authorities in Palestine upon homes, women, religious scholars, worshippers, and upon all other liberties. We draw the attention of Britain's responsible statesmen to the effects of such oppression upon the hearts of the Arabs of Trans-Jordan, and we ask Great Britain to fulfil its promises to the Arabs by granting Palestine its legitimate national demands and by supporting its freedom and independence; so as to spare bloodshed, to calm the troubled spirits of Arabs everywhere, and to uphold enduring peace in the Holy Land.⁴²

As mentioned, a day after the Umm Al-Amad Conference, the attendees met with Emir Abdullah at Raghadan Palace. After the Emir offered his remarks, he posed a pointed question: 'Who is dearer to you, Shukri Al-Quwwatli, Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash, and their companions, or Al-Hussein bin Ali?'

Mithqal Pasha Al-Fayez stood up and put his hand on the hilt of his sword and said: 'Those who seek our protection (*dukhala*); we defend them with the sword if necessary.'

Majid Pasha Al-Adwan responded to the Emir's question, saying: 'Abu Talal, we have no opinion while our elder

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 319.

brother is present,' gesturing toward Sheikh Haditha. Emir Abdullah turned and said: 'Ah, Abu Ali ...' inviting Haditha to speak.

Sheikh Haditha stood and said: 'I support what Mithqal said. As for Sharif Hussein—we would protect him with our lives. But regarding the revolutionaries: we will not hand them over to anyone, even if the sword is required.'

With this exchange, Emir Abdullah had successfully made the views of the Jordanian people and the conference delegates clear to the British Commissioner, who was in attendance. The Emir turned to him and said: 'You have now heard the position of the people regarding Palestine. The matter is out of my hands and if I push further, I fear there will be a revolution in the land.'

And so it was that none of the freedom fighters and revolutionaries of Palestine and Syria, many of whom sought refuge with Sheikh Haditha, were extradited.

Retired Brigadier Fahd Maqboul Al-Ghbein of the Arab Army related many years later:

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha—a man who would not relinquish his Ummah's right in Palestine, not even an arm's length of the Holy Land—was one I knew closely, and I found none his equal in courage and in love for his homeland and his Ummah. He was among the first to answer the call of the Arab Revolt and fought the coloniser, especially in Syria. His heart was wounded by the partition of the lands into multiple states, and his desire for the unity of Bilad Al-Sham was profound. Such was the sincerity of his feeling for Palestine that, at the Umm Al-Amad Conference, his speech moved many among the assembled to tears. The English disliked him for his

steadfast insistence upon the rights of Jordan and the Jordanians, and for his subsequent struggle for Greater Syria and the unity of the Arabs. He was not among those who went about seeking English titles, gold, or favour. He urged Bani Sakhr to enlist in the Arab Legion and counselled them in the principles of struggle, love of country and of Palestine, and in readiness to fight the Jews ... many men from among the Khirshan and Bani Sakhr fought the colonisers and the Jews, and watered with their sweat and blood the soil of Jerusalem and every span of the land of Palestine. Abu Ali, Haditha Al-Khraisha, abides forever in the memory of Jordan and the Ummah's free men.⁴³

'Labbayki, O Palestine': The 1948 War

'Labbayki, O Palestine: At your call, O Palestine' was a familiar maxim of Sheikh Haditha. When the drums of the 1948 war sounded, he was sixty-six, and he repeated it across Jordan as a call to mobilisation, summoning all around him to *hayy 'ala al-jihad*. As a leader of his people, he was obeyed without dispute. Men and youths converged upon him from every direction. 'Labbayki, O Palestine ... at your call, O Abu Ali,' they cried. Jordanians answered Palestine's call and in Bani Sakhr it was not only the Khraisha clan who answered, but the wider clans of the Ka'abneh and the men of the Eastern Badia whose men, young and old, had pledged themselves to the defence of the Ummah's Holy Places.

Sheikh Haditha organised hundreds of these volunteers into companies and detachments for jihad. He placed the combat leadership with his son, Nayef Al-Khraisha, that he

might be the spear-point in battle. Their role in the fighting on Palestine's soil was considerable, especially around the Holy City of Jerusalem. Before and during the battles, Sheikh Haditha met with officers and men of the Arab Legion from among the Khirshan and Bani Sakhr whenever time and means of contact allowed. He stoked their ardour, enjoined steadfastness, and urged them toward martyrdom. Among them, to name only a few by their ranks at the time, were: Captain Khalid Mjalli Al-Khraisha; Captain Barakat Traad Al-Khraisha; First Lieutenant Hamad Abdullah Abu Dkheinah Al-Khraisha; First Lieutenant Rfeifan Al-Khraisha; First Lieutenant Abdullah Mjalli Al-Khraisha; and Officer-Cadet Dari Mshash Al-Khraisha.

Throughout the 1948 war, Sheikh Haditha sustained the front with men, arms, ammunition, money, provisions, and other necessities. Zionist forces were beaten back around Jerusalem, Nablus, Jenin, Hebron, and many other towns and villages where those mujahids and the Arab Legion triumphed. The enemy drew back, with many surrendering to the fighters and the Legion. Led by Sheikh Nayef Haditha Al-Khraisha, the Khirshan and the wider Bani Sakhr took part in most of the Arab Legion's battles to defend Palestine: Bab Al-Wad, Al-Latroun, Kfar Etzion, and others. They offered up many of their sons as martyrs, including the late Captain Khalid Mjalli Al-Khraisha and Fadil Argoub Al-Khraisha, among others.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Officers from the Khirshan and from Bani Sakhr who fought in Palestine (Source: Musa, Suleiman, *Unforgettable Days: Jordan in the 1948 War [Ayyam La Tunsu: Al-Urdun fi Harb 1948]*; Dar Al-Ward Al-Urduniyyah, Amman, 2016; pp. 538-40.)

From the Khraisha:

Captain Khalid Mjalli Al-Khraisha, Staff Officer, 3rd Battalion

These officers fought in all the battles and engagements on Palestine's soil in 1948, alongside hundreds of non-commissioned officers and soldiers from the encampments and villages of Bani Sakhr, serving with their peers in the Arab Legion in the hope of victory or martyrdom. Their courage was exceptional, their steadfastness legendary, and they

Captain Barakat Traad Al-Khraisha, Commander, Volunteers' Company
First Lieutenant Hamad Abdullah Abu Dkheinah Al-Khraisha, Commander,
1st Armoured Company – 1st Battalion
First Lieutenant Rfeifan Khalid Al-Khraisha, Commander, 3rd Company –
2nd Battalion
First Lieutenant Abdullah Mjalli Al-Khraisha
Officer-Cadet Dari Mshash Al-Khraisha

From Bani Sakhr:

Captain 'Akkash Al-Zaben, Staff Officer, 2nd Battalion
First Lieutenant Za'al Irhayyil, Commander, 3rd Armoured Company –
3rd Battalion
Lieutenant Fanattil Thnayyan Al-Muharib, Deputy Commander, 1st
Armoured Company – 1st Battalion
Lieutenant Muhammad Muflih Al-Suheim, Commander, 8th Infantry
Company
Officer-Cadet Ali Mithqal Al-Fayez, 2nd Battalion
First Lieutenant Farid Al-Qutb

Martyrs of Bani Sakhr in the 1948 War

Captain Khalid Mjalli Klaib Al-Khraisha — 22/5/1948 — Jerusalem
Deputy Sanad Nasser Sulayman Al-Hgeish — 22/5/1948 — Jerusalem
Deputy Muhsin Nayef Badr Al-Hgeish — 16/7/1948 — Salfit
Private Hamdan Nahar Ahmad — 7/6/1948 — Jerusalem
Private Ata 'Uglah Ali Al-Khadeir — 8/4/1948 — Jerusalem
Private Ali Rit'an Marbough — 15/5/1948 — Jerusalem
Private Mfaddi Sakit Shahir Al-Jbour — 22/5/1948 — Jerusalem
Private Mamdouh Zahir Dhiab Al-Fayez — 7/6/1948 — Jerusalem
Private Jasir Hamadah Dhiab — 9/6/1948 — Jerusalem
Private Salim Muhammad Al-Liftawi — 15/6/1948 — Jerusalem
Private Fadil 'Argoub Al-Khraisha — 16/7/1948 — Al-Burj
Private Khalaf Hammad Al-Khadeir — 16/7/1948 — Al-Burj
Private Abd Al-Latif Muflih — 16/7/1948 — Al-Burj
Private Muflih Flayyeh Falah — 16/7/1948 — Al-Burj
Private Falih Mitlig Muhammad — 16/7/1948 — Al-Burj

forced the enemy into ignominious withdrawals. Many of these battles by the Khirshan and Bani Sakhr are held in proud remembrance and some were consecrated by martyrdom on Palestine's fiercest fronts and around the Holy City of Jerusalem. Sheikh Haditha was also among the foremost contributors of arms and money to Palestine, in particular to the Jerusalem area. His resolute stands on the question of Palestine prompted the British to banish him to remote districts along the desert frontier, citing continued support for the Revolution in Palestine and the supply of arms to its revolutionaries.

The Medal for Military Valour (*Wisam Al-Iqdam Al-Askari*)

The High Command of the Arab Legion awarded Bani Sakhr officers, NCOs, and soldiers medals for their exceptional bravery in those battles, chief among them the Medal for Military Valour (*Wisam Al-Iqdam Al-Askari*).

Notable Figures

Sheikh Barakat Al-Ṭraad Al-Salman Al-Khraisha, who escaped as a fourteen-year-old from Abu Hneik Prison in Baghdad to his hometown Al-Muwaqqar, was the first son of a major tribal leader selected to form the nucleus of Jordan's Desert Force and had a distinguished record in the Palestinian struggle. His father, Ṭraad Al-Salman Al-

Falah Salim Hajas — 2/10/1948 — Unknown

Private Raddad Khalaf Shiyyab Al-Zaben — 27/10/1948 — Al-Radar

Private Thalji Ghsayyebb Samir — 9/1/1949 — Unknown

Among the mujahids and non-commissioned officers of Bani Sakhr who were martyred: Hayil Salamah Al-Nawfal Al-Zaben, Ali Hijir Al-Dhiab Al-Fayez, and Salim Al-Maslat Al-Fayez.

Khraisha, a ‘*Aqeed* of Bani Sakhr, led the last recorded tribal raid in Jordanian history: the Bani Sakhr–Sirhan campaign of 1919, in which young Barakat also took part at the age of thirteen. He later became Soldier No. 1 in the Desert Force, the nucleus of the future Jordanian Armed Forces.

Haditha and the Zionist Movement

W.B. Seabrook reported the opinion of Haditha and the Bani Sakhr on the Zionist movement and their view of it. To them Palestine is Arab and a land for the Arabs, and that the Jewish settlements were on Arab land that had been stolen and seized under British protection, and must be recovered by the sword if necessary.

... Between the men of the desert and the *Yahoud* [Jews], there is a declared blood feud. This death proscription is not against Jews in general, but against all colonists who have been allotted lands which the Arabs regard as their own. ‘This land was ours,’ they say, ‘before Moses and his thieving horde of runaway slaves ever came ravaging out of Egypt. It returned to us under caliph and sultan, and it shall yet be ours again.’

... There was talk of the Zionists in Haditha’s tent, and I was amazed at the bitterness of the words. I have life-long friends among Jews, and I relate now simply as a part of my attempt at a true record that the Bedouins whom I knew held all Jews in hatred and contempt. I had asked the gentle, saintly sheik Haditha what he thought of the actual Zionist movement. He had replied, with the mildness of a

lamb, and no intention of irony, that he considered it a most admirable arrangement; when the British had brought them all in, and then withdrew armed protection, it would be easy and convenient to massacre them all and take their flocks and crops!⁴⁵

Haditha and the Buraq Wall / Western Wall Revolt (1928–1930)

Haditha was a member of the Executive Committee of the First Jordanian National Congress (*Al-Mu'tamar Al-Watani Al-'Aam*)—which was a reaction to the 1928 Anglo-Jordanian treaty and the new Basic Law (Constitution). Its members supported their fellow Arabs, and especially the Palestinians. The question of the Aqsa Mosque / Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem was of great concern to the Committee and particularly the compound's western wall, the Buraq Wall, which today the Israelis refer to as the Wailing Wall. In late July–August 1929, mounting tensions over prayer rights, access, and religious symbols at the Buraq Wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque escalated into violence across Palestine. Clashes between Muslims and Jews spread in mid-August, leaving hundreds dead and injured. Most notable of these was when the inhabitants of Hebron rose against the Jews; the uprising then spread to Safad and other Jewish colonies, and the disturbances reached Haifa, Nablus, and beyond.

Amman reacted swiftly and openly. On 14 August 1929, the Executive Committee of the Jordanian National Congress organised a large demonstration that moved from central Amman to Raghadan Palace. There, Sheikh Haditha

⁴⁵ Seabrook, W.B., *Adventures in Arabia*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York; 1927, pp. 123–124.

Al-Khraisha gave an impassioned speech before Emir Abdullah and said: ‘The Jews have attacked Al-Haram Al-Sharif, violated religious freedom, and assaulted us in the heart of our own home. This is an outrage we cannot endure a moment longer. We either live with honour or we die with honour. We ask leave of Your Highness to march to Palestine in aid of our brothers.’



The First National Congress, 1928

After the demonstration, around 600 men armed with shotguns, daggers, and guns headed for the Jordan River but were prevented from entering the Allenby (King Hussein) Bridge by British forces. When travel to Palestine was blocked by the British, the National Congress’ Executive Committee appointed a fact-finding delegation comprising Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez and Taher Al-Jaqqah to travel to the Holy Land. The two were detained for two days and when they were released, they refused to leave prison until they knew the real reasons behind their detention.⁴⁶ Over

the following months (late 1929–1930), British authorities reported intercepting arms consignments moving from Trans-Jordan to Palestine.

As tensions regarding one of Islam's three holiest sites continued in Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, Britain intervened militarily and later appointed international and domestic inquiries, including the International Buraq Commission, to investigate causes and responsibilities. In December 1930, the International Buraq Wall / Western Wall Commission Report was issued by a commission of three neutral jurists approved by the League of Nations to determine rights and claims at the Holy Site. It concluded that ownership of the Buraq Wall and the paving in front of it, and the adjacent Magharbeh (Moroccan) Quarter are Muslim *waqf* property and Muslims hold the sole proprietary right to them:

The conclusions arrived at by the Commission ... may be summed up as follows:

To the Moslems belong the sole ownership of, and the sole proprietary right to, the Western Wall, seeing that it forms an integral part of the Haram-esh-Sherif area, which is a Waqf property.

To the Moslems there also belongs the ownership of the Pavement in front of the Wall and of the adjacent so-called Moghrabi (Moroccan) Quarter opposite the Wall, inasmuch as the last-mentioned property was made Waqf under Moslem Sharia Law, it being dedicated to charitable purposes.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Khreisat, Muhammad Abdel-Qader, *Al-Urduniyyun wa al-Qadaya al-Wataniyya wa al-Qawmiyya* [Jordanians and National and Pan-Arab Causes], Ministry of Culture, Amman, 2020, p. 101.

⁴⁷ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-183716/>

Such appurtenances of worship and/or such other objects as the Jews may be entitled to place near the Wall either in conformity with the provisions of this present Verdict or by agreement come to between the Parties shall under no circumstances be considered as, or have the effect of, establishing for them any sort of proprietary right to the Wall or to the adjacent Pavement.

When the International Buraq Commission visited Amman in December 1929 and heard from a number of Jordanian figures, Jordanians met it in the Hummar area with a large and raucous demonstration.⁴⁸

The Supreme Muslim Council also convened a General Muslim Conference in Jerusalem on 1 November 1928. The Conference was chaired by Hajj Amin Al-Husseini who was the head of the Supreme Muslim Council. Muslim notables from Palestine and the Arab World gathered to coordinate a response to Jewish encroachments on Al-Buraq Wall, and affirm the Wall's status as an Islamic waqf integral to Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Al-Aqsa Mosque. The meeting issued protests to the Mandatory authorities, and appealed to the broader Muslim world.

Bani Sakhr also protested the Zionist attempts to seize the Buraq Wall. Sheikhs Haditha Al-Khraisha and Mithqal Al-Fayez sent a telegram endorsing the resolutions of the General Muslim Conference under the chairmanship of Hajj Amin Al-Husseini, rejecting the Balfour Declaration and resisting every Jewish effort to gain possession of the Buraq Wall and calling for resistance.⁴⁹ The telegram was published in *Jaridat Al-Jami'a Al-'Arabiyya*:⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Filastin* [Palestine] Newspaper. No. 162; 19 December, 1929.

⁴⁹ Khreisat, Muhammad Abdel-Qader, *Al-Urduniyyun wa al-Qadaya al-Wata-*

Your Eminence President of the Supreme Muslim Council,

The Jews' efforts to take possession of the Buraq Wall have pained us. We protest with all our strength against every such aggression and aggressor, and we ask to be reassured regarding our Holy Places.

It is worth noting that a number of associations and committees were formed in Jordan to collect donations to support the people of Palestine. Among these associations was the Bedouin Women's Association, which collected funds and sent them to the Arab Women's Committee in Jerusalem.⁵¹

Long before 1916, Sheikh Haditha's political engagement was shaped by a sustained commitment to Arab freedom and resistance to imperial domination, first against Ottoman rule, then French authority in Syria, and eventually British power. His support for Palestine emerged not as a momentary response but as the natural extension of a life defined by leadership, principled activism, and service as a sheikh of Bani Sakhr and a national figure in Trans-Jordan. This commitment unfolded against the escalating crisis of the British Mandate in Palestine, where Zionist immigration and land acquisition provoked recurrent confrontations from the early 1920s through the mass uprising and armed struggle of 1936–38, met by increasingly severe British counter measures. Confrontations emerged early in the Mandate period, beginning in Jerusalem in April 1920 and in Jaffa in May 1921, followed by further disturbances

niyya wa al-Qawmiyya [Jordanians and National and Pan-Arab Causes], Ministry of Culture, Amman, 2020, p. 229.

⁵⁰ *Jaridat Al-Jami'a Al-'Arabiyya*. No. 174; 18 October, 1938, p. 2.

⁵¹ *Filastin* [Palestine] Newspaper, No. 86; 23 June, 1936, p. 7.

later that year and culminating in the Buraq Uprising of 1929, when disputes over sacred space and sovereignty escalated into widespread violence extending to Hebron, Safad, Haifa, Nablus, and beyond.

Within this context, Haditha became one of the earliest and most forceful advocates in Trans-Jordan for active solidarity with Palestine. He translated words into action by mobilising men, encouraging enlistment in the Arab Army, and providing material support to the struggle, drawing on his organisational influence across Bani Sakhr and the Badia. British efforts to curtail this support—through movement restrictions, weapons controls, and exile—failed to deter him. Instead, Haditha embodied a continuous political line linking the Arab Revolt, the Syrian struggle, and Palestine’s jihad, reinforcing within Trans-Jordan a durable conviction that the defence of Palestine was an essential moral and national obligation.

CHAPTER FIVE

RELATIONSHIPS FORGED IN FIRE

Mahmoud Sa'eed Obeidat wrote:

Men are only as significant as the positions they stand by, and men's positions are an embodiment of how true they are to the honour of patriotism. This is particularly so when their stances are purely for the benefit of the Arab *Ummah* and not in service to their ego, and when the person is neither arrogant nor sanctimonious about his favours. This is how the venerable Sheikh Haditha was: intelligent, quick-witted, solid, serious, upright, bold when it came to what is right, and sincere both outwardly and inwardly. He had the spirit and approach of a revolutionary, and everyone who knew him and dealt with him testified to this. Adel Arslan described him as 'the unbreakable spear.' And the mujahid Ahmed Al-Khatib called him 'the one with the long arm.'⁵²

Haditha's Relationship with Haj Amin Al-Husseini

Sheikh Haditha had an interesting relationship with Haj Amin Al-Husseini, the Mufti of Palestine and Head of the Supreme Muslim Council. Haj Amin once sent his assistant, Emile Al-Ghoury, on a mission to the Khirshan's stomping grounds with a sum of money to purchase weapons for the revolutionaries in Palestine.

⁵² Obeidat, Mahmoud Sa'eed, *Sheehan* Newspaper, 9-3/2002.

Farid Fakhr Al-Din related the following:

A messenger sent by Haj Amin Al-Husseini came to me and said that His Eminence wanted to meet me immediately at the home of Al-Arqatanji, which belonged to Sheikh Wahbeh Tamari, a member of the Jaffa Chamber of Commerce and the founder of the National Orthodox Association there. Haj Amin arrived accompanied by Emile Al-Ghouri and said: 'Today you will go with Emile to Sheikh Haditha bin Ali bin Abdullah Al-Hneif Al-Khraisha in the village of Al-Muwaqqar. He is a widely knowledgeable illiterate Bedouin, and has given generously to every patriotic cause, and is a good friend to all Arabs.'

Haj Amin also explained that he had given a letter to Al-Ghouri, in addition to a thousand pounds to give to Sheikh Haditha to see what weapons he could buy with them as he enjoyed friendly relations with all the Arab countries and was held in very high esteem. Haj Amin said that Saleh Al-Tuwani, an activist who would be our driver, would use his truck and that he knew how to reach Sahab and from there it would not be too difficult to find Al-Muwaqqar where hopefully we would fill the truck with weapons.

We arrived with the call to noon prayer and met Sheikh Haditha and his eldest son, Ali. Emile presented the letter to the sheikh, and then presented the money. An indecipherable smile appeared on the sheikh's face when he received the money. He called two men to him, one named Krayyim and the other, Mshaash, and he asked them to read the letter for him. Then he looked at Emile and asked: 'How much

do you pay for a rifle?’ Emile replied: ‘One hundred pounds, and that is a high price.’ Sheikh Haditha said: ‘Ten rifles need a truck;’ and we said: ‘We do not necessarily need to fill the whole truck; we brought it because it can drive over unasphalted roads.’

A boy came in and whispered in the Sheikh’s ear, then Haditha said: ‘Come on, boys (*iyal*) a light meal is ready. Al-Ghouri whispered in my ear: ‘Boys?! We’re boys to him?!’ Then we entered the second tent, and there some food had been spread out on the ground. The Sheikh said: ‘This is only a snack; a proper meal is being prepared for you.’ The food consisted of thick rich yoghurt; white butter and hot flatbread.’ Perhaps it was because we were hungry, or because of the way the food was generously offered and presented, but we all agreed that it was the most delicious meal we had ever eaten in our lives. Before we were completely full, the Sheikh ordered that the spread be taken away. We did not object as we knew another meal was on its way.

After the Arabian coffee had been served, Emile Al-Ghouri said: ‘Excuse me, *ya sidi*; I have a question. The Sheikh said to go ahead and Al-Ghouri continued: ‘We know that you are widely knowledgeable and a poet. So why do you call us ‘boy’ when that refers to a person of little significance?’ The Sheikh said: ‘Firstly, I did not call you ‘boy’, rather I said ‘boys (*iyal*)’. Al-Ghouri said: ‘What difference does it make, Sheikh.’ Sheikh Haditha said: ‘There is no shame in the plural of the word. Have you not heard them saying in Nablus:

*O lads (subyan), O lads, from the east came a caller
O chivalrous ones, he's making away with
your grandeur*

Sheikh Haditha continued: 'Do you know the meaning of this verse of poetry?' We said we did not. He explained: 'They are young women whose sheep have been stolen, and they have come to inform the men. Instead of 'men', they said, '*subyan*,' which is the plural of '*sabi*' (lad).'

Haj Amin was right when he called him 'a widely knowledgeable illiterate Bedouin.'

Two literate men, Krayyem and Mshaash, were constantly at Sheikh Haditha's side. He explained that they would read to him from the Palestinian and Jordanian newspapers twice a week. Over the course of our conversations, it became evident that the sheikh possessed a profound and wide-ranging knowledge of Arab and Islamic history, and he held well-reasoned and compelling views on both. He was also notably conversant in the histories of other peoples.

Sheikh Haditha was very gracious and had a beautiful character, and a beautiful face. No other sheikh combined his many qualities. His Arabic was pleasing to the ear—eloquent, fluid, and marked by a clear Bedouin accent. His complexion was fair, and his son, Ali—who, like his father, was illiterate—shared his calm temperament, patience, and quiet dignity.

At one point Sheikh Haditha looked at Ali and

said: ‘Godspeed,’ then he looked at a black man named Kassab and said: ‘Get food and water for the brothers.’ He turned to the driver, Saleh, and said: ‘Are you ready to go with Ali?’ He replied: ‘Of course. I am at your command, *‘ammi* (uncle).’ When Haditha was ready, he called his son Ali to the driver; we wished them success with all our hearts and the two departed.

After dinner, two men wearing traditional Circassian garb arrived carrying a message from Emir Abdullah. They greeted Sheikh Haditha respectfully and one of them said: ‘*Mawlana* Abdullah sent you his private car; he wants to see you.’ Haditha said, ‘Please extend my *salams* to him and let him know that I have guests.’ We all shouted in unison: ‘No, *‘ammi* Abu Ali, you must go to the Emir! We want to sleep anyway!’

It was a little before the call to evening prayer, so Sheikh Haditha was persuaded and he went to change his clothes. During his short absence, one of the messengers asked: ‘You are guests, may God bless you; where are you from?’ Kassab immediately said: ‘They are guests from Palestine sent by Haj Amin Al-Husseini to *‘Ammi* Haditha to supply them with weapons.’

We did not want Kassab to share this information, and when the Sheikh returned, he headed for the car and called the two men without us having the chance to tell him what Kassab had said.

The Sheikh returned two hours later and the same two men entered with him carrying a burlap sack which they placed on the ground. We asked for

permission to approach, and the Sheikh sat down and said: 'Bring out the rifles and ammunition, Kassab.'

Kassab took out five brand new rifles, and a number of bandoliers. Haditha said: 'These are a gift from Emir Abdullah. He knows everything about you; are you really so infiltrated?' Emile said: 'It was Kassab who told the guards everything.' The Sheikh said calmly: 'Why did you do that, Kassab? Thank God it was to our benefit, otherwise the Emir would not have given us the weapons.'

I said: 'Believe me, Abu Ali, if all we got were these weapons, I would consider our trip a success.'

We awoke on the morning of the second day, took our breakfast, and spent the hours in restless anticipation. In the middle of the night, the driver—the mujahid Saleh Al-Tuwvani—arrived, brimming with joy. He informed us that the truck was now loaded with arms: mostly rifles, but also five Sten submachine guns and three Brno rifles. Saleh added that some of the weapons had been purchased with Turkish Mejidi gold coins. Kassab brought him water to wash, and not long after, Ali entered. We rose to greet him with enthusiasm and offered our thanks.

At dawn, we bade farewell to the sheikh and his men. Sheikh Haditha handed us a coarse burlap sack, half-filled with fresh bread and milk for the road, and told us that a letter for Haj Amin was tucked at the bottom. When we reached the river, we opened the sack to retrieve the provisions and found a small white pouch. Inside were twenty Mejidi gold coins and a handwritten note from the sheikh, which read:

يا غوري ويا فخر الدين
عيدوا مال الحاج أمين
وهذي بقايا الليرات
منا هدية لفلسطين

*O Ghouri and Fakhr Al-Din
Return the money of Haj Amin
And these liras that remain
Are a gift from us to Palestine*

In the bag was the one thousand pounds we had given him and twenty Mejidi gold coins donated to Palestine. This was all Sheikh Haditha had left after he had paid for the weapons from his own pocket. Tears of joy streamed down Emile Al-Ghouri's face. 'Take heart, Farid' he said; 'as long as there are men like Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha in the Arab Ummah, Palestine will not be lost.'

When we met Haj Amin, it occurred to me to joke with him, so I said: 'Abu Ali sent us back and said that the money was not enough, and that the money had remained with the Sheikh. His Eminence said: 'Are you absolutely sure it was Sheikh Haditha, or did you meet with someone else?' Al-Ghouri, reluctant to prolong the joke, interjected: 'He's joking, *ya sidi.*' Haj Amin said: 'I am sure he returned the money and used his own money to buy weapons.' Al-Ghouri said, 'And far more than that!' We told him every last detail and gave him the letter, the handwriting of which was not very clear. Haj Amin ordered that it be transcribed in clear penmanship and hung in our homes.



Haj Amin Al-Husseini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem

This was the sheikh who, upon seeing that Khaled Mjalli Al-Khraisha—who would be martyred in defence of the Holy Land—was angry because he had heard a provocative verse that said:

بالمعيدي لا تكل من الخفاره

إنهش الليرات وانهب يا ضنيني

In Al-Mu‘aidi, don’t speak of defence

Grab the liras, my friend, and make no pretence

replied:

علوم جزّها حديثه وقال
حبّ الوطن عليكم دين يا عيال
ومن أجل الوطن صرتم جنود الجيش
لا من أجل نهش ليرة وريال
القدس ثم القدس يا رجال
أعلى من العشيرة وشيوخها والمال

Haditha heard news and said:

*‘My sons, love of the homeland is a debt
You’ve joined the army for the homeland’s sake,
Not to seize a Lira or a Riyal to take.
O men, Jerusalem and Jerusalem ...
Is more precious than the clan, its sheikhs, its wealth’*

Haditha’s Relationship with Emir / King Abdullah I

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha was among the men who welcomed and declared *bay‘ah* to Sharif Hussein bin Ali when he arrived in Amman in 1924 and was declared Caliph of the Muslims. Sheikh Haditha also maintained a close, enduring, and politically consequential relationship with Sharif Hussein’s son, Emir Abdullah, later King Abdullah I of Jordan. Abdullah I ruled Trans-Jordan as Emir from 1921 and was proclaimed King on 25 May, 1946, when full independence was achieved and the country was formally renamed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Long before this transition to sovereignty, they were close friends and allies with a shared purpose and vision centred on Arab autonomy, regional stability, and resistance to external domination.

One telling episode that underscores Sheikh Haditha’s political alignment with Emir Abdullah unfolded during the wave of rumours and press agitation of 1932–1933. As

reports circulated in the towns of the Emirate alleging that certain Transjordanian leaders—foremost among them Emir Abdullah—had established contacts with Zionists and were negotiating the sale or lease of land, several of the accused felt compelled to issue public denials in the Palestinian press.⁵³ When elements of that press escalated into a sharp campaign against Emir Abdullah and a number of East Bank notables in early 1933,⁵⁴ Haditha joined a coalition of Jordanian sheikhs and political figures in sending protest telegrams to Musa Al-Kazim, head of the Arab Executive Committee, and Muhammad Amin Al-Husseini, head of the Supreme Muslim Council, condemning what they described as an unjust ‘press attack’ and defending the Emir’s reputation. The telegrams were signed by a wide roster of leaders, a collective intervention that illustrates Haditha’s willingness to defend the Emir publicly at moments of political vulnerability.

In the 1920s, Emir Abdullah took a third wife. This third marriage stirred unease in his court, for the bride was a black servant woman from the Hashemite household in Mecca, where Emir Abdullah’s father, Sharif Hussein bin Ali, had ruled as Emir of the Hijaz. Many among Emir Abdullah’s entourage found the match difficult to accept. Ministers, notables, and officials of the Emiri Diwan voiced their disapproval, foremost among them Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda, the Chief of the Diwan.

Word of their objections reached the Emir. Rather than

⁵³ *Filastin* [Palestine] Newspaper, July 26, 1932, p. 4; *Filastin*, August 30, 1932, p. 2; *Al-Karmil* Newspaper, No. 1740; *Al-Karmil*, No. 1743; *Al-Jami ‘ah Al-Arabiyyah* Newspaper, No. 1003, February 14, 1932, p. 4.

⁵⁴ *Al-Karmil*, No. 1746, February 22, 1933, p. 2; *Al-Karmil* Newspaper, No. 1747, February 25, 1933, p. 2.

rebuke them directly, he chose a more subtle and characteristically literary response. Emir Abdullah was a man deeply versed in Arab genealogy and tribal history, and he delighted in proverbs, maxims, and riddles. Summoning his entourage, he posed the following riddle to them:

‘What are the three that do not need three? (*Ma hiya al-thalath illi ma bidha thalath?*)’

They reflected on it and offered answer after answer, but each was wrong. At length they pleaded for time to discover the correct response. The Emir replied, with the measured authority of inherited custom, ‘The Arabs grant a waiting period of three nights and a third of a day.’

The courtiers deliberated over who might be capable of solving such a riddle. In the end they agreed that there was no one for it but Sheikh Haditha, so they set out for Bani Sakhr’s encampments. When they arrived at Sheikh Haditha’s tent, he received them warmly and extended the full measure of Bedouin hospitality. After the meal they said to him:

‘Abu Ali, Emir Abdullah has given us a riddle, and we have not been able to solve it.’

They repeated the riddle to him. Sheikh Haditha asked: ‘Where is the Emir staying these days?’

They told him that he was at his palace in the Ghor. He said:

‘Stay with me tonight. Tomorrow, after the dawn prayer, we will ride to him within the allotted time with the answer.’

And so it was; after the dawn prayer, they set out with Sheikh Haditha and some of his men, and by noon they had reached the Emir’s residence in the Jordan Valley. The Emir welcomed them and food was set before them. Then Tawfiq



King Abdullah I

Abu Al-Huda said:

‘We have brought the answer with Abu Ali.’

The Emir turned to Sheikh Haditha and said:

‘The first, Abu Ali?’

‘Truth does not need money (*al-sidg ma widdo dara-hem*),’ Haditha said.

‘You have spoken truly (*sadagt*). And the second?’ said

the Emir. ‘Wisdom does not need men (*al-‘aql ma widdo rjaal*),’ Haditha said.

‘You have spoken truly. And the third?’

Sheikh Haditha said: ‘Love does not need physical beauty (*al-hubb ma widdo zein*).’

At this, the Emir looked towards Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda and the others and said:

‘This is my answer to your disapproval of my marriage to a servant woman. I love her, and so I married her according to the law of God and His Messenger (*‘ala Sunnat Allah wa Rasuluh*).’

The tale carries both wisdom and admonition. ‘Truth does not need money’ means that an honest man, even if he goes to market without coins in his pocket, may still buy what he needs, for the merchants trust him and record the sum as a debt until he returns to repay it. Because he is truthful, he has no need of ready cash. ‘Wisdom does not need men’ means that a wise and prudent man does not entangle himself in needless disputes and therefore has no need of armed companions to help resolve his affairs. And ‘Love does not need [conventional] physical beauty’ means that a man does not love a woman solely for her physical beauty, for hearts are in the hand of the All-Merciful who turns them as He wills.

More than an anecdote about wit, the story stands as a small but telling illustration of the bond between the two men shaped not only by politics, but by shared cultural codes and a common understanding of dignity.

The warmth of their relationship was evident in frequent reciprocal visits. Sheikh Haditha received Emir Abdullah on several occasions in his village of Al-Muwaqqar—once a summer retreat of the Umayyads—most notably in May

1931, when the Emir arrived accompanied by the British Accredited Representative and the Financial Commission. Haditha honoured his guests with a lavish Arab-style banquet⁵⁵ and hosted them for an entire day. In January 1934, *Filastin* newspaper reported that Emir Abdullah spent five restorative days in Al-Muwaqqar ‘for rest and refreshment,’⁵⁶ a visit that captured the ease and familiarity between the two men. These visits in Al-Muwaqqar’s evocative setting capture the warmth, trust, and camaraderie between the two men who shared a relationship that extended beyond formal protocol to one of genuine affection.

Politically, Sheikh Haditha served as a vital intermediary for Emir Abdullah, particularly during the period of the Syrian Revolt against French rule (1925–1927). As Yoav Alon notes: ‘Haditha was Abdullah’s principal link to the Syrian rebels, with the northern branches of Bani Sakhr, which moved freely across the Trans-Jordan–Syria frontier, providing a discreet channel for communication, mediation, and material support.’⁵⁷ This role placed Haditha at the intersection of tribal networks and regional politics, enabling the Emir to pursue covert policies while maintaining plausible deniability vis-à-vis the Mandatory authorities.

The depth of King Abdullah’s confidence in Haditha is further reflected in symbolic gestures of reward and trust.

⁵⁵ *Filastin* [Palestine] Newspaper. No. 1719, May 17, 1931, p. 3. Cited in *Akhbar wa Wathaiq Urdiniyya fi Sabifat Filastin*, part 1, compiled and edited by Zuheir Ghanayim and George Tarif; Jordanian Ministry of Culture, 2001.

⁵⁶ *Filastin* [Palestine] Newspaper, No. 2618, January 22, 1934, p. 9. Cited in *Akhbar wa Wathaiq Urdiniyya fi Sabifat Filastin*, part 1, compiled and edited by Zuheir Ghanayim and George Tarif; Jordanian Ministry of Culture, 2001.

⁵⁷ Alon, Yoav, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*, I.B. Taurus, 2007, p. 69.

In correspondence with London, Herbert Samuel recorded that he presented two cars to Emir Abdullah, one of them a Ford, in return for a gift to Samuel and the then Chief Secretary Deedes, of two horses. Emir Abdullah presented the two cars to Sheikh Haditha and Sheikh Mithqal as a token of his thanks for their role in defeating the Wahhabi Ikhwan.⁵⁸ Such gifts were not merely personal favours, but acknowledgements of decisive tribal support at moments of existential threat to the nascent polity.

Sheikh Haditha also proved indispensable to Emir Abdullah during periods of acute political and financial strain. When Trans-Jordan was burdened with a punitive fine of one hundred thousand gold pounds imposed by the British Mandate authorities—arising from cross-border tribal raids and related penalties—Emir Abdullah entrusted Haditha with leading a major tribal conference in Dar‘a. Drawing on his mastery of tribal custom and negotiation, Haditha not only secured the funds required to discharge the debt, but raised an additional one hundred thousand pounds. The conference brought together leading Syrian tribal figures, including Sheikh Nuri Al-Sha‘laan of the Ruwala and other prominent shaykhs of the northern Badia, highlighting Haditha’s stature as a mediator whose authority extended well beyond Trans-Jordan’s borders.

At the same time, the relationship between the two men was not without tension. Haditha’s political stands occasionally brought him into open disagreement with both Emir Abdullah and the British. Yoav Alon reports that ‘Haditha Al-Khuraysha also went into temporary exile

⁵⁸ Abu Nowar, Ma’an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan; 1920–1929* [in English], Ithaca Press, 1993, p. 129.

following his defiance of [King] Abdullah [I] and the British; he instructed his people who served in the Legion to abstain from suppressing Rashid ‘A[a]li’s revolt in Baghdad in 1941.⁵⁹ Other incidents underscore his independence of judgment, such as Emir Abdullah’s difficulty in persuading him to return livestock seized by Bani Sakhr from the villagers of Al-Husn.⁶⁰ There was also the instance of Sheikh Haditha sheltering Kleib Al-Shraideh who fled after hundreds of bombs were thrown on three villages in Koura. He took refuge with Haditha and sought the mediation of his host in tendering his submission to [King] Abdullah. Kleib, his sons and several followers were sentenced to death but King Abdullah commuted their punishment to prison sentences and less than a year later granted them amnesty⁶¹—another illustration of Haditha’s function as a broker between state authority and tribal society.

Sheikh Haditha was among Emir Abdullah’s most steadfast supporters, yet he retained a moral and political autonomy rooted in tribal authority and honour. For Emir Abdullah, Haditha represented both a pillar of support and a necessary interlocutor with the tribes; for Haditha, the Emir—and later King—was a Hashemite leader whose legitimacy stemmed from his Prophetic lineage and his fidelity to Arab causes.

⁵⁹ Alon, Yoav, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*, I.B. Taurus, 2007, p. 144.

⁶⁰ Report no. 4, 5 June 1921, CO733/3 and report no. 7, 1 September 1921, CO733/6.

⁶¹ Philby, Trans-Jordan situation report, no.1, 1 April 1922, CO733/21; Samuel to Churchill, 19 July 1922, CO733/23.



Frederick Peake

Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez and Frederick Peake

If the earlier sections emphasise relationships forged through shared struggle and aligned purpose, the following encounters between Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez of the Bani Sakhr and Frederick Peake Pasha introduce a different, more abrasive dimension to the political landscape of Trans-Jordan. Here, the relationship was not one of ideological kinship or mutual trust, but of confrontation between tribal authority and colonial arrogance. The episodes illuminate the limits of British authority on the Badia and reveal how tribal leaders could, when circumstances demanded, challenge imperial officers directly, forcing negotiation, mediation, and recalibration at the highest levels of the emerging state.



Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez

A quantity of petrol stored for the Arab Legion disappeared from the Al-Jizah area. Peake Pasha went out with his troops to investigate the matter with Mithqal Pasha Al-Fayez, the head of the Twaga branch of the Bani Sakhr.

The outcome, however, was that Mithqal captured Peake and imprisoned him in the horse stables, where he remained for five days until the government decided to end the matter and ordered his release.

It is also recounted that Peake once went to the village of Umm Al-Amad, the seat of Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez, to persuade him to appear before the court in Salt. Instead, Mithqal detained him and released him only after the mediation of Emir Abdullah and the intervention of

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha and Sayel Al-Shahwan of the Ajarmah.⁶²

Peake had in fact taken part in the Arab Revolt, commanding a company of Egyptian camel cavalry. Yet he belonged to a group of elitist and entitled British officers who were a product of Britain's colonial age. Thus, during his service in Trans-Jordan he embodied the archetype of the colonial officer who guarded his prestige and authority with rigid pride. One of his peculiar habits was to wear two *hattas* (headdress) instead of one—a custom associated with sheikhs of the Ruwala, Al-Sha'alan, by which they signalled their exalted rank.

Peake harboured a lasting animosity toward the Bedouins, stemming from the incident in 1921 when he was held captive by Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez. Throughout his years of service in Jordan (1921–1939), he never displayed any sympathy for the Bedouins. In truth, he was an arrogant man who kept his distance from the people of the land except in the rarest of circumstances.⁶³

One telling story during the events of the Koura Revolt is that Peake took as booty the traditional wooden coffee grinder (*mihbash*) from Sheikh Kleib's home, as though on a Bedouin raid. He would sometimes flaunt it before visitors in his house in Amman. The *mihbash* has always been a symbol of Arab hospitality, and Bedouins never allowed themselves to treat it as spoils in their raids. In any case, Peake eventually returned the *mihbash* to Sheikh Kleib after

⁶² Al-Bakhit, Muhammad Adnan. *Dirasat fi Tarikh Bilad Al-Sham* [Studies in the History of Bilad Al-Sham]. The French Institute for the Near East, Damascus, 2008, p. 238.

⁶³ Musa, Suleiman. *Dirasat fi Tarikh Al-Urdun Al-Hadith* [Studies in the History of Modern Jordan] 1st ed.: Ministry of Culture, 1999, Amman, p. 227.

Emir Abdullah ordered him to do so. Peake's conduct contravened British military service regulations; had he been serving in a British unit, he would have been court-martialed for plundering from a civilian home.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920–1929* [in Arabic], Al-Rai Press, 2000, p. 93.

CHAPTER SIX

THE WAHHABI IKHWAN INCURSIONS (1922–1930)

The First Wahhabi Incursion (1922)

The Wahhabi Ikhwan were a militant religious brotherhood formed in the early 20th century in central Arabia, composed largely of Bedouin tribesmen under the religious doctrine of Wahhabism. The Ikhwan were Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud's tool for territorial expansion and lent religious legitimacy to his political ambitions.⁶⁵ In early 1922, King Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud was ready to launch an expansion campaign into neighbouring parts of the Arabian Peninsula from which the Ottomans had withdrawn. These territories had left a political vacuum beyond the immediate reach of British influence and interest, and were ruled by sheikhs with only partial control, as in 'Asir and Ha'il. After the death of Muhammad Al-Idrisi, with whom Ibn Saud had concluded a protection treaty, Ibn Saud mounted a campaign, occupied 'Asir, and brought its tribes into the Wahhabi fold, adding some 4,000 square miles to his realm. Shortly afterwards he turned to Ha'il and Jabal Shammar, which spanned the vast desert of northern Arabia between Nejd and his rivals, King Faisal in Iraq and Emir Abdullah in Trans-Jordan. In November 1921 the last of the Al-Rasheed family to rule Ha'il, Muhammad bin Talal, surren-

⁶⁵ Alon, Yoav, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*, I.B. Taurus, 2007, p. 52, 85.

dered to the Aal Sauds; and in June 1922 the Wahhabi Ikhwan seized Al-Jawf and Skaka north of Ha'il. Ibn Saud thus doubled the size of his state, filling every gap in the Peninsula with his uncontested power and pushing his frontiers up against the Iraqi and Trans-Jordanian borders.

Meanwhile, back in Trans-Jordan, in March, Philby and Major Holt made a desert journey to Kaf on their way to Al-Jawf. Philby reported to High Commissioner Samuel that his impression was that political and tribal conditions made the idea of using Al-Jawf as a link on the Desert Railway between Aqaba and Baghdad a fantasy. Given the circumstances, he proposed that the British government should establish an independent buffer state in Al-Jawf between Nejd and Trans-Jordan; yet he agreed with Sir Percy Cox's view that His Majesty's Government would one day be obliged to recognise Ibn Saud's intentions in Al-Jawf. Philby knew his superiors in London were aware that Britain's capacity to halt the Wahhabi advance was so limited that it was unwise to provoke the Saudis. On a second desert journey, May-June 1922, he visited Al-Jawf and Skaka and ended it very shortly before the Wahhabi Ikhwan occupied both. That visit was laden with ambiguities and different parties read different aims into it. For Emir Abdullah, Philby seemed intent on adding a wide tract under the Emir's authority; for Samuel and Cox, he was surveying a prospective railway route that would free Britain to counter French overreach in Syria. In any case, the trip stirred Baghdad, Jerusalem, and London, and the riddle of his real purpose remained unsolved.

Within days of Philby's return, around 1 July, some two thousand Wahhabi Ikhwan fighters from the 'Anaza, 'Utaybah, and Mutayr tribes advanced towards Trans-Jordan

from the Al-Washm district near Riyadh.⁶⁶ By July 1922 Abdel-Aziz ibn Saud had seized Tayma, Khaybar, Al-Jawf, and the southern parts of Wadi Al-Sirhan. Al-Jawf and Wadi Al-Sirhan had been under the authority of Nuri Al-Sha'laan, and after the fall of the Aal-Rasheed emirate in Ha'il, Ibn Sha'laan suggested to Emir Abdullah that Al-Jawf and Wadi Al-Sirhan be joined to his emirate, but conditions in Trans-Jordan were not favourable for it at the time. The Wahhabi Ikhwan attacked the Ma'an area and were confronted by the Huweitat tribe and a fierce battle ensued forcing the raiders to retreat in defeat.

On 7 August Philby, Peake, and Major Holt were taking a desert excursion at Qasr Al-Kharanah, one of the Umayyad castles in the Jordanian desert in Al-Muwaqqar, midway between Azraq and Amman. Philby found a tribal brand carved on the castle walls and became convinced that the Wahhabis had been there recently. On returning to Amman he informed Emir Abdullah and 'Ali Rida Al-Rikabi of his discovery. On 13 August Emir Abdullah visited High Commissioner Samuel and discussed the question of Al-Jawf.

On 14 August 1922 Philby and Major Holt went on an outing to the Jordan Valley. That same day, two or three hours before dawn, the Wahhabi Ikhwan lay in wait for the villages of Umm Al-Amad and Al-Tunayb, two of Bani Sakhr's largest areas. Just before daybreak they launched a sudden and overwhelming sneak attack while Bani Sakhr slept. In the fighting through the pre-dawn dark, and

⁶⁶ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920-1929 [in Arabic]*, Al-Rai Press, 2000, p. 93.

owing to the element of surprise, the advantage lay with the Wahhabi Ikhwan.⁶⁷

On the morning of 15 August 1922 a large force of 1,500 Wahhabi Ikhwan reached the encampments of Bani Sakhr at Al-Mushtatta and Al-Tunayb, and began killing whomever they found, making no distinction between combatants and non-combatants.⁶⁸ But by first light the sheikhs Haditha Al-Khraisha, Mithqal Al-Fayez, Zahir Al-Dhiab, Za'al Knie'an, and Awwad Al-Sattam had gathered and mustered the warriors of Bani Sakhr, and driven them into battle against the Wahhabi Ikhwan. At sunrise reinforcements arrived from the Balqa tribes, led by Minwar Al-Hadid and others; this tipped the balance in favour of the Jordanian tribes. They fought with swords, spears and daggers and the Jordanians had Arabian horses which out-matched the Ikhwan's slow camels in close quarters. Bani Sakhr seized the situation and turned what was a defensive fight in the morning into a counter-offensive by noon and a pursuit in the afternoon; and the Wahhabi Ikhwan fled into the desert heartlands. In the village of Al-Tunayb near the railway, thirty-seven Bani Sakhr tribespeople were killed, including two women. In Umm Al-Amad, six miles from the railway, three men and two women of Bani Sakhr were killed. As for the Wahhabi Ikhwan, two hundred fighters were killed and fifty-three were taken prisoner.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 96, 98.

⁶⁸ Bakkar, Ahmad Musa; *Dawr Al-Hashimiyyin fi Bina' Al-Urdun Al-Hadith* [The Hashemites' Role in Building Modern Jordan], *Hawd Al-Zaytoun* for publishing and distribution, 1999, p. 151.

⁶⁹ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920-1929* [in Arabic], *Al-Rai Press*, 2000, p. 98.

With morning, further reinforcements from Bani Sakhr arrived to fight the Ikhwan, and the two sides engaged again. The government began moving the troops it had in Amman to repel the incursion, and other Bedouin tribes joined the fight. Bani Sakhr fought with exceptional valour alongside the military forces and the Bedouin allies who came to their aid, driving the Wahhabi Ikhwan back and inflicting heavy losses. The toll of the battle exceeded 300 dead among the Ikhwan, while 62 were killed from Bani Sakhr and its allies, including one woman. Thirty prisoners were taken, most of them wounded; some later died of their wounds, and Emir Abdullah pardoned the remainder. Bani Sakhr stalked the Ikhwan in their retreat as far as Qasr Al-Kharanah and Al-'Umari, and many of the Ikhwan perished of hunger and thirst before reaching Wadi Al-Sirhan.

Emir Abdullah Moves his Camp from Amman to Al-Muwaqqar with Sheikh Haditha (1922)

In *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, historian Ma'an Abu Nowar argues that some historians claimed that the Reserve Force took part in the battle. He himself did not find any proof that Peake or any element of the Reserve Force joined the defence. In fact, the Reserve Force's second company was en route to Kerak and stopped at Zizia, but it did not fight. Peake spent every hour of 15 August with a Christian family in Amman; on 16 August he went to Umm Al-Amad with Philby in two armoured cars, and later that day the two of them met the Emir. On 17 August Emir Abdullah moved his camp from Amman to Al-Muwaqqar, to the encampment of Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, and set about organising a force of Bedouin fighters to defend the region. In doing so the Emir

strengthened his close relationship with Bani Sakhr, and he expressed his affection and gratitude for their courage and loyalty by granting them land and monetary gifts and exempting them from taxes. He offered condolences to the families of the martyrs and provided what compensation and assistance he could. Later he sent a company of the Reserve Force to Kaf to deter any new Ikhwan incursions. After the victory over the Wahhabi Ikhwan, Emir Abdullah's standing and influence rose markedly.⁷⁰

The British left the Jordanians to face the Wahhabi Ikhwan alone. Al-Rikabi asked Philby for British aircraft and armoured cars to help repel the attack, but he was refused, even though the sound of gunfire could be heard in Amman throughout the night. British aircraft merely carried out reconnaissance, and while armoured cars did set out from Amman, they were only to return with their crews reporting that they could not find the way.⁷¹

In mid-September 1922 the government dispatched a force of 250 soldiers to occupy the Kaf Fort (Qal'at Kaf) in Grayyat Al-Milh at the eastern tip of Wadi Al-Sirhan. The column comprised an infantry company under Commander Subhi Al-Umari; a cavalry company under Captain Muhammad Janbek; and a machine-gun company under Captain Shukri Al-Ammouri. Peake Pasha led the expedition with his chief of staff Fu'ad Salim. The area, then under Ibn Sha'laan, was taken without difficulty. Sharif Muhsin bin Al-Hussein Al-Harithi accompanied the force to main-

⁷⁰ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920–1929 [in Arabic]*, Al-Rai Press, 2000, p. 98, 101.

⁷¹ Al-Musa, Suleiman, Al-Madi, Munib. *Tarikh Al-Urdun fil Qarn Al-'Isbrin (1958–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century]*, 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, p. 185.



The Kaf Garrison made up of fighters from Bani Sakhr and the Arab Army

tain contact with the inhabitants. After three months, most of the force returned, leaving a platoon of fifty men in the fort. The Kaf garrison was not supplied with a wireless set to keep it in touch with the command in Amman, which limited its usefulness. It remained there until the autumn of 1924, when the Jordanian force withdrew after the Second Wahhabi Incursion.⁷²

In June 1923 the village of Kaf was attacked, but the Jordanian troops repelled them after killing fourteen men. Immediately thereafter a Bedouin column was prepared under Emir Shaker, including many from Bani Sakhr. It patrolled Wadi Al-Sirhan to restore a sense of security among the Bedouins living along the Jordanian Badia and to encourage them to stand firm against any future raids. The

⁷² Al-Musa, Suleiman, Al-Madi, Munib. *Tarikh Al-Urdun fil Qarn Al-'Isbrin* (1958–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, pp. 185–6.

column reached Kaf, where it was relieved by an army detachment consisting of fifty soldiers, a number of officers, and several machine-guns.⁷³

The Second Wahhabi Incursion (1923)

The British brokered talks held in Kuwait in 1923–24 to settle Ibn Saud's disputes with the Hashemites (Iraq, Trans-Jordan, and the Hijaz) and to fix frontiers and the rules governing raids along the Nejd–Trans-Jordan border. The talks came on the heels of the 1922 Uqair settlement which set Nejd's borders with Iraq and Kuwait, but left the Trans-Jordan question open. At the Kuwait Conference, the Saudis pressed to remain in Al-Jawf and Wadi Sirhan, while the Jordanians insisted on remaining in Kaf. The talks dragged and ultimately failed to produce a definitive Nejd–Trans-Jordan border.

The Nejdī tribes' raids and incursions continued and the Jordanian tribes continued to fight them. At the Kuwait Conference, the Jordanian delegation demanded compensation for the losses inflicted by the Wahhabi Ikhwan's incursions on the people of Trans-Jordan and the payment of blood money for the slain. The Saudi delegation demanded one thousand camels, forty horses and eighty thousand liras as the price of loads they claimed the Huweitat and the Bani Sakhr had seized from Nejdī merchants' caravans. They also sought to fine the Bani Sakhr tribe two hundred thousand liras as a guarantee for the safety of trade between Nejd and Syria.

⁷³ Bakkar, Ahmad Musa; *Dawr Al-Hashimiyyin fi Bina' Al-Urdun Al-Hadith* [The Hashemites' Role in Building Modern Jordan], *Hawd Al-Zaytoun* for publishing and distribution, 1999, p. 151–2.

In July 1923, thirteen Wahhabis attacked railway workers between the Zarqa and Al-Samra stations, killing four and wounding one, and taking their belongings. Emir Shakir sent out his men, who pursued the culprits, killed two and captured the rest. A harsh lesson was needed to deter all who might contemplate similar raids; and so the death sentence was carried out on all of them on 16 July in the square of the Roman Amphitheatre in Amman.

In the summer of 1924 Ibn Saud judged the circumstances favourable to invade the Hijaz and Trans-Jordan. He began with the latter, tasking Emir Abdul-Aziz bin Musa'ed, who resided in Ha'il, to prepare the raiding force. He ordered Nahdi bin Nuhaier of the Shammar tribe, and Hindi Al-Dhuwaybi of the Harb tribe to prepare their men for a raid on the second day of Eid Al-Adha 1342 AH. The two parties and their men assembled at Ajrafah, and a number of sheikhs from the 'Anaza tribe joined them, and they all moved toward Trans-Jordan. When they reached Sha'b Bayir, the Shararat and the Ruwala joined them. There were now three to four thousand men under twenty standards (*bayareg*), some mounted on camels, others on horses.

After passing the Kaf Fort by roughly ten kilometres, their vanguard encountered a Jordanian supply convoy bound for Grayyat Al-Milh. The convoy had eighteen soldiers and forty men from Bani Sakhr. The raiders fell upon them and butchered them, including one woman, and only two soldiers survived. They were wounded but hid among the dead before making their escape to Kaf. The raiders seized the convoy's supplies and ammunition and pressed on, spending the night at Al-Umari, and on the following morning marched until they reached Qasr Al-Mushatta

where they stopped to rest. Their chief (*'aqeed*), Ibn Nuhaïr, divided the force into four groups: one to head towards Lubban and Al-Tunaib; a second towards Umm Al-Amad and its environs; a third towards Zizia and Al-Qastal; and a fourth held back as a reserve force and a rear-guard to protect ammunition and what they had plundered.⁷⁴

On the evening of 12 August 1924, a large force of Wahhabi camel-mounted fighters crossed into Trans-Jordan and moved to within five miles of Kaf and camped at Al-Umari unobserved and prepared to strike the next day. The sources differ on the size of the Wahhabi force in this second Incursion. The newspaper *Filastin* (No. 704, 19 August 1934, p. 1) reported: 'We learned yesterday morning, after the paper had gone to press, that ten thousand Wahhabi fighters attacked Trans-Jordan and approached Amman.'⁷⁵ In *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, Ma'an Abu Nowar records that at dawn on 13 August, six thousand Wahhabis, who were commanded by Sheikh Awwad Al-Dhuwaybi of Harb and Sheikh Nahdi bin Nuhaïr of Shammar, advanced westward across the Jordanian desert, deliberately avoiding Qasr Amra in the Eastern Jordanian desert. Midway between Qasr Amra and Qasr Al-Kharanah their vanguard attacked a small supply convoy bound for Kaf carrying provisions for the Jordanian garrison there. They killed eighteen men of the Arab Legion and forty camel-mounted fighters of Bani Sakhr who were securing the convoy.

⁷⁴ Al-Musa, Suleiman, Al-Madi, Munib. *Tarikh Al-Urdun fil Qarn Al-'Isbrin* (1958–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, p. 236–7.

⁷⁵ *Filastin* [Palestine] Newspaper. No. 704, 19 August, 1924. Cited in *Akhbar wa Wathaiq Urdiniyya fi Sabifat Filastin*, part 1, compiled and edited by Zuhair Ghanayim and George Tarif; Jordanian Ministry of Culture, 2001.

Before sunset that day the Wahhabis reached the high lands of Msattart Al-Falej, some sixty miles west of Al-Umari and less than ten miles from the Bani Sakhr villages of Al-Tunaib and Umm Al-Amad. Seasoned fighters and trackers, Bani Sakhr sensed the Wahhabi presence and eventually some survivors from the convoy reached Al-Muwaqqar and Bani Sakhr's clans sprang into action. They moved women, children and non-combatants from Al-Tunaib and Umm Al-Amad and their outskirts to safe places to the west, beyond the Hejaz Railway. The fighters of the tribe positioned themselves within and around the two villages to meet any assault.

At first light on Thursday 14 August, the sound of the rifle-fire of six thousand Wahhabis on camelback bellowing war cries and waving their banners broke the silence of the desert as they moved towards their respective targets in unison. The Wahhabis had planned a two-pronged attack: 3,000 fighters under Sheikh Awwad Al-Dhuwaybi were to advance to the villages of Al-Tunaib, Lubban, Al-Yaduda and Khreibt Al-Souq, and from there on to Amman. The second were the 3,000 fighters under Sheikh Nahdi bin Nuhair who were to push west in two assault groups: the first, 1,500 riders to advance to Umm Al-Amad, Barazin, Al-Samek and Hisban; the second, 1,500 riders to Al-Qastal, Umm Rummanah, Manja and Madaba.

Al-Dhuwaybi's men stormed Al-Tunaib to the north where the Junaibat clan under Sheikh Rumayyeh Abu Junaib were set to defend, but the sheer unprecedented scale of the attacking force forced them, after brief resistance, to fall back north and west with skirmishes here and there to slow the Wahhabi advance. The Junaibat dispatched riders to the Khirshan and the Bakhit to call for support. The right

wing of Ibn Nuhair's column attacked Umm Al-Amad, and after bitter fighting in which the renowned Bani Sakhr fighter, Sheikh Awwad Al-Sattam, was wounded, the Al-Fayez withdrew from Umm Al-Amad to Barazin. Simultaneously, Ibn Nuhair's left wing attacked Al-Qastal from the direction of Qasr Al-Mushatta and overran the village of Umm Rummanah which was under the Dhiab clan. Sheikh Zuheir and his men fought bravely but, unable to hold, withdrew step by step to Manja which was under Bani Sakhr's Kunei'aan clan, fighting as they fell back in order to slow the Ikhwan. Eventually Ibn Nuhair pitched his tent in Umm Al-Amad, land he had seized from Bani Sakhr, and brewed Arabian coffee as a slight and a challenge to them.⁷⁶

The nearby clans rallied to support the withdrawing Bani Sakhr fighters. This coincided with the Wahhabis beginning to gather booty from the occupied villages. They seized camels, horses, sheep, tents, food and water even as skirmishes continued on the outskirts. During this time Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha rode from Al-Muwaqqar with the Khirshan horsemen toward Lubban and joined Sheikh Dirdah Al-Bakhit. Soon after, the Balqa tribes massed at Al-Yaduda under their sheikhs: Minwer Al-Hadid, Hamad Al-Hunayti, Ali Al-Shawabkeh and Muhammad Sa'd Al-Raggad.

Just as Al-Dhuwaybi was on the point of overrunning Lubban, he was struck by the counter-attack led by Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha and Sheikh Dirdah Al-Bakhit. Known for their courage and skill in combat, they repelled Al-Dhuwaybi's column in a fierce, decisive fight. Al-Dhuwaybi then

⁷⁶ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan; 1920-1929* [in English], Ithaca Press, 1993, p. 140.

went around Lubban and attacked Al-Yaduda, only to find the tribes of the Balqa waiting for him. A heavy battle took place and Al-Dhuwaybi was wounded, though not very seriously, and the Wahhabis fell back to Al-Tunaib. At this point, the battle turned from a Wahhabi offensive to a sustained counter-offensive by Bani Sakhr.

Meanwhile, the group led by Ibn Nuhair of the Shammar tribe stormed Barazin and nearly destroyed it, then readied to attack Al-Samek. At Al-Samek the Adwan and the Ajarmah under Sheikh Fadeel Al-Shahwan joined Sheikh Awwad Al-Sattam and his withdrawing men; and in their sudden counter-attack they overwhelmed the Wahhabis and forced them back to Umm Al-Amad.

At the same time Sheikh Zahir Al-Dhiab was joined by Sheikh Hatmal Al-Zaben and Sheikh 'Addoub Al-Zaben; Sheikh Za'al Al-Kunei'aan; Sheikh Nuhair ibn Muhayya of Al-Khadeir; Sheikh Talib Abu Al-Ghanam; and a platoon of the Arab Legion under Lieutenant Sa'eed Ishaqat from Madaba. They counter-attacked the Wahhabis as they neared Manja, drove them back and pursued them to Al-Qastal, then forced them to abandon it and retreat east.⁷⁷

It is also recorded that a party of Huweitat who were camped near Bani Sakhr's dwellings joined the fight and fought with particular valour, especially their sheikh, Hamadah, who was killed in action and was the nephew of Sheikh Auda Abu Tayeh. Sheikh Dirdah Al-Bakhit and his kinsmen also showed outstanding heroism, resisting the

⁷⁷ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, Vol. 1: *The Creation and Development of Transjordan; 1920-1929* [in Arabic], Al-Rai Press, 2000, pp. 172, 174, 175.

Wahhabis for several hours until reinforcements arrived and joined the battle.⁷⁸

After roughly four hours of savage fighting, while the Wahhabis were already being driven out eastward by Bani Sakhr and the Balqa tribes, two Royal Air Force aircraft reached the scene and indiscriminately dropped a few bombs on both the Wahhabis and the Jordanian tribes and inflicted casualties on both sides. At around 8:30, three RAF armoured cars and a detachment of the Arab Legion reached Lubban and attacked the retreating Wahhabis. In the confusion, the armoured cars' machine-guns also hit some Bani Sakhr and Balqa tribe fighters. The Wahhabis then began withdrawing, pursued by the Jordanian tribes, the armoured cars and the army detachment as they fled east. In Umm Al-Amad, as soon as Ibn Nuhair saw the attack on Al-Tunaib, he broke camp and fled. His haste may have been heightened by the arrival of the RAF aircraft and armoured cars, but the August heat, water shortage, battle fatigue and heavy casualties compounded the Ikhwan's plight. The pursuit continued to Wadi Al-Asaymir near Qasr Amra where it was abandoned that afternoon.⁷⁹

Besides their humiliating defeat, the Wahhabis suffered five hundred men killed, an unknown number of wounded, and three hundred men were taken prisoner. The Bani Sakhr captured seven of their standards (*bayareg*) and took six hundred camels and roughly one thousand rifles. Jordanian losses totalled 197 killed: 21 from the Arab Legion;

⁷⁸ Musa, Suleiman, *Al-Harakah Al-'Arabiyyah: Sirat Al-Marhalah Al-'Ula li-l-Nahdah Al-Arabiyyah Al-Hadithah, 1905-1924*, 3rd ed., Beirut: Dar Al-Nahar, 2002, p. 239.

⁷⁹ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan; 1920-1929* [in English], Ithaca Press, 1993, p. 142.

62 at Umm Al-Amad; 27 at Al-Qastal; 8 at Al-Zabayir; 9 at Umm Rummanah; 2 at Manja; 15 at Barazin; 13 at Al-Tunaib; and 40 near Amra. The RAF casualties were two armored-car officers who were slightly wounded.⁸⁰

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha repelled the aggressors by his active presence in the heart of events and by the courageous action of his steadfast men and renowned horsemen across every theatre in Trans-Jordan—from Kaf to Umm Al-Amad, Al-Qastal, Al-Zubayir, Umm Rummanah, Manja, Barazin, Al-Tunaib and Qasr Amra, among other sites of combat.

The Third Wahhabi Incursion (1928)

In early 1928, armed Wahhabi clans gathered under three standards and moved toward an area near Al-Ghraisa. The force was led by Sheikh Faisal Al-Duwish, sheikh Al-Fudhaili, and Sheikh Ibn Shunayf, three of the Ikhwan's ablest fighters. In the same district the Zaben and the Hgeish, both clans of Bani Sakhr, were grazing in their customary pastures under rights acknowledged in the Hadda Agreement. They were where they had a right to be, occupied with seasonal work and were eyes and ears for Bani Sakhr.

On 13 February 1928, two Wahhabi groups under Farhan bin Mashhur and Darzi bin Al-Dughaymi advanced under cover of darkness, accompanied by a Shararat contingent led by Masnad bin Farayh. Moving quietly through the night, they reached the Bani Sakhr encampments by first light, closing to within rifle range before their presence was widely known. The shock was severe and immediate: the raiders overran the tents and killed sixty men of Bani Sakhr,

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

among them the esteemed sheikh Hatmal Al-Zaben. Worst of all, in an unforgivable act of aggression they assaulted a woman of the Shararat who was a guest of the Zaben. The violence of that first onrush provoked a response of equal determination. In the fighting that followed the Bani Sakhr fighters engaged the intruders so fiercely that the Wahhabis, having struck their blow and gathered their plunder, fled the scene. Emir Abdullah was apprised of the events and was deeply angered, and he lodged a protest with the British government.⁸¹

Further accounts of the third Wahhabi incursion broaden the picture. The bands of the Wahhabi Ruwala and the Shararat inflicted grievous losses on the Bani Sakhr, estimated at seventy dead, including Sheikh Hatmal. Other reports, however, sketch a still darker picture, with roughly three hundred dead on both sides.⁸² Other reports attribute to the February raid a toll of 162 dead of Bani Sakhr, together with the seizure of 4,162 camels and 8,590 sheep.

Later that year, on 29 December 1928, a column of the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force—twenty-three vehicles carrying troops, supported by aircraft—encircled the Zaben encampments to stop a retaliatory attack. The aim was to arrest the cycle of violence, but it only served to constrain Bani Sakhr which had suffered heavy casualties, and had been deprived of a large part of its pastoral wealth. Thus, they found themselves restrained by outside powers that

⁸¹ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan; 1920–1929* [in Arabic], Al-Rai Press, 2000, p. 241.

⁸² Musa, Suleiman. *Imarat Sharqi Al-Urdun: Nash'atuha wa Tatawuriha fi Rub' Qarn* [The Emirate of Transjordan: Its Origin and Development over a Quarter-Century]. Amman: Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research (Aal Al-Bayt Institute, 1990), p. 311.

forbade the retributive customs that for generations had kept order in the desert.⁸³

The Attempts of Ibn Saud's Cousin and the Last of the Incursions (1930–1932)

In his book *The Story of the Arab Legion*,⁸⁴ John Bagot Glubb describes the spring of 1930 and relates that the Wahhabi Ikhwan mounted raids into Trans-Jordan. The first was led by Ibn Saud's cousin, who commanded it in person. The Trans-Jordan Frontier Force had gone out into the desert bearing orders that were, in effect, not supporting the Jordanian tribes. In this way the tribes found themselves weakened by their own government while being ravaged by raids from the Saudi side.⁸⁵

The Huweitat, in particular, fell into despair after they were encircled, threatened, and driven from their home grounds by the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force under the excuse that they had raided Ibn Saud's lands—even though they were themselves facing regular incursions from the Saudi side at a time when the Frontier Force had no orders to protect them from raids launched out of Saudi territory. Nevertheless, the last raid along the Jordanian–Saudi frontier occurred in July 1932, and it came from Saudi territory.⁸⁶

⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 322-3.

⁸⁴ Glubb, John Bagot, *The Story of the Arab Legion*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1948.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SHEIKH HADITHA AND THE JIHAD AGAINST FRANCE (1915–1929)

Sheikh Haditha played a significant role in the struggle against French rule in Syria, while Trans-Jordan—under Emir Abdullah and with the support of key tribal actors, foremost among them Haditha—emerged as a corridor of sanctuary, arms, and mobilisation. In these years, Haditha's leadership took on a distinctly regional dimension, linking tribal authority to the wider Arab cause.

The Battle of Maysalun and the Collapse of Arab Rule in Syria (1920)

The Battle of Maysalun on 24 July 1920 marked a decisive turning point in the modern history of Syria and the wider Arab East. The battle ended in the defeat of the Arab Kingdom of Syria, ruled by King Faisal ibn Al-Hussein, when its forces under Yusuf Al-Azma were overcome by the French, leading to the imposition of the French Mandate over Syria. Resistance to the Mandate was no longer a matter of political protest alone but became a sustained national struggle against foreign occupation.

The consequences of Maysalun reverberated immediately across Trans-Jordan. News of the defeat intensified popular anger, accelerated calls to jihad against France, and spurred early mobilisation among tribes and towns alike. Sheikh Haditha and other tribal figures responded not as passive observers but as active participants, supporting vol-

unteer efforts and aligning themselves with Emir Abdullah's subsequent campaign to restore Arab rule in Greater Syria. Maysalun was a foundational rupture that set in motion a decade of struggle in which Haditha played a central role.

The Syrian Revolution (1925–1927)

The Syrian struggle for independence unfolded in the aftermath of the First World War, as France imposed its Mandate over Syria in defiance of wartime pledges and Arab expectations. The French did not adhere to the articles of the Mandate and divided Syria into mini-states and implemented racist policies that sowed division between the various parts of Syria. They also suppressed public freedoms and censored the press. They interfered in the religious affairs of Muslims and placed French officials in charge of managing Islamic endowments. They also attempted to impose French social and civil mores upon the Syrians.⁸⁷

Resistance began almost immediately and intensified with the outbreak of the Great Syrian Revolt in the summer of 1925, led by Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash in Jabal Al-Druze. French forces suffered major losses in the early months of the uprising, and the revolt soon spread to Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, and beyond.

Trans-Jordan could not remain insulated from the upheaval to its north. French reprisals drove thousands of Syrians—particularly Druze families—across the border. By 1927, more than 3,000 had settled in Azraq alone, with thousands more dispersed across Ramtha, Jerash, Amman, Zarqa, and Kerak.

⁸⁷ Khawand, Masud *The Geographical History Encyclopedia* [Al-Mawsou'ah Al-Tarikhyyah Al-Jughrافيyyah] 10th Vol.: Syria, Hanyad Institute, p. 70.

Despite limited resources, local communities extended protection and hospitality, while popular sympathy for the revolt ran deep among Jordanians and within the court of Emir Abdullah.

Alliance, Secrecy, and Emir Abdullah's Reliance on Haditha

Bound by British oversight yet committed to Arab unity, Emir Abdullah pursued a careful strategy of covert support for the Syrian revolutionaries. He offered refuge to political leaders, facilitated contacts with Syrian nationalist networks, and relied heavily on trusted tribal allies, to operationalise this support without provoking direct British retaliation.

Haditha was the backbone of this clandestine effort. Through his authority among the Khirshan and the wider Bani Sakhr, he organised the transport of money, food, arms, and ammunition from Amman to Al-Muwaqqar, and onward across the desert to Azraq and Jabal Al-Druze. He supplemented these efforts from his own resources and transformed his encampments into zones of sanctuary governed by the Bedouin code of protection (*dakhalah*).

Haditha shielded those who sought refuge and when British officers Peake, Kirkbride, and Stafford arrived at Al-Muwaqqar with Arab Legion troops demanding the surrender of wanted Syrians who had come to Haditha. The sheikh received the officers as guests as custom required, serving them lunch before declaring that his tents were open to all for three days before being asked their purpose, and that a man who had sought *dakhalah* (protection) could never be handed over. Surrounded by hundreds of Khirshan tribesmen, he made clear his readiness to defend his guests

with his life, forcing the British to withdraw empty-handed. Such defiance demonstrated both Haditha's personal honour and Emir Abdullah's reliance on him to shoulder the burden of protecting the revolution's supporters while shielding the Emir from direct confrontation.

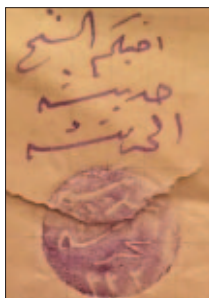
Under Haditha's protection, prominent Syrian figures—including Fawzi Al-Qawuqji, Abdulrahman Al-Shahbandar, and Nasib Al-Bakri—found refuge in Trans-Jordan. Sheikh Haditha provided the revolutionaries with shelter in his village of Al-Muwaqqar, and supplied them with horses, guides, and food. Haditha would often use the Umayyad palace, Qasr Al-Kharanah, near Al-Muwaqqar to shelter Syrian revolutionaries. One foreign traveller relates that he visited the encampments of Bani Sakhr at Sheikh Haditha's home, and that later that night a group of revolutionaries arrived. He went with them to Qasr Al-Kharanah, where



Sheikh Ali Haditha Al-Khbraisha with guests and one of his falcons

they spent the night, and in the morning they were supplied, by Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, with weapons and ammunition.

Indeed, Sheikh Haditha took the extraordinary step of risking his son's life several times, dispatching him, together with small troops of horsemen and spare horses, to the Syrian frontier in order to help rescue Syrian nationalists. From there, he would arrange for their onward passage to Saudi Arabia. His son, Ali, Abu Feihan, endured severe hardship as he tried to evade British surveillance in Jordan and the French in Syria, who would have executed him had they caught him. Haditha also put safeguards in place once he began moving these groups. When he sent the first contingent of Syrian 'free men'—among them Shukri Al-Quwatli—he wrote to King Abdel-Aziz Aal Saud requesting a private letter confirming their safe arrival. When no reply came because Saudi intermediaries hesitated to press the King for an answer, Haditha instructed his son not to send any further Syrians until reassurances arrived regarding the safety of those already dispatched. He then wrote again, telling King Abdel-Aziz that these men were a trust in his care (*amanah*) and that he wished to send another group only after confirming that the first had reached safety. King



Sheikh Haditha's seal

Abdel-Aziz agreed that Haditha was right, and sent him a letter each time a group arrived, confirming that they had reached him securely.

Sheikh Haditha was also a lifeline to Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash and his cousins, and also Emir Adel Arslan, and Shukri Al-Quwwatli who would become Syria's first president after independence.⁸⁸ When French pressure mounted and extradition loomed, Haditha arranged escape routes through his son Ali, preserving the revolution's leadership at moments of acute danger.

Most of the refugees who entered Trans-Jordan settled there permanently, integrating into the local economy and later receiving Jordanian citizenship. At the close of 1927, Sultan Al-Atrash himself sought *dakhlah* with Emir Abdullah, requesting permission to reside in Trans-Jordan under whatever conditions the Emir might impose. The Emir allowed him to settle near Grayyat Al-Milh, in grazing lands under the authority of Sheikh Haditha—territory safely distant from French reprisals.⁸⁹ Thus, the Druze leader was placed under Haditha's protection, thereby placing the most prominent leader of the revolution within his protective orbit. Through Haditha, Emir Abdullah maintained secret contact not only with Al-Atrash but also with Abdulrahman Al-Shahbandar and Nasib Al-Bakri, ensuring that the Emir remained connected to the leadership of the Syrian national movement even while bound by British constraints. Sultan Al-Atrash, Dr Abdulrahman Al-

⁸⁸ Al-Fayez, Prof. Mufleh Al-Nimer, *The Clans of Bani Sakhr: History and Positions up until 1950* [*'Asha'ir Bani Sakhr: Tarikh wa Mawaqif Hatta Sanat 1950*], Armed Forces Printers; p. 293.

⁸⁹ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan; 1920–1929* [in Arabic], Al-Rai Press, 2000, p. 227.

Shahbandar, and Nasib Al-Bakri visited Emir Abdullah in Amman and their journey was made possible by Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, who smuggled them across the desert via Azraq and protected them until they reached the Emir.⁹⁰ The Emir could not provide substantial financial aid, but he smuggled arms and ammunition to the revolutionaries by the established route from Al-Muwaqqar to Azraq.

Tribal Mobilisation and British Anxiety

In 1926 the Syrian Revolt was woven into the fabric of Jordanian public life. During a tribal reconciliation between the Huweitat and Bani Sakhr held in the presence of Emir Abdullah, Bani Sakhr raised its voice against French atrocities, declaring, 'Honour obliges us to aid our brethren in Syria.' Their words carried the weight of a tribe whose size, cohesion, and martial tradition made it indispensable to the political balance of Trans-Jordan. It was precisely this strength that unsettled Frederick Peake Pasha, who believed that the policy that every government should pursue in the Arab East was the division of the tribes,⁹¹ because when united they were a source of trouble for Britain and made demands the British did not want to grant.⁹² Bani Sakhr's unity, magnified through the leadership of Haditha and his peers, posed a direct challenge to British colonial strategy.

In the mountains of Ajloun Peake attempted to arrest

⁹⁰ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan; 1920-1929* [in Arabic], Al-Rai Press, 2000, p. 216.

⁹¹ Khreisat, Muhammad Abdel-Qader, *Al-Urduniyyun wa al-Qadaya al-Wataniyya wa al-Qawmiyya* [Jordanians and National and Pan-Arab Causes], Ministry of Culture, Amman, 2020, p. 162.

⁹² Khreisat, Muhammad Abdel-Qader, *Al-Urduniyyun wa al-Qadaya al-Wataniyya wa al-Qawmiyya* [Jordanians and National and Pan-Arab Causes], Ministry

Ahmad Mreiwed who was accused of masterminding the attempted assassination on 23 June 1921 of General Gouraud, commander of the French forces in Syria. The General had survived, but the British High Commissioner demanded that the Government of Trans-Jordan hand over the perpetrators for trial. Demonstrations broke out in Amman and Sheikh Haditha and Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez participated in them. The British authorities accused them and the *Al-Istiqlal* Party of mobilising the Bedouins in their support.

When Brunton came to Salt in August of 1920, he found the general atmosphere there captive to rumours coming from Syria, and so asked the Governor, Mazhar Arslan, to establish a local government in order to avoid any risks because there were victories against the French forces in the Sham. On the night of 7–8 September 1920, leaflets appeared speaking out against France, and saying that prisoners had been released in Amman. Some of the Sharifs were making their moves, including Sharif Muhammad Ali Bdeiwi, who declared jihad against France, and Sharif Ali Al-Harithi, who began preparing for the arrival of Emir Abdullah.

A letter issued in Salt on 31 August 1920 made it clear that the people's paramount concern was security. Brunton made Salt's Governor, Mazhar Arslan, the sole person with access to the representative of the British government in the region. He also became aware that Sharif Ali Al-Harithi, with the support of Haditha Al-Khraisha, had succeeded in recruiting people in Amman, and that the number of volunteers had reached 50 notables, 40 of whom were under Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha. The other ten were from the Ajarmah under Sheikh Sayel Al-Shahwan. Sharif

Ali Al-Harithi's mission was to mobilise people against France before Emir Abdullah bin Al-Hussein came to Jordan in November 1920.⁹³



Ahmad Mreiwed

The positions of Jordanians towards Emir Abdullah's campaign to restore Arab rule in greater Syria varied between supportive and reluctant. Some leaders in Trans-Jordan rushed to receive Emir Abdullah in Ma'an and declare their welcome and support for the Emir and joined the volunteers for the jihad in Syria against the French. Sheikh Haditha and 40 of his men from the Bani Sakhr tribe volunteered for that jihad. He and Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez and a thousand horsemen from Bani Sakhr and Balqa tribes welcomed Emir Abdullah in Al-Jiza Station. The Emir spent the night with them there and then travelled to Amman.

⁹³ *Al-Ghad* Newspaper, 1st February, 2008; p. 8.

Trans-Jordan as a Haven for Syrian Nationalists

In 1926, following the French suppression of the Great Syrian Revolt, Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash, the Commander-in-Chief of the uprising, sought refuge in Trans-Jordan together with a large number of Druze notables and revolutionary leaders. They first settled in Azraq, then moved to Al-Omari, followed by where Haditha Al-Khraisha was in Wadi Al-Sirhan, and finally took residence in Kerak, where they remained with their families until 1937, when Syria obtained self-government and the mujahidin returned. Mithqal Al-Fayez and Haditha Al-Khraisha confided to the Syrian nationalist Dr. Abd Al-Rahman Al-Shahbandar that the tribes did not raid that year lest they accidentally harm the revolutionaries.⁹⁴ In his autobiography, Dr Abdel-Rahman Al-Shahbandar wrote:

One of the painful incidents that happened during this journey in 1926 was that Mijhem Al-Sha'laan who was one of those who profess religiosity in the Wahhabi manner, attacked Al-Azraq in an area known as Al-Buqei'awiyah on the morning I departed for Suweida. He raided around 50 homes of the Masa'eed tribe at a time when the entire country, from north to south, was looking hopefully to the arrival of the religious men to come to the aid of the mujahidin. In doing what he did, he had a negative influence on the brothers in Palestine who sought to avoid it by writing to sympathetic authorities.

What deserves recording—and shows the desert inhabitants' sympathy with the revolution, with some

⁹⁴ Al-Shahbandar, Abd Al-Rahman, *Muthakirath Al-Daktor 'Abd Al-Rahman Al-Shahbandar*, Beirut, Dar Al-Irhad, 1968.

rare exceptions—is what Haditha Al-Khraisha, Sheikh of the Khirshan, and Mithqal Pasha Al-Fayez, Sheikh of Al-Fayez, both sheikhs of Bani Sakhr, told me: that raids that year were very rare compared with previous years, because the Bedouins had prohibited upon themselves raiding this area, fearing that they might clash with the mujahidin there or strip them of their herds ...

What will you say to the generations to come if you left your houses, palaces, homes, and took refuge in the camel-hair tents—single-poled, their cloth torn and patched—without acquiring from this Bedouin ethos the time-honoured Bedouin virtues of courage, truthfulness, integrity, and proud self-respect?⁹⁵

Emir Abdullah, together with the people of Trans-Jordan, provided these freedom fighters, who numbered no less than 500, with every means of comfort they were able to provide. The Emir even appointed Zeid Al-Atrash, Sultan Pasha's brother, as his honorary aide-de-camp.

Sheikh Haditha, and other leaders of Trans-Jordan, supported the Syrian revolutionaries who were members of the Arab Independence Party. The Jordanian leaders who supported the Syrian revolution faced a lot of harassment, but they did not abandon the revolutionaries. On 3 April 1927, the government declared martial law in the Azraq area and ordered that it be used as a refuge for the women and children of non-combatants. Although the inhabitants sympathised with the revolt and its leaders, the British in-

⁹⁵ Thubyan, Muhammad Taysir, *Mukhtarat min A'malihi Al-Matbu'a wa Al-Mukhtara* [Selections from His Printed Works], ed. Osama Yusuf Shihab, p. 387.

sisted upon the neutrality⁹⁶ of the area during the conflict. Consequently, the Jordanian military force stationed at Azraq was replaced by a British unit to ensure the complete enforcement of the principle of neutrality.

Sheikh Haditha and the Second Golan Revolt (1926)

Throughout the Syrian struggle Sheikh Haditha provided sustained material and moral support to the mujahidin, but in 1926 his role assumed a distinctly military character. That year, he personally equipped more than fifty fighters with arms, ammunition, horses, and provisions, dispatching them as the vanguard of the Second Golan Revolt under the leadership of Ahmad Mreiwed. Men from Bani Sakhr joined the fighting, including Haditha's⁹⁷ own brother, and other close companions such as Bashir, who mounted a machine gun on a rooftop and fought until he was martyred.

Following the return of Subhi Al-Omari from Syria, Mreiwed and his comrades—many of whom had taken refuge in Iraq in 1924—resolved to return to the heart of the struggle in order to revive a revolution weakened by sustained French repression. On 15 April 1926 they set out, first securing permission from King Faisal, and reached Jabal Al-Arab in April after crossing the Iraqi desert. Their route passed through Trans-Jordan, where they met with national and tribal leaders, among them Sheikh Haditha who supplied them with men, weapons, and the necessities of the journey, once again transforming Trans-Jordan into a corridor of resistance.

⁹⁶ Musa, Suleiman, Al-Madi, Munib, *Tarikh Al-Urdon fil Qarn Al-'Ishrin* (1900–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, p. 316. ⁹⁷ *Sheehan* Newspaper, 9th March, 2003.

Battles and Resistance in Jabal Al-Druze (1925–1926)

The revival of armed resistance in the Golan and the Ghouta was one of the direct consequences of the networks of support sustained through Trans-Jordan. Fighters displaced by French reprisals in Qal‘at Jandal and Majdal Shams—villages that suffered devastating losses and mass civilian casualties—gathered around Ahmad Mreiwed and other commanders, determined to return to battle. These men formed the nucleus of the force that would launch the Second Golan Revolt, whose early mobilisation owed much to the arms, men, and routes secured through Sheikh Haditha.

As the struggle expanded, Mreiwed moved between Jabal Al-Arab, Damascus, and the Ghouta, coordinating clandestinely with national leaders across political lines. The scale of this mobilisation, culminating in the formation of a revolutionary force nearly one thousand strong,⁹⁸ drew the attention of the High Commissioner. In response, sweeping measures were imposed along the Trans-Jordanian frontier: fighters were disarmed and expelled, refugees were restricted to designated zones such as Azraq, and British officers—most notably Frederick Peake—moved aggressively to sever the very networks of sanctuary and supply that Haditha and his allies had established. These measures underscore the extent to which Trans-Jordan, and Haditha’s role within it, had become integral to the continuation of the Syrian Revolt: in the battles of Jabal Al-Arab against the French, in the Golan, and in mobilising great numbers from Trans-Jordan, especially from the Khirshan and the wider Bani Sakhr, along with fellow Jordanians. Around

⁹⁸ Obeidat, Mahmoud; *Al-Dawr Al-Urduni fi Al-Nidal Al-Suri (1908–1946): Al-Nidal Al-Mushtarak*, Al-Ahliyyah Publishing, 1997, p. 496.

Haditha, dozens of heroes from Jordan, Houran, and Jabal Al-Arab carried their weapons and earned the honour of being counted among the revolution.⁹⁹

Haditha's Role in Anti-French Demonstrations in Amman

From June–September 1921, Trans-Jordan became a staging ground for anti-French activity in Syria. A cell of Independence Party activists operating out of Ajloun set out on 13 June 1921 and ambushed High Commissioner Gouraud near Quneitra, wounding him and the Governor of Damascus and killing a French lieutenant. Paris lodged a sharp protest with High Commissioner Herbert Samuel, accusing the Amman authorities of complicity and pressing for arrests.

Under British pressure, warrants were issued for several figures, among them Ahmad Mreiwed and Ali Khulqi Al-Sharayri who later claimed he had planned and armed the operation. Prime Minister Rashid Tlei‘, who was of Lebanese Druze origin, refused to surrender the fugitives sheltering in Sama Al-Rousan with Suleiman Pasha Al-Soudi, who was of the Al-Rousan tribe, and resigned when the stand-off embarrassed the government. His successor as head of the Council of Advisers, Mazhar Arslan who was of Lebanese Druze origin, rejected the British demand on principle, arguing that political offences were not cause for extradition, and that some named suspects had alibis.

Peake Pasha nonetheless moved troops to seize Ahmad Mreiwed and his companions in the hills of Ajloun. News of the impending arrests triggered a mass mobilisation in Amman led by Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, Sa‘eed Kheir,

⁹⁹ Obeidat, Mahmoud; *Al-Dawr Al-Urduni fi Al-Nidal Al-Suri (1908–1946): Al-Nidal Al-Mushtarak*, Al-Ahliyyah Publishing, 1997, p. 499

and Mithqal Al-Fayez. Haditha stood at the head of the Amman demonstrations, deterring a forcible round-up of Syrian revolutionaries and local sympathisers. The gendarmerie under Muhammad Ali Al-Ajlouni blocked Peake's men, and a clash between civil officials and Peake's troops seemed imminent until Emir Abdullah intervened and refused to hand the men to the French. London maintained its stance that the men had to be handed over, since failing to do so would constitute a breach of the Emir's agreement with Churchill, especially regarding the effort to persuade France to grant Syria independence. It would also obstruct the Emir's journey to London to conduct negotiations there. In the end, it was decided that the governments of Palestine and Trans-Jordan would appoint one delegate each to discuss the matter and reach a decision. They concluded that the act was political, not criminal, and that Amman had no legal duty to extradite beyond any diplomatic courtesy.

Despite British pressure, Jordanian sympathy with the Syrian revolt deepened. Amman, Kerak, Irbid, Al-Salt, Al-Muwaqqar, and Al-Azraq (among other localities) sheltered rebels; some cells operated as far as Wadi Musa, and Jordanian scouts carried messages between the freedom fighters.¹⁰⁰ By rallying the gendarmerie and townspeople and backing the principle that political offences should not trigger extradition, Haditha defended the long-standing regional ethic of asylum.

Bani Sakhr's Stand Against France

Throughout the decade-long struggle against French rule, Sheikh Haditha stood as one of the revolution's most reli-

¹⁰⁰ Khreisat, Muhammad Abd Al-Qadir. Jordanians and the National and Pan-Arab Causes [*Al-Urduniyyun wa-l-Qadaya al-Wataniyya wa-l-Qawmiyya*]. Jordanian Ministry of Culture, Amman, 2020, p. 160.

able pillars. He linked tribe to state, sanctuary to strategy, and Bedouin honour to Arab nationalism. Through him, Bani Sakhr became not merely sympathisers but active participants in the Syrian struggle. Emir Abdullah, constrained yet committed, relied on Haditha as shield, intermediary, and executor of decisions. Despite the harassment Jordanians were subjected to for their solidarity with the Syrian revolution, their commitment never wavered. The Bani Sakhr tribe as a whole transformed its tents and encampments into a refuge for the Syrian cause.

The French recognised the disruptive potential of Bani Sakhr. Their forces repeatedly violated the Jordanian frontier in pursuit of revolutionaries, clashing most often with the Ka‘abnah section of the tribe, which Haditha headed, in the area of Al-Fudayn (today Mafraq), near Sama Al-Sarhan in northern Jordan.^{101/102} The Ka‘abnah—especially the Jbour—were geographically positioned to aid the Syrian revolutionaries, often crossing into Syria to join their struggle. To neutralise them, the French deployed a substantial column of cavalry and cars armed with machine guns, reinforced by fighters from the Sardiyya tribe and Ahl Al-Jabal long hostile to Bani Sakhr.

When news of this advance reached the Ka‘abnah encampments, the men of Bani Sakhr swiftly evacuated their families and herds to safety, then prepared for battle among the ruins of Khirbat Sama. It was in such moments that the tribe’s collective discipline and defensive ethos became manifest: they would not allow foreign soldiers to trample their territory or dishonour their land and their families.

¹⁰¹ *Muqaddima li-Dirasat al-‘Ashair al-Urdunniyya* [Introduction to the Study of Jordanian Tribes], p. 751.

¹⁰² *Filastin* [Palestine] Newspaper, No. 982, 24 May, 1927.

In this volatile atmosphere, Muhammad Al-Sakran of the Jbour fell into French hands. Deceived by their assurances that they came only as guests, he returned to his people urging them to extend hospitality. Trusting his word, the Ka'abnah emerged from their positions, only to be met with a devastating volley of French machine-gun fire. Many fell, yet the warriors of Bani Sakhr refused to yield. From dawn until sunset they resisted with ferocity, defending family and land. By nightfall, they had forced the French to retreat, inflicting heavy casualties.

The names of those who fought that day became part of the tribe's collective memory. Salim Al-Nimli Al-Dhaam, immortalised in Bedouin verse, was praised in lines that capture both his courage and Bani Sakhr's defence:

سالم النملي يا النجاب
من فوق الحمرا المذواب
للروح القشرا جالاب
يا طير ابثر بالعلف

*Salim Al-Nimli, O noble one,
riding the red steed aflame,*

*To the soul of the foe he is death,
like the bird feeding upon the grain.*

Nor did he stand alone. Akli Al-Shushari, Nmour Al-Uwayn of Al-Dhaam, Muhammad Al-Sakran, Nsayyer ibn Aqil of Al-Freij, Ibn Taybuq of Al-Qudah, and Makazi Al-Juraybee' of Al-Khadeir all distinguished themselves in the encounter which was immortalised in verse:

واني بالصايح يصيح
يصيح براس النبيّة
يصيح ويقرط بشروشه
تقول ملابطته جنبه

أهل العرفا يا عزي
 جتتا فرنسا تكزي
 يا الربع أعطوهم الضدي
 أصفر الملح يقدي
 قميص وراه استاره
 ردوا عيال الدهامي
 وصاروا لفرنسا اخزامي
 يوم المنأيا حضاره
 وردوا عيال الفريجي
 بنهار اينشف الريقي
 يوم المكابين سعاره
 راعي العليا ما ذلي
 بيده صواري عصملي
 يلكد عالجيش ولا يذلي
 ومكازي يذن بالغاره

*I ride with the crier — hear him cry,
 From Nabiiyah hear his battle-cry.*

*O keepers of custom, kin and blood,
 France has come in war-mad flood.*

*O brothers, answer — fire for fire,
 Yellow powder feeds the pyre.*

*Shirt on his chest, cloak on his back,
 Dhaam's sons were beaten back.*

*They bound up France with iron chain,
 A day when death stood clear and plain.*

*Freij's sons were turned aside,
 Mouths ran dry on that hard tide.*

*Machines screamed hot, the barrels flared,
 The Protector of Alia was not battle-scared.*

*He strikes the ranks, he will not kneel,
 His rifle calls — the raid is real.*

In this way, Bani Sakhr, through both word and deed, defended the Syrian Revolt and Trans-Jordan itself. Their support for the revolutionaries, their defiance of both the French and the British, and their willingness to suffer losses in defence of their honour and allies positioned them as a decisive force in the nationalist struggle of the 1920s.

After this battle, the Jordanian People's Party (*Hizb Al-Sha'b Al-Urduni*) issued a statement on 23 May 1927 condemning the violation of Jordanian territory by French forces. Copies of the communiqué were sent to the British High Commissioner in Jerusalem and the British Resident in Trans-Jordan. As reported in *Filastin* newspaper (no. 982, 24 May 1927, p. 1), it declared:

The policy pursued by France against our brethren, the inhabitants of northern Syria, has stirred within us the revolt of proud souls that will not accept humiliation nor endure oppression ... The French army's abandonment of reason, and its violation of our country on three occasions, demonstrates before the entire world the legitimacy of the Syrian nation's revolt and its stand against a tyrannical state devoid of human feeling ... The aggression of the French armies against the Bani Sakhr tribe on their own land, and their killing of women and children, has shaken the country from end to end, and has set it on edge, preparing it for action that may exact from France a costly price—one that will bring discomfort even to her friend, Britain ... Since it is France that has broken the sanctity of neutrality and assaulted the people of this land who expect nothing but to be treated in kind, we now submit this protest and await outcomes.



Sheikh Haditha, his son Ali, and his grandson Feihan

In word and deed, Haditha helped sustain the Syrian Revolution until its ultimate success: Syrian independence. His role exemplifies how tribal leadership, when aligned with national purpose, can decisively shape the political fate of the region.

CHAPTER EIGHT

OPPOSING THE FRAGMENTATION OF TRANS-JORDAN

The Local Government of Salt (1920–1921)

In *Jordan: History and Civilisation*, Ahmad Muhammad Khalaf Al-Momani writes:

In the late Ottoman period, Balqa was governed on a tribal basis. Nawfal Al-Ajrani migrated from Al-‘Ula in the Hijaz, settled in the Balqa, and his descendants ruled for a time until the tribe of Al-Mahdawiyya emerged around 1640. Thereafter came the Al-Adwan, who shared power in Balqa with the Mahdawiyya. From Al-‘Ula in the Hijaz also came the Bani Sakhr,¹⁰³ which overcame the Sardiyya and the Sirhan in Houran and wrested supremacy from them in

¹⁰³ Bani Sakhr are originally from Al-‘Ula in modern-day Saudi Arabia, 300 km from Al-Madina Al-Munawwara. The Khirshan were based there at some point in history and they were known as *Ahl al-bayt al-kabir* and had a home known as Bayt Al-Khraisha (The House of Al-Khraisha) in Al-‘Ula. It was knocked down in 780 AH and Masjid Al-Sakhra was built over it. A poet said:

حنا صخور ومنازلنا العلا
وبيوتنا ما ترضى نزل الطماني
وحنا على كل البوادي بنا نوف
نقلط وما يقلط علينا الساني
وحنا نعجب اللا صرنا معازيب
وضيوف ويا عز منهو لا يذب ذرانا
وحنا هل العليا أبو اريد وسيوف
نحمي دخيلنا ومنهو لا يذ بحمانا
ونطلع مناسف بها الرز مردوف
وما يشبع العايم سوى من قرانا

*We are Skhour; our dwellings are Al-‘Ula, high and strong;
Our houses will not host the base who do us wrong.*

1730. Disputes then broke out between the Adwan and Bani Sakhr for control of the Balqa, culminating in the Battle of Lubb in Houran. Bani Sakhr subsequently overcame the Adwan and other tribes such as those of Jabal Ajloun who aided them—among them Al-Momani and Al-Qudah—driving them to take refuge in Ajloun. During this time the Abbad appeared and took control of Salt and a large part of Al-Balqa, which prompted the Adwan to ally with Bani Hasan and the people of Salt; they raided the Abbad and forced them to flee to Bisan. The Adwan regained their ascendancy in 1882, and the Balqa remained in a state of continual inter-tribal contest.

The Adwan opposed the reorganisation of the Balqa, and the Ottoman government developed a policy of pitting tribes against one another to control matters—the Adwan against Bani Sakhr, for example. This policy led to ruining routes and to the decline of agriculture and trade, as the *fellahin* (farmers) confined themselves to their own needs without regard for the needs of other districts.¹⁰⁴

Across all deserts, our name is raised in every tongue;

We set the feast for all who come — in hosting, we are second to none.

We shine the most when we become hosts, where guests belong;

And honour and guard whoever seeks our throng.

We are the people of Al-Alia: will and swords laid bare;

We shield our refuge-seeker—none may harm him in our care.

We bring out mansaf-trays with rice heaped high in generous store;

No hungry man goes away unfilled at our door.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Momani, Ahmad Muhammad Khalaf, *Al-Urdun, Tarikh wa-Hadara: Dirasat fi Al-Tarikh Al-Siyasi wa Al-Askari* [Jordan: History and Civilisation: Studies in Political and Military History]. Amman: Ammon for Studies and Publishing, 2003, p. 44-5.

In June 1920 the British government appointed Sir Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner in Palestine. Samuel telegraphed the Foreign Secretary that British policy envisaged Trans-Jordan as independent, provided it remained as closely linked as possible with Palestine. Yet he advanced another view in private: he wrote to the Home Secretary and to Prime Minister Lloyd George seeking authority to occupy Trans-Jordan and annex it to Palestine under British administration and control, thereby binding it to the 1917 Balfour Declaration. The British Foreign Secretary rejected this proposal and instead called for a local administration under several British political agents. When Samuel could not constitute a single administration, he encouraged the creation of separate local administrations—‘local governments’.

From September 1920 to April 1921, Trans-Jordan experienced a period of local governments. Several were formed, including:

1. **The Government of Ajloun**, headquartered in Irbid and headed by the *qa'im maqam* Ali Pasha Khulqi Al-Sharayri; with several sub-districts around Irbid declaring local administrations:

Al-Koura under Sheikh Kleib Al-Shraideh.

Ajloun under Sheikh Rashid Al-Khuza'i Al-Freihat.

Jerash under Abdel-Aziz Al-Kayed Al-Utoun and his brother Ali Al-Kayed.

Al-Wasatiyya under Naji Al-Azzam of the Shararat.

Al-Ramtha under Fawaz Al-Barakat Al-Zou'bi.

2. **The Government of Salt**, based in the town of Salt and headed by the *mutasarrif* Mazhar Arslan.

3. The Government of Kerak, based in Kerak and headed by Sheikh Rfeifan Al-Majali.

These governments did not possess sufficient power or military means to enforce their authority, and all of them collapsed following the formation of the national government in Trans-Jordan on 11 April 1921.¹⁰⁵

Through this fragmentation in Trans-Jordan and other areas, Britain aimed to prevent cohesion and to block the emergence of any organised Arab force capable of resuming the struggle for unity and resisting colonial ambitions and Zionist designs. The people of Trans-Jordan, however, were politically astute and were aware of British and French imperial aims, as well as those of the Zionist project and its designs upon Jordan.

On 18 August 1920 King Faisal left Haifa for Europe. Before departing, he wrote to his father, His Majesty King Hussein in the Hijaz, to say that he would now work in the political arena and that the journey would serve the Arab cause, which needed an advocate before international forums.

He added that he had asked Sharif Muhammad Ali Al-Bedeiwi to go to Amman so that it might become a centre of Arab resistance and a gathering point for the national movement in Bilad Al-Sham.

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha's Role

Sheikh Haditha stood at the forefront of the response to imperial aims. As the head of the Ka'abnah branch of Bani

¹⁰⁵ Al-Bawa'neh, Luay, and Al-Armouti, Omar. *Mahattat Hamma min Tarikh Al-Urdun [Important Stations in the History of Jordan: From the Era of King Meshah of Moab to the Reign of King Abdullah II]*. Amman: Al-Fanar Printing Press, 2007, p. 95-6.

Sakhr and a member of the Independence Party, he rejected not only the Government of Salt but all of the weak administrations in Trans-Jordan, recognising that they would foster fragmentation rather than unity. He moved decisively, mobilising tribal authority and nationalist networks to obstruct their consolidation and to keep Amman aligned with the wider Arab cause.

Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner in Palestine, dispatched a small group of British representatives to different districts in Trans-Jordan. He appointed Major Fitzroy Somerset to Irbid and Ajloun, Major Camp to Salt, Captain Brunton to Amman, and Captain Alec S. Kirkbride to Kerak. These officers all had equal status and were tasked with advising on self-government. They had limited funds and no military support.

As for Major Camp, he relied on Mazhar Arslan, the *mutasarraf* of Salt, who formed the Local Government of Salt. He also set up an elected council representing Amman, Salt, Madaba, the Adwan tribe and the Circassians. The sheikhs and notables who did not attend the Salt Conference were those of Bani Sakhr, Al-Hadid, Al-Ajarmah, Abbad, Al-Lawziyyin, the Syrian merchants in Amman, and members of the Independence Party. They refused to cooperate with Major Camp, Mazhar Arslan or the Local Government of Salt, which rendered that government impotent.

The sheikhs and notables who opposed the Local Government of Salt were Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha; Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez; Sa'eed Kheir, Mayor of Amman; and Sheikh Auda Abu Tayeh, the famed Arab revolutionary and leader of the Huweitat tribe. They sent an appeal to King Hussein bin Ali to appoint one of his sons, the

princes, to lead them against the French. Captain Brunton, who visited Amman in early September, reported: 'Amman will in the future be the most important centre in Trans-Jordania.'^{106/107}

A study of these local governments over their seven months of shadowy, nominal rule shows that they failed to reform a political structure centuries old. Even the borders between them reproduced Ammon, Moab and Edom, together with three of the Decapolis cities, with slight adjustments between settled and nomadic areas, and complete neglect of the Bedouins—something which revived earlier tribal disputes. The bonds of tribe and clan reawakened and the politics of armed tribal forces grew fierce and threatening. No effective power existed to enforce the law within the territories of the local governments, nor was there any authority with sufficient force to check the larger tribes as they sought to extend their influence. The Huweitat dominated the south; the Hilalat and the Humaidat controlled Tafilah; Al-Majali enjoyed their traditional status in Kerak; Bani Sakhr controlled Balqa (except for Salt and its environs); the Adwan wielded great influence in the southern Jordan Valley; and in the north each local government became a kind of tribal coalition, with no single tribe exercising complete control over the others.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Rogan, Eugene L. *The Making of a Capital: Amman, 1918–1928*. [In *Amman: Ville et société*], edited by Jean Hannoyer and Seteney Shami. Beirut: Presses de l'Ifpo, 1996, p. 89.

¹⁰⁷ PP, Brunton File, Letter to Deedes from Al-Salt dated 3 September 1920. (See also: <https://books.openedition.org/ifpo/8228?lang=en>).

¹⁰⁸ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920–1929* [in Arabic], Al-Rai Press, 2000, p. 40-1.



Sheikh Auda Abu Tayeh and his son Muhammad, the youngest participant in the Great Arab Revolt

Sheikh Haditha and his fellow Bani Sakhr tribesmen—foremost among them Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez—and the Huweitat, under Sheikh Auda Abu Tayeh, took an honourable and principled stand for Arab unity and foiled British attempts to fragment Trans-Jordan. Sheikh Haditha and other notables declined to cooperate with the Salt government which hastened its eclipse and helped Amman to emerge as the political centre. The Salt-based arrangement endured only from about August 1920 to March/April 1921, when it gave way to Hashemite administration under Emir Abdullah. In any case, Amman's proximity to the Hejaz Railway, and its emergence as the headquarters and base of political action for the Independence Party, gave it a significance surpassing that of Salt.

With the establishment of the Jordanian Emirate in 1921, the era of those frail local governments came to an end. Their ulterior motive had sought to tear Trans-Jordan

into enfeebled statelets; each set against the other and thus vulnerable to absorption by Zionist designs and aims and subordinating the country to the Balfour Declaration and to the projects of the nation's enemies, in the spirit of Sykes-Picot.



Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisah

CHAPTER NINE

HADITHA AS MEDIATOR

The formative years of the Emirate of Trans-Jordan were marked by repeated crises that tested the fragile relationship between tribal authority and central government. In these moments of confrontation—whether in Sahab, Koura, or Balqa—Sheikh Haditha emerged not merely as a tribal notable, but as a mediator, protector, and political stabiliser whose actions helped shape the trajectory of the new state

Sheikh Haditha Averts Bloodshed in Sahab

(7 October 1920)

In 1920 Captain C. Dunbar Brunton observed that Sharif Muhammad Al-Bedeiwi, the mayor of Amman Sa'eed Kheir, and members of the Independence Party were engaged in political agitation against the French as Hashemite Sharifian proclamations and slogans calling for jihad were raised in Amman and Salt.¹⁰⁹ In early September he surveyed conditions east of the Jordan and concluded that the local gendarmerie was too disorganised to keep order and maintain public security amid mounting nationalist agitation in Amman and Salt and to confront powerful tribes, and specifically the Bani Sakhr. He drafted a plan for 'a Reserve Force which would be kept ready as a small striking force to reinforce the ordinary gendarmerie when nec-

¹⁰⁹ Al-Bawa'neh, Luay, and Al-Armouti, Omar. *Mabattat Hamma min Tarikh Al-Urdun [Important Stations in the History of Jordan: From the Era of King Mesha of Moab to the Reign of King Abdullah II]*. Amman: Al-Fanar Printing Press, 2007, p. 96.

essary,' with Amman as headquarters.¹¹⁰ And indeed he built a 'Reserve Force' from ex-Ottoman soldiers and Circassians—a unit that later formed the nucleus of the Arab Legion. Its first real test came with an incident in Sahab, a village 10 miles south-east of Amman where villagers constantly defied government orders, defied taxation, expelled collectors, and vandalised telegraph poles. Although the reserve was not yet prepared for action, Brunton wanted to use it to set an example to the rest of the region.¹¹¹ On 7 October 1920 the Salt government headed by Mazhar Arslan sent a company of 70 gendarmes with two machine-guns to Sahab. An initial attempt to subdue Sahab, under Brunton's deputy, 'Aref Al-Hasan, failed and suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the people of Sahab who ambushed them and took almost half the force as hostages. The next day Brunton returned with reinforcements and issued an ultimatum. Both he and his deputy said they would attack the village if their terms were not met. 'Aref Al-Hasan even told the sheikhs that he had asked for aerial support. According to Uriel Dann, a brief battle took place following which Sahab surrendered. And according to the testimony of those who witnessed the Sahab events, the attack lasted only one day, starting at noon and ending the same time the next day. Brunton's report at the time says the surrender resulted not from combat but from mediation

¹¹⁰ Dann, Uriel, 'The Beginnings of the Arab Legion,' in *Studies in the History of Transjordan, 1920–1949: The Making of a State* (London: Routledge, 1984), online at: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/mono/10.4324/9780429307812-2/beginnings-arab-legion-Uriel-dann><https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/mono/10.4324/9780429307812-2/beginnings-arab-legion-Uriel-dann>

¹¹¹ Alon, Yoav, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*, I.B. Taurus, 2007, p. 31.

by Sheikh Haditha and Sheikh Minwer bin Hadid¹¹² between the people of Sahab and the Salt government and the British. In his account of the events Brunton said that Sheikh ‘Haditha in particular, deserves the greatest credit for the way in which he acted as intermediary.’ And described him as ‘sensible and reliable ... is not wealthy but never begs like others and is generous to a degree. His manners are quiet and he has a great personal charm. One might term him the only real gentleman among the sheikhs of this region.’¹¹³ In *The Making of Jordan*, Yoav Alon writes: ‘Haditha clearly embodied the stereotypical Bedouin Gentleman so admired by the British. It is worth noting that Britons serving in Trans-Jordan in later years often remarked on his virtues.’¹¹⁴ Brunton reported that Sheikh Haditha even provisioned the troops on the night they camped near Sahab.

Sheikh Haditha, along with Sheikh Minwer Al-Hadid, opened a channel of mediation between the government force and the villagers, steering both sides away from escalation and towards terms. The outcome was that the live standoff came to an end and Haditha used his diplomacy and his standing within Bani Sakhr and nationalist circles to defuse a crisis, protect civilians, spare bloodshed and limit the reach of an aggressive colonial experiment. The people of Amman also sympathised with Sahab; although they offered no direct assistance, they refused to sell ammunition to the army, even at premium prices. Brunton

¹¹² *Ibid.* p. 32.

¹¹³ Brunton, Political Report, 9 October 1920, Brunton Papers; Middle East Centre, St Antony’s College, Oxford.

¹¹⁴ Alon, Yoav, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*, I.B. Taurus, 2007, p. 32.

noted, with evident frustration, that Arabs and Circassians adopted a united position on the affair, and several other towns took a similar line.

Sheikh Haditha Mediates Between the Bedouins and the *Fellahin* (1918–1920)

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha emerged as a decisive figure in the clashes between the Bedouin tribes and the *fellahin* of northern Trans-Jordan. He stood at the head of Bani Sakhr when violence escalated, and was the tribe's representative in the reconciliations that ended what came to be known as '*Harabat Al-Arab*'. In a dispute that repeatedly threatened to widen into a multi-tribal confrontation, his authority mattered because it could either prolong retaliation or make settlement possible.

The wider cycle of violence began in 1918 after the Ottoman army withdrew from the region and left behind large quantities of weapons. Local people collected these arms and concealed them, and as attacks on civilians and crops increased, around four hundred sheikhs from Hawran, Al-Ramtha, Al-Tura, Al-Shajara, Hawwara, and Al-Yaduda gathered to demand that such violations be brought to an end. A meeting was held in Al-Yaduda under the chairmanship of Sheikh Fawaz Barakat Al-Zou'bi. While they were still assembled, a man from Al-Sirhan drove his camels into a cultivated field belonging to a man from Tafas in Hawran and made them graze there. The field's owner shot the herder dead and drove the camels out, and the incident ignited a cycle of raids, counter-raids, and vengeance. In one of the subsequent encounters, Sheikh Odtallah Al-Khaza'li was killed, and his death further inflamed resentments. Several battles followed. In the Battle of Al-Shalala, casualties were

heavy: nine men from Al-Ramtha were killed while the Bedouin dead numbered thirteen.

The conflict reached a dangerous turning point with the killing of Sheikh Salih Al-Salih Al-Khraisha in Irbid's livestock market on Thursday 13 March 1919. He was killed by Hussein Abu Hammad, Fayyad Odtallah Al-Khaza'li, and Deifallah Al-Yasin Al-Khaza'li, all identified as being from Al-Ramtha. Security authorities arrested a number of those present in the market and news of the killing spread rapidly. The shock was felt among Bedouin and *fellahin* communities alike because, in Bani Sakhr's *'urf*, Sheikh Salih was a Sheikh and thus must not be harmed, whatever he may do. His death intensified demands for vengeance and raised fears that the feud would expand into a broader war drawing in Bani Hasan, Al-Sardiyyah, Al-Sirhan, and others.

It was at this stage that Sheikh Haditha's leadership became central. His position made him one of the few figures capable of restraining retaliation without appearing to concede honour. To prevent the dispute from turning into a generalised war, a written truce was then produced between the *fellahin* families and the clans of Bani Sakhr and Bani Hasan. Al-Sirhan refused to sign at first, but later accepted after King Abdullah I intervened to secure an agreement. Haditha's consent and standing gave this truce practical force, because it signalled that Bani Sakhr's leadership was prepared to move from open retaliation towards negotiated containment.

By 1920, efforts to end the bloodshed culminated in a formal reconciliation. A settlement meeting took place on Tuesday, 19 October 1920 (6 Safar, 1339 AH) at the encampments of Bani Hasan in Rahab, convened through the

mediation of Sheikh Ali Al-Kayed and with the approval of Sheikh Makazi Akho Irsheida. Bani Sakhr attended in force, including Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha and Muti' ibn Zuheir. Haditha was Bani Sakhr's principal spokesman and he demanded satisfaction for Sheikh Salih's blood and described him as 'the pillar of the sky (*'amood al-sama*)', framing the loss as one that could not be treated as ordinary. The opposing side pressed for a comprehensive settlement—'*hfaar wa dfaan*'—that closed the dispute fully and also addressed the return of money, deposits, and debts that pre-dated the fighting. Agreement was reached, reconciliation was declared in public, and the parties sealed it with handshakes.

Sheikh Haditha's role as the hinge between conflict and settlement was critical. He carried Bani Sakhr through a period of escalation in which a feud could have widened into a multi-tribal war, then represented the tribe in the negotiations that produced closure.

The Koura Revolt (1921–1922)

Sheikh Kleib Al-Shraideh Seeks Refuge with Sheikh Haditha

The events at Sahab were only the first in a series of confrontations that tested the balance between tribal authority and the nascent Emirate. In the years that followed, Haditha would again find himself at the centre of crisis—this time not suppressing unrest, but offering sanctuary and mediation during the Koura Revolt.

In September 1920 Sheikh Kleib Al-Yusuf Al-Shraideh established a local government in Deir Yusuf, at the heart of the Koura subdistrict. His authority and influence soon brought him into conflict with the emerging central govern-

ment of Emir Abdullah in Amman, particularly when the authorities decided to subordinate Koura to the governor of Irbid. Al-Shraideh refused to accept this loss of autonomy and demanded a direct relationship with the central government. When his request was denied, tensions mounted, culminating in the outbreak of what became known as the Koura Revolt (1921–22).

What began as a dispute over tax collection spiralled into open clashes between government forces and Al-Shraideh's men. Twice, Emir Abdullah attempted conciliation, issuing amnesties to restore calm, but the conflict flared again under Prime Minister Ali Rida Al-Rikabi. Determined to reassert government authority, Al-Rikabi personally oversaw military operations against Al-Koura. Bombings by the Royal Air Force (RAF) and a large-scale campaign under Peake Pasha forced Al-Koura into retreat.¹¹⁵

By mid-1922 Sheikh Kleib, his son Abdullah, and his nephew Rashid Al-Jarwan were fugitives, pursued by the Emirate's army. At this critical juncture, they sought refuge with Sheikh Haditha¹¹⁶ who was uniquely placed to protect the fugitives while also mediating with the Emir. His acceptance of Al-Shraideh's men demonstrated both his adherence to the Bedouin ethic of *dakhalah* and his political weight, for few could have sheltered such prominent rebels without risking severe government reprisal.

When Kleib and a small delegation went to present themselves to Emir Abdullah, fifty of his men remained under Haditha's protection. It was Haditha who took the

¹¹⁵ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920–1929 [in Arabic]*, Al-Rai Press, 2000, P. 91–2.

¹¹⁶ *Al-Ghad* Newspaper, 7 March, 2009, sec. 'Urduniyyat,' p. 6.

initiative to intercede with the Emir, pressing for leniency and seeking to prevent further damage. His mediation helped transform what might have become a cycle of violence into a more measured political resolution. Though Al-Koura was disarmed, fined, and subjected to administrative restructuring, Emir Abdullah ultimately declared a general amnesty in 1923, sparing Al-Shraideh and his men.¹¹⁷

The Koura Revolt underscored the fragile balance between tribal autonomy and the authority of the nascent Jordanian state. Sheikh Haditha's role in providing refuge and brokering mediation between rebels and ruler preserved lives and also reinforced his stature as someone who could act decisively in moments of national crisis to safeguard both Bedouin tradition and the stability of the emerging Emirate. As in Sahab, Haditha acted neither as a rebel nor as a mere agent of government power, but as a mediator operating within both tribal and political spheres.

The Adwan Revolt and the Balqa Alliance (1923)

The Adwan Revolt, also known as the Balqa Alliance Movement, erupted in September 1923 under the leadership of Sheikh Sultan Al-Adwan. It was rooted in fierce competition over grazing lands and water sources, particularly between Bani Sakhr and the Adwan. As Bani Sakhr encroached west of the Hijaz railway into more fertile lands, they met resistance from established landholders in the Balqa. The conflicts spread into the lands of the Ajarmah and the Adwan around Hisban and west of Amman. Sheikh Salim

¹¹⁷ Al-Bawa'neh, Luay, and Al-Armouti, Omar. *Mahattat Hamma min Tarikh Al-Urdun [Important Stations in the History of Jordan: From the Era of King Mesha of Moab to the Reign of King Abdullah II]*. Amman: Al-Fanar Printing Press, 2007, p. 104.

Al-Shahwan (Abu Sayil), remembered as *Khayyal Al-Malha* ('Horseman of Al-Malha'), became a defender of Ajarmah territory against Bani Sakhr, which further solidified the Balqa alliance's alignment with the Adwan in 1923.

The revolt unfolded against a wider regional backdrop. The militant Wahhabi Ikhwan used by Ibn Saud raided into Trans-Jordan to spread the Wahhabi doctrine, extract tribute, and undermine Hashemite authority and its tribal allies. Their cross-border forays sought to extend Nejd influence up to the Jordanian steppe. In August 1922, Wahhabi Ikhwan raiders launched their first attack on Trans-Jordan, striking at the Bani Sakhr encampments in Al-Mushatta and Al-Tunaib. Bani Sakhr repelled the raid and inflicted heavy losses, and Emir Abdullah and his government came to regard them as an indispensable bulwark against Wahhabi expansion.

In sympathy with their losses, Bani Sakhr were exempted from taxation, which provoked resentment among other tribes, particularly the Adwan and their allies. Heavy taxation across the country was already a grievance, and the movement took on the character of a 'tax revolt'. The Adwan's demands included establishing a representative council, removing foreign advisers, reserving government posts for locals, reducing salaries, cancelling sheikhs' stipends, equalising taxation, and reclaiming funds earmarked for anti-Wahhabi campaigns.

Tensions escalated when Sultan Al-Adwan marched into Amman with armed horsemen on 3 September 1923 in a show of force. Emir Abdullah met him and his son Majid, listened to their demands, and promised to visit them in Hisban—a promise that was not fulfilled. Sultan took this as an affront, and when arrests of his allies followed, he re-

solved to respond with arms. His fighters attacked gendarmerie posts in Na'our and spread unrest through Hisban, Sweileh, and along the Amman–Jerusalem road.

The decisive clash came on 16 September 1923, when government forces supported by two British armoured cars faced the rebels near Sweileh. Dozens were killed, among them prominent Ajarmah and Bani Hamida sheikhs. Sultan and his sons fled to Jabal Al-Druze, while other tribal leaders surrendered and the revolt collapsed within days. By early 1924 Sultan and his sons sought refuge with Sharif Hussein in the Hijaz, who pardoned them; Emir Abdullah soon issued a general amnesty, and reconciliation was arranged in May 1924 between the Adwan and Bani Sakhr. The settlement effectively brought the Balqa affair to an end and made plain that tribal leadership should find its outlet through state institutions and peaceful means. In the years that followed, Sheikh Majid Al-Adwan became a close friend and leading supporter of the Emir.

Sheikh Haditha's Role

Sheikh Haditha and his Bani Sakhr kin stood firmly with Emir Abdullah throughout the revolt.¹¹⁸ Alongside Mithqal Al-Fayez, Muflih Al-Qim'an Al-Zaben and others, Haditha ensured that the government had reliable tribal backing against Sultan Al-Adwan's coalition. His stance reflected two principles: loyalty to the Emirate at a moment of fragility; and a rejection of tribal civil war within Trans-Jordan.

Contemporary accounts stress that Haditha's opposition

¹¹⁸ The National Archives (UK). CO 733/49. Correspondence: Philby to Herbert Samuel, 15 September, 1923. Kew.

to the revolt was grounded not in personal rivalry but in his conviction that disputes should be resolved through dialogue, not armed rebellion against Hashemite leadership. For him, Emir Abdullah was not only the Emir of Trans-Jordan but also the potential liberator of Syria from French rule. Supporting the Emir, therefore, was both a political and nationalist commitment.

Across three crises—Sahab, Al-Koura, and Balqa—Haditha demonstrated a consistent political philosophy: loyalty to legitimate authority, rejection of intra-tribal civil war, and preference for mediation over bloodshed. In doing so, he helped transform tribal authority into a pillar of the emerging Emirate. His mediation left a powerful imprint not only in official reports but in popular memory. The poet Mufleh Abdel-Jawad Al-Tahrawi commemorated the Sahab episode in Nabati verse:

يصيح مفلح من ضمير موجع
والنار في قلبه تزيد الهابا
من خلف ذا يا ركباً فوق أشعل
مشيه هميم وزايد بهذا
خذلي سلامي لدار البكري
وهو السُكْر وهو العسل لن ذابا
تلفي حديثه شوق بيضا تنجلي
شوق الطموح اللي تجرُّ اثيابا
صبيانا بلُغُونُ ما بيهم ردي
كن ضيعوا ضن العدو بحرابا
صبيان باعت روحها للي يشري
يوم العذارى شلقن اثيابا
صارت علينا عجة ما تنجلي
غطيطة وعتام وسوق للجلابا
بيهم يقول دعنا عليهم نمعلي
وبيهم يقول أهل المحل أصحابا
هيا اركبو هن بالعجل يابو علي
وقع القدر يالله تخون اسبابا
حنا نخينا جد قيس الولي
عبد الله وسيدا لصحابا

فتح لنا من كل باب مغلق
 تفتحت دنياك كل أبو ابا
 عيّا علينا بالحدب خلفه علي
 عيّا علينا بقصرته وطنايا
 بلقاك باقت بالخريشة بيهلي
 قام يتصفق سنّها في نابا
 ولد الخريشة شبه سيف مصقلي
 كن ضيع الحساد في جوابا
 كن غاب عنا ساعة ما هي بطي
 جتنا صفرا وراكبها عقابا
 اللي رحل قولوله ينزلي
 يلعن أبو العسكر ع أبو اللي جابا
 شاهر لفانا فوق شقرا عندلي
 ذيب ولد ذيب وأساس ذيابا
 كن ذدع الحردا وقوטר ينتخي
 يلكد على متر اللوز ما يهابا
 مرجي لفانا فوق سودا واسودي
 أسود سواده مثل جناح غرابا
 واحد من الحساد ليته بيتلي
 بكبر بلوتنا أو أكبر بابا

*Mufleh cries out from a conscience torn in pain,
 and in his heart the fire flares up again.
 After all this O rider on a bright steed,
 swift in his stride, set out on this need*

*Carry my greeting to Al-Bakri's home:
 sugar in sweetness, honey when it's foam.*

*You will find Haditha: pure and unblemished,
 like a high-minded maiden who gathers up her
 hems—replenished.*

*Young men—no stain of baseness in their band—
 who smashed the foe's hard hopes with spear in
 hand.*

*Young men who sold their lives to Him who buys,
the day maidens shook garments in surprise.*

*A clamour fell on us and would not clear:
a muffled shout, a market dealing fear.*

*Among them one said, 'Let us rise and go,'
and one said, 'The townsfolk—friends we know.'*

*Mount up in haste, Abu Ali; be near;
fate has struck hard—Lord, don't let means betray
here.*

*We called upon the grandfather of Qays, the wali—
Abdullah, a Sayyid among his comrades, strong and
steady.*

*He opened for us every gate made fast;
your world threw open all its doors at last.*

*Ali's descendent would not let us fall
his ropes held firm, his camp stood as our wall.*

*On meeting you, O Al-Khraisha, pride,
my clan held firm—teeth gnashing side to side.*

*The son of Al-Khraisha: a blade refined,
leaving the jealous without a word to find.*

*If absent from us, it was but an hour;
then Haditha came on a golden horse—an eagle in
power.*

*Whoever rode away, tell him, dismount, come
down;*

*curse the troops, and him who brought them to
our town.*

*Shahir reached our camp on a pale, proud mare
a wolf, son of a wolf, wolves' root laid bare.*

*When the north wind blew and the call rang clear,
he gripped his gun; no hint of fear.*

*Marji reached our camp on a black mare too
black upon black, like raven-wing in hue.*

*Would that an envier tasted, and then knew,
a trial as great as ours or greater too.*

*You who take your plea to the ruler's ear,
you want the coins, not comrades near.*

*You who press the debt on us in time of strain,
you who demand your due without even asking
again.*

*I end my words with blessings on the Prophet, the
Chosen One from Adnan's line,
and on all his Companions, honouring them till the
end of time.*

Sheikh Haditha's Participation in the First Jordanian Economic Conference (1933)

Sheikh Haditha took part in the First Jordanian Economic Conference, a landmark gathering that reflected the growing willingness of Jordanian notables and tribal leaders to intervene collectively in questions of economic policy and rural welfare. Convened in Amman on 30 June 1933 under

the title ‘The Jordanian Economic Conference,’ the meeting was chaired by Mithqal Al-Fayez and drew around two hundred attendees. It was initiated by a broad coalition of prominent figures from across the country, including Rashid Al-Khuza‘i from Jabal Ajloun; Mahmud Al-Fneish from Irbid; Bahjat Al-Sleibi and Tawfiq Zu‘mot from Salt; Mitri Zureiqat from Kerak; Abdel-Aziz Abu Breis from Bani Hamida; and Shams Al-Din Sami representing the Circassians. Among those present were also Dleiwani Al-Majali, Khalil Al-Madanat, Majid Al-Adwan, Hamad bin Jazi, and Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, whose attendance signalled the engagement of leading tribal figures in national-level efforts to address the country’s worsening agrarian crisis.

The conference’s resolutions focused squarely on the protection of farmers—particularly those whose lands had suffered drought that year—through emergency relief and structural financial reforms. The delegates called on the government to issue a temporary law delaying personal debts owed by affected farmers; to defer state dues (*amwal amiriyyah*) without exception for those farmers; to postpone debts to the Agricultural Bank; and to exempt drought-stricken villages from the tithe tax (*‘ushr*). They further demanded that Jordanian taxpayers be released from arrears in state dues dating from 1924 to 1932. Looking beyond immediate relief, the conference urged the government to reach an agreement with the Ottoman Bank to establish an agricultural branch capable of lending to farmers with moderate interest rates and long repayment terms, citing comparable arrangements pursued by the governments of Cyprus and Syria. It also pressed for investment in agricultural education: the dispatch of students, at

government expense, to agricultural schools until domestic institutions could be established, alongside permitting and materially supporting private initiatives to open such schools in order to meet the country's need for technically trained farmers.

On 3 July 1933, the executive committee submitted these decisions to Emir Abdullah and requested that he issue his directive to implement them. Within this framework, Sheikh Haditha's presence was part of a wider pattern in which he aligned himself with national petitions and reformist initiatives aimed at safeguarding rural livelihoods—lending his social and political weight to a programme that sought both immediate debt relief and longer-term institutional solutions for Jordan's agricultural economy.

Land Borders and *Wajbat*

It is worth noting that, despite Sheikh Haditha's broad vision and sound political and social judgement, which made him a principal participant in many tribal reconciliation conferences and efforts to mend rifts, he was never reluctant to consult those close to him. He recognised that a man is limited in himself but great through his tribe. He regularly sought the counsel of senior members of his clan, the Khirshan, who offered him advice and stood as his allies, just as he, in turn, was a pillar of support for them.

Among his notable contributions was his participation, alongside other sheikhs from the Bani Sakhr, in drafting an agreement to define the internal boundaries separating the tribal territories of Bani Sakhr clans. This was done to prevent future disputes and to safeguard the rights of the various tribal segments. The agreement was formalised in

1945, a period during which land distribution had taken on a new dimension, particularly with regard to two types of land: those bordering the desert to the east of the *tabu* (title deed) lands; and the so-called *jalad* lands—commonly referred to as grazing lands or eastern territories.

The demarcation was made official in a written document dated 4 December 1945, approved by the sheikhs of Bani Sakhr and carried out under the supervision of the state. It was endorsed by both official and tribal authorities.

CHAPTER TEN

FROM TRIBE TO NATION: HADITHA AND THE FORGING OF JORDANIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY (1926–1951)

By the mid-1920s, the Emirate of Trans-Jordan had survived its formative crises. The rebellions of the early decade had been suppressed or reconciled, tribal autonomy had been partially institutionalised, and Emir Abdullah's authority had begun to stabilise. Yet the political order remained fragile. The Mandate framework limited sovereignty, economic resources were scarce, and tensions between British oversight and local aspirations persisted. In this evolving landscape, Sheikh Haditha emerged not merely as a tribal notable but as a participant in the gradual articulation of a cohesive Trans-Jordanian national identity. Between 1921 and the late 1930s, his role expanded from regional mediation to constitutional engagement, legislative participation, border diplomacy, and economic crisis management. Through these arenas, he helped shape the integration of tribal authority into the institutions of the emerging state.

Sheikh Haditha's Role in Formalising and Institutionalising Tribal Law (1921–1936)

From the founding of the Emirate in April 1921, Prince Shakir bin Zeid was the person responsible for tending to the affairs of the Bedouins. His appointment to the cabinet as 'Deputy for Tribal Affairs' (*Na'eb Al-'Asha'er*) reflected Emir Abdullah's concern for the Bedouins and the need to

establish harmony among their tribes. The British, however, were dissatisfied with the office of the Tribal Deputate (*Niyabat Al-‘Asha’er*), and in 1924 they issued an ultimatum imposing restrictions on the Emirate that included the abolition of the Deputate. The Mandatory authorities even ignored tribal custom (*‘urf*), on which tribal adjudication had rested, and ordered that the Bedouins be subject to the civil law applied in regular courts. It soon became clear this was impossible, and the first **Tribal Courts Law** was issued on 1 October 1924. This law provided for the establishment of a tribal court composed of the administrative governor and two tribal sheikhs in each district, as well as the creation in the capital of a **High Tribal Court** to review the decisions of the district courts. The High Tribal Court itself included two sheikhs steeped in Bedouin custom and the unwritten laws of Bedouin justice.¹¹⁹ Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha played a principal role in resolving disputes and tensions from inter-tribal raids, whether in Trans-Jordan or neighbouring Arab tribes beyond Jordan. Owing to this, and to his position as one of the senior sheikhs of Trans-Jordan, he was selected to serve on **The Committee to Oversee the Bedouins** (*Lajnat Al-Ishraf ‘ala Al-Badu*) chaired by Prince Shakir bin Zeid. The other members were ‘Eteiwi Al-Majali, Mithqal Al-Fayez, ‘Addoub Al-Zaben, Adib Al-Kayed, and Peake Pasha (later replaced by Glubb Pasha¹²⁰). This committee was considered the High Tribal

¹¹⁹ Musa, Suleiman, *Imarat Sharq Al-Urdun: Nash‘atuha wa Tatawuriha fi Rub‘ Qarn* [*The Emirate of Trans-Jordan: Its Emergence and Development over a Quarter of a Century*]. Amman: The Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research (Aal al-Bayt Institute), 1990, p. 320-1.

¹²⁰ Musa, Suleiman, Al-Madi, Munib, *Tarikh Al-Urdun fil Qarn Al-‘Ishrin* (1958-1959) [*Jordan’s History in the 20th Century*], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, p. 368.

Court, and was charged with investigating the raids carried out by the tribes and adjudicating disputes in accordance with tribal custom, issuing judgments grounded in Bedouin customary law rather than statutory law. Its decisions were subject to Emir Abdullah's ratification, not to the jurisdiction of the regular courts. When differences of opinion arose among the members of the committee, an extraordinary session would be convened, attended personally by Emir Abdullah, who would weigh the opposing views and determine the prevailing judgment.

More often than not, however, the Emir himself assumed the role of mediator, personally presiding over reconciliation (*sulh*) between the contending tribes and restoring harmony and concord among them. Prince Shakir was a man deeply experienced in Bedouin affairs and traditions, and he rendered an important and valuable service to the country. He presided over the committee and held this post until his death in 1934.

The damage inflicted upon the country by cycles of reciprocal raiding compelled the government to pursue a decisive and far-reaching remedy. The establishment of the Desert Patrol constituted a major institutional step towards the consolidation of security and order. Equally significant was the enlistment of the tribesmen themselves into the ranks of the army. This measure drew directly upon the Bedouins' intimate knowledge of the land, their martial traditions, and their renowned courage, and it proved instrumental in achieving the sought-after objective of stability and protection. In the following decades the government moved towards improving the conditions for Bedouins and integrating them into the country's wider social and economic life.

The Badia's problems were of two kinds: (1) external raids; and (2) internal disputes. Most external raids came from Saudi tribes in Nejd and the Hijaz. In the view of Field-Marshal Peake, Jordanian tribes always ended up at a disadvantage; when Saudi tribes suffered losses, the Jordanian government required its tribes to pay full compensation; but when Jordanian tribes suffered losses, they obtained none. Among the difficulties faced by the Trans-Jordan government was determining the jurisdictional affiliation of raiding tribes. During 1924–1926 the 'Amarat and the Fed'an mounted several raids on Jordanian Bedouin tribes—most often against Bani Sakhr, who in turn launched counter-raids against the 'Amarat and the Fed'an. The question confronting the government was whether a given tribe belonged to Syria or to Iraq, so that the responsible government could prevent further raiding and compel reconciliation with the aggrieved party.

As a senior sheikh and member of the High Tribal Court and the Committee to Oversee the Bedouins, Sheikh Haditha mediated disputes, enforced settlements within the framework of recognised Bedouin custom, and helped shift tribal relations from cycles of retaliation to state-supervised peace. In doing so, he stood at the junction between tribal law and emerging state institutions, using Bani Sakhr's influence in the service of a wider project of order, reconciliation, and integration.

Sheikh Haditha also played a prominent role as an arbiter in tribal affairs beyond Trans-Jordan, repeatedly entrusted with resolving complex internal and cross-border disputes. His standing was particularly evident in efforts to secure reconciliation between the tribes of Trans-Jordan and Palestine,¹²¹ most notably through his participation as

an official arbitrator in the 1930 **Beersheba agreement**, which established comprehensive settlements based on Bedouin custom and formally ended cycles of raiding, and in the **Dar'aa reconciliation meeting**,¹²² where he represented Bani Sakhr in securing a *hfaar wa dfaan* settlement to halt raiding and blood-feuds. His influence also extended to Trans-Jordan's relations with Iraq,¹²³ where he emerged as a key tribal figure in fostering stability along the desert frontier: he was a member of the Jordanian delegation to the 1927 Ramadi tribal conference, which achieved a sweeping *hfaar wa dfaan* settlement between the tribes of both sides. Through such mediation, Haditha contributed directly to the security conditions that enabled major strategic projects, including the Iraq–Haifa oil pipeline, and to the consolidation of enduring political and military cooperation between Trans-Jordan and Iraq during the interwar Mandate period and beyond. As a member of the Committee to Oversee the Bedouins (*Lajnat Al-Ishraf ala Al-Badu*), Sheikh Haditha also occupied a key position linking Bedouin leadership with state authority in the implementation of the Jordan–Saudi agreements into effective security along the desert frontier and stabilising it.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Al-Abbadi, Muhammad Yunis, ed. *Al-Amir Shakir bin Zeid (1885–1934): Siratahu wa Masiratuhu min Khilal Al-Watha'iq Al-Tarikhiyya* [Prince Shakir bin Zeid (1885–1934): His Life and Career through Historical Documents]. Amman: Dar Ward, 2010; p. 64–6.

¹²² Al-Fayez, Prof. Mufleh Al-Nimer, *The Clans of Bani Sakhr: History and Positions up until 1950* ['Asha'ir Bani Sakhr: Tarikh wa Mawaqif Hatta Sanat 1950], Armed Forces Printers; p. 112.

¹²³ Musa, Suleiman, *Imarat Sharq Al-Urdun: Nash'atuha wa Tatawwuruba fi Rub' Qarn* [The Emirate of Trans-Jordan: Its Emergence and Development over a Quarter of a Century]. Amman: The Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research (Aal al-Bayt Institute), 1990, p. 308–310.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 311–2.

The Law to Oversee the Bedouins (1929 and 1936)

The nomadic tribes, whose seasonal migrations, customary law, and inter-tribal raiding practices long predated the Mandate administration, posed both a challenge and an opportunity for the nascent Jordanian state. **The Law to Oversee the Bedouins (1929)**¹²⁵ emerged within this context as a legislative attempt to regulate tribal movement, adjudication, and security while preserving elements of Bedouin customary practice. By institutionalising oversight through a centrally appointed committee and linking tribal judicial mechanisms to executive authority, the law sought to integrate the desert into the administrative framework of Trans-Jordan without wholly dismantling its social foundations. In order to secure the loyalty of tribal sheikhs and ensure effective tax collection, the Jordanian government decided in 1932 that tribal sheikhs would participate in the enumeration of their tribes' livestock and would receive 15 percent of the taxes levied on camels and 32 percent of the fines imposed on stray livestock.

A new **Law to Oversee the Bedouins** was issued in 1936, restricting the designation of Bedouin tribes to Bani Sakhr, the Sirhan, Bani Khalid, Al-Huweitat, Al-Hajaya, Al-Sa'idin, Bani Atiyya, the Shararat, and Al-'Isa. In the same year, a law was promulgated establishing tribal courts and a Tribal Court of Appeal.

Constitutional Development and the Emergence of National Politics (1926–1937)

In 1926, Sheikh Haditha's son, Ali; representing his father, was one of the members of a delegation that was 'an expression of common interest representing the whole of

¹²⁵ See Appendix I for the full text of the Law.

Trans-Jordan as one identity.' In *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan* (Vol. I)¹²⁶ Ma'an Abu Nowar relates:

On 8 October [1926] a delegation representing every district in T.J. [Trans-Jordan] and the baduins [*sic*] called on the Prime Minister at his office in 'Amman; from Irbid district: 'Abd al Qadir al Tall, Sulaiman al Sudi, and Rashid al Khiza'i; from Salt: Muhammad al Husain and Nimir al Humud; from the Balqa tribes: Mithqal al Fayiz, 'Ali Ibn Haditha al Khraishah, Majid al 'Adwan, Shahir al Hadid; from 'Amman: Hashim Khair, Tahir al Juqqah and Shams al Dine Sami; from Karak: Za'al al Majali, 'Attallah al Suhaimat, Mustafa al Muhaisin, 'Isa al Mdanat, 'Abd al Mihdi al Shamailah and Salih al 'Auran. They demanded the promulgation of a **constitution** [*emphasis author's own*] and the early establishment of an elected *Majlis Niyabi* (representative assembly). They also demanded the abolition of arrears due to the Treasury from 1921–1925; the reduction of the Tithe; and to allow them to continue to occupy lands which had been transferred to State Domain as *Mah-lula* Lands. The Prime Minister agreed to their demands and promised to fulfill them. For the first time since the *Bai'ah* meeting with 'Abdullah in 1921, an expression of common interest representing the whole of T.J. [Trans-Jordan] as one identity was born, peaceful but powerful and not to be ignored.

A study of this political development, suggests that

¹²⁶ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920–1929 [in English], Ithaca Press, 1993, p. 180–1.

some form of defensive Trans-Jordanian nationalism was being developed from shared experiences, shared demands towards a common aim and common interest, shared loyalty and a feeling of oneness by the district representatives. The fact that members of the delegation were all indigenous Trans-Jordanians, suggested that the feeling of 'we' or 'us' was no longer merely tribal, it was also common to all the tribes, and could be regarded as national; their demands suggest that they were opposed to Government policy and that they yearned for a share in their own government, and its economic and political benefits. Thus a gathering sense of national identity was on its way.

The Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, the Constitution, and Trans-Jordan's National Charter (1928)

Since Jordan's proclamation of independence in 1923, Britain did not move to formalise the Emirate's constitutional position by way of a formally agreed treaty. The Emir therefore pressed the matter, supported by popular demands, and a treaty was ultimately concluded in Jerusalem on 20 February 1928, known as the **Anglo-Jordanian Treaty**. Under its terms, Trans-Jordan became an internationally recognised independent entity with a constitutional government. **The Basic Law (Constitution)**, promulgated on 16 April 1928, provided for an **elected Legislative Council** with a three-year term; established civil, religious, and special courts; guaranteed equality of citizens irrespective of race, religion, or language; and safeguarded personal freedoms. It further declared Islam the religion of the state and Arabic the official language. Jordanians regarded this law a means to temper provisions of the Anglo-Jordanian

Treaty which had curtailed certain liberties, particularly in finance and foreign affairs which fell under direct British supervision, in addition to Britain's right to retain military forces in Trans-Jordan.

In practice, the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty constrained the Emirate, and the Mandatory authorities began to intrude into domestic affairs. The Emir, who was an experienced statesman with a long history of dealings with Britain since before the Arab Revolt, grew increasingly vexed. At the same time, national forces rallied, objecting to a British posture that was more colonial than mandatory. Opposition intensified, rejecting British interference and pressing the Executive to amend the Treaty. The Legislature aligned itself with this movement which became the substantive opposition to British meddling and the undermining of freedom and independence.

National parties also advanced the cause of independence and the removal of British control over the Emirate's internal and external affairs. Noteworthy were the **Jordanian People's Party** (*Hizb Al-Sha'b Al-Urduni*), founded in March 1927; the **Free Moderate Party** (*Al-Hizb Al-Hurr Al-Mu'tadil*), founded on 4 June 1930; the **Jordanian Solidarity Party** (*Hizb Al-Tadamon Al-Urduni*), founded in March 1933 and which Sheikh Haditha was a founding member of, and the **Jordanian Brotherhood Party** (*Hizb Al-Ikha' Al-Urduni*), founded on 25 September 1937. In parallel, a vigorous national movement culminated in the **General National Congress** (*Al-Mu'tamar Al-Watani Al-'Aam*) held in Amman on 25 July 1928. The Congress issued a **Charter** affirming the Emirate of Trans-Jordan as an Arab state; insisting that Britain's role be curtailed to technical assistance only, and that that role be defined by a

treaty that would not infringe on national sovereignty. It also rejected the Balfour Declaration, and called for free elections and a government answerable to an elected **Chamber of Deputies (or Legislative Council)**. Sheikh Haditha was a pivotal member of the National Congress and played an important role in drafting its Charter.

Sheikh Haditha, Legislative Councils and Parties and Senate Engagement (1928–1951)

Sheikh Haditha was a member of:

The First Jordanian National Congress (1928);

The Second National Congress (1929);

The Fourth National Congress (1932);

The Fifth National Congress (1933).

The Jordanian People's Congress (1933), and served in its Executive Committee.

The Second Chamber of Deputies (Second Legislative Council) (1931);

The Fourth Chamber of Deputies (Fourth Legislative Council) (1937).

The First National Assembly in the Senate (1947);

The Second National Assembly in the Senate During the Unity of the Two Banks (1950).

The Independence Party (1920);

The Jordanian Solidarity Party (1933).

The First Jordanian National Congress (1928)

The First National Congress (*Al-Mu'tamar Al-Watani Al-'Aam*) convened in Amman at Hamdan Café on 25 July 1928 as a broad opposition gathering in response to

the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty and the new Basic Law (Constitution) earlier that year. Sheikh Haditha was in attendance and the Congress issued the first country-wide political platform; often called the **(First) Jordanian National Charter** (1928) (*Al-Mithaq Al-Watani Al-Urduni*). It called for genuine independence, representative government, and the protection of Jordanians' rights. It also called for pushing back against British control of foreign affairs, finance, and the army. It was as a watershed moment that galvanised the Jordanian national movement and shaped political life into the 1930s.

The First National Congress had more than 150 representatives from all regions of Trans-Jordan in attendance. The members of the Congress elected Sheikh Hussein Al-Tarawneh of Kerak as president and agreed to commit themselves to the National Charter, composed of eleven articles¹²⁷ in the form of a declaration. The Congress elected a delegation from among its members to present the National Charter it had adopted to His Highness the Emir. It included Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, Sheikh Mithqal Al-Fayez, Sheikh Salim Abu Al-Ghanam, Ali Niyazi Al-Tall and Nimir Al-Hmoud of the Arabiyyat tribe. The Emir received the delegation on the evening of the Congress, promised to study the Charter, summoned Cox to meet him at Raghadan Palace, handed him a copy of the Charter, and asked him to transmit it to the British Government.¹²⁸

Ma'an Abu Nowar argues¹²⁹ that an examination of the

¹²⁷ See Appendix II. ¹²⁸ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, Vol. 1: *The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920–1929* [in English], Ithaca Press, 1993, p. 199.

¹²⁹ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, Vol. 1: *The Creation and Development of Transjordan; 1920–1929* [in English], Ithaca Press, 1993, p. 199.

names of the members of the Congress shows that the majority were supporters of the Emir and that the conference could not have been held without his consent. Clauses 4, 6, 7, and 8 contained criticism of British policy and no criticism of the Emir. This suggests that the Emir approved of the Congress which displayed the people's allegiance to him, for it demanded: 'an independent constitutional government under the leadership of His Royal Highness Emir Abdullah bin Al-Hussein and his descendants after him.'

Britain rejected the demands and this provoked widespread agitation, petitions, and protests among Jordanians. Demonstrations broke out demanding the country's independence and an end to British presence, whose officials had treated the Emirate as though it were one of their colonies.

As a result, some Jordanians were dismissed from their posts; among them the poet Mustafa Wahbi Al-Tall. Memoranda were also sent from Irbid to the League of Nations protesting the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, calling for the country's independence and for Jordanians to be given their right to hold the various state offices then filled by seconded officials of the Mandatory power.

On 5 August 1928 the Accredited British Resident sent the Emir a letter saying that to create a council devoid of government officials, in order to share in the work at such a stage in the country's development, would be a disaster. And that it would be a mistake to set up an Executive Council not composed of the senior officials of government. And that the country could not afford the salaries of an Executive Council whose members did not at the same time hold the posts of heads of departments. He also said that progress towards parliamentary government would come

only after the people had demonstrated their capacity to bear greater responsibilities.

The Government published the letter, and a meeting took place between the President of the National Congress, Hussein Al-Tarawneh, and the Accredited British Resident. On 16 August 1928 the President of the Congress sent the Accredited British Resident a letter that included the following:

Those who demand the country's lawful rights are not a handful of random individuals; they are the true representatives of the nation and its genuine aspirations and national demands. Your Excellency knows that matters here proceeded on the basis of independence under the leadership of His Highness Emir Abdullah; then you encircled the country by force in the name of the Mandate ... The constitution proclaimed by the Government in the name of Trans-Jordan vested the right of appointing the Government in His Highness the Emir alone. Yet the situation here shows that the country is still treated as if a colony, where those in power act as proprietors in their own estate, and the Mandatory State has come to regard its people as a stray herd ... The members of the National Congress truly represent the people of Trans-Jordan and the proposal they submitted to His Highness the Emir rests on two parts. The first is to separate executive authority from the legislative council, in accordance with constitutional practice throughout the world. This is the sole demand and the highest aim. The second is to form a national government that enjoys the confidence of the people and of His Highness the Emir as well. This is a right of

the people, which we do not think Your Excellency will deny them ... Standing in the way of this rightful demand arouses suspicion regarding the British Resident and his stance here. It leads the people to think that the British State does not look upon this country as it does upon Iraq or Egypt or other Arab lands, but rather as upon an African colony; a thing the country neither accepts nor consents to for itself, but rejects while living in the twentieth century ... Great Britain, which has prohibited the slave trade and established shelters for protecting animals, is too great to look upon the gentle people of Trans-Jordan in this archaic manner. We believe, Your Excellency, that some of those holding the reins of affairs here have widened the rift between you and the people, misrepresenting them to you and making you think the country and its people are sunk in absolute ignorance, so that the field might be left to them. Such men are neither fit nor competent to administer government or to judge the country's interests. Duty calls upon you to refute such claims rather than confirm them, and to help the country set its course towards safe harbour ... Your mandatory function requires you to be with the people and for the people; not against them with others ... Therefore, and for the foregoing reasons, we return to request a reconsideration of our demand and your agreement to separate the legislative authority from the executive authority, together with the entrusting of the country's affairs to its own people.

In his reply of 22 August 1928, the Accredited British Resident invoked Article 25 of the Mandate and argued

that delay in concluding a treaty stemmed from the Jordanian Government's early departures from constitutional rule. He also claimed that the population had not proved that it had the capacity assume full administrative responsibility. He urged gradual progress and cautioned against haste. **The Executive Committee of the National Congress** answered by rebutting these claims and restating nationalist grievances against the Government. It protested the imposing of exceptional laws, and the suppression of freedoms of opinion, assembly, and the press. It also demanded constitutional rule, and the establishment of an independent and responsible cabinet, and that relations with Britain be founded on sound friendship and mutual rights.

When High Commissioner Sir John Chancellor visited Amman in mid-December 1928, the Executive Committee requested an audience; when none was granted, it submitted a memorandum. Speaking in the name of the Jordanian people, the memorandum protested the Treaty (recalling wartime pledges to the Arabs and their sacrifices), condemned interference by the Accredited British Resident, and laws enacted without popular will. It denounced the **Election Law**, which, after revision, allowed 160 voters to choose a legislature said to represent 25,000 people and excluded some tribes. It criticised repressive measures against publishing, interference with the courts, the imprisonment of patriots, and the Mandate's patronage of unqualified and ignorant men which had led to increased taxation. It also condemned the spending of money on informers, and the construction of a grand residence for the Accredited British Resident while the Government lacked its own building.

Earlier, in October 1928, the Executive Committee had

telegraphed the League of Nations, asserting that the Anglo-Trans-Jordan Treaty and the Constitution were unfair and the people had protested against them. It also protested the electoral law which included coercive registration practices and included non-Jordanian residents; warning that a legislature born of an electorate amounting to roughly six per cent of a population exceeding 250,000 could not ratify the Treaty with legitimacy. It requested that the League of Nations mediate to establish a durable settlement consonant with popular wishes and the spirit of an upright Mandate.¹³⁰

Sheikh Haditha was a member of the **National Congress** and thus played a prominent and active role in defending the causes of the nation and its people. He was also a member of the **Independence Party** (established in 1920), a member of the **Founding Committee of the Jordanian Solidarity Party** (established in 1933), and a member of the **Executive Committee of the General People's Congress** and of its **Permanent Bureau** in 1933. Sheikh Haditha attributed the Jordanian nationalists' inability to fight the colonialists to the situation imposed by the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty. As he put it: 'We in Trans-Jordan are like a newborn placed under a guardian who withholds from him milk, clothing, warmth, and care, then says to him: "live and sleep and take your share of your property and the other means of your life."'”¹³¹ On 10 April 1929 the leaders of National Congress called for convening a **Second Jordanian National Congress**.

¹³⁰ Musa, Suleiman, Al-Madi, Munib, *Tarikh Al-Urdun fil Qarn Al-'Ishrin* (1958–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, p. 295, 297, 299, 301, 303.

The Second National Congress (1929)

On 11 March 1929, the **Second National Congress** was held and its **Executive Committee** adopted a set of resolutions to be sent to the **League of Nations**. Sheikh Haditha was a member of the Congress and its **Executive Committee** which charged that British Residents in Trans-Jordan had violated the Mandate's spirit by curtailing citizens' rights; rejected outright the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty as contrary to national aspirations, the National Charter (1928), and wartime Allied pledges; and declared that the legislature elected under the revised Election Law did not represent the country which was not bound by it, but merely extended illegitimate British control. The **National Congress** affirmed the **National Charter** (*Al-Mithaq Al-Watani*) as the basis for lawful claims to independence and a constitution grounded in national sovereignty, and it held Britain solely responsible for administrative regression, burdensome taxation, and broader economic and social decline. It asked the League of Nations to dispatch an impartial commission of inquiry.¹³²

The **First National Congress** had already issued an extensive statement on Anglo-Jordanian relations, the Treaty, the Basic Law, and the Election Law, reaffirming adherence to the National Charter (*Al-Mithaq Al-Watani*).¹³³ Broader nationalist aims were shared by parties and civic groups and were consistent. They demanded an end to British tutelage; staffing the government with qualified Jordanians; establishing an Arab Jordanian army; creating a legislature

¹³¹ *Al-Karmil Newspaper*, No. 1725, 3rd January, 1932, p. 2.

¹³² Musa, Suleiman, *Al-Madi, Munib. Tarikh Al-Urdun fil Qarn Al-'Ishrin* (1958–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, p. 305. ¹³³ *Ibid.* p. 307.

before which the Executive is responsible; better schools, building the economy and improving infrastructure; securing international standing and diplomatic representation; and exercising independent political decision-making. The Emir himself encouraged these aims and used them as leverage with the Mandatory power, even as the British responded with pressure, dismissals, imprisonment, and exile.

The **Second National Congress** consolidated a coherent, programmatic nationalist platform. It called for constitutional government grounded in sovereignty, representative elections, civil liberties, economic relief, and an end to foreign rule. It also legitimised the 1928 National Charter as the country's foundational point of reference and mobilised both domestic and international avenues of appeal, including the League of Nations. It also documented the legal and administrative instruments of control: emergency laws, electoral engineering, and press repression. In doing so, it fixed the historical record against which later reforms would be measured. It mapped a dynamic interplay that shaped Trans-Jordan's political bargaining through the 1930s and into independence: popular pressure often with the Emir's tacit encouragement in confronting the British.

The Fourth National Congress (1932)

Sheikh Haditha participated in the **Fourth Jordanian National Congress** in Amman, convened in March 1932. Among its first resolutions was a refusal to recognise the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty. It also warned against British interference and the danger posed by the restrictions imposed by the Mandate authorities on the Jordanian government.

The Fifth National Congress (1933)

At the **Fifth National Congress** in 1933, the newspaper

Filastin reported that Sheikh Haditha, together with leading Jordanian figures, endorsed the demand for the formation of a national government with collective responsibility, tasked with negotiating with the British government to amend the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty in a manner that would guarantee the country's rights. They also condemned Zionist propaganda aimed at diminishing the rights of Trans-Jordan, called for decisive legislation to prevent the sale of land to Jews, and demanded that any Jew be barred from permanent residence in Jordan.

Filastin also records that, in 1933, Sheikh Haditha took part in a demonstration in Amman, after which Peake Pasha instructed the chief of police to arrest him. When he was detained, the gendarmerie was compelled to release him due to the intervention of the protesters.

The government confronted the activities of the Fifth National Congress's Executive Committee through intimidation, including arrest, deportation, and exile, under exceptional laws. The severity of these measures increased after the promulgation of the **Defence Law of 1935**, issued for emergency conditions and granting the government the authority to enact regulations to monitor correspondence and to arrest and deport any person. Sheikh Haditha protested this law, regarding its provisions as harsh, unconstitutional, and a grave infringement of the country's rights and the freedoms of its people.

Sheikh Haditha and the Executive Committee of the Jordanian People's Congress (1933)

Sheikh Haditha served twice on the **Executive Committee of the Jordanian People's Congress** and its **Permanent Bureau** (*Mu'tamar Al-Sha'b Al-'Aam / Mu'tamar Al-Sha'b Al-*

Urduni)—not to be confused with the **General National Congress** (*Al-Mu'tamar Al-Watani Al-'Aam*) of 1928. The **Jordanian People's Congress** was a broader and less interrupted body for political coordination. Unlike the **General National Congress** (*Al-Mu'tamar Al-Watani Al-'Aam*), which met in periodic sessions to issue resolutions, it functioned through an **Executive Committee and Permanent Bureau**, giving it a more sustained organisational role.

The Executive Committee convened its Fifth Congress at Al-Kamal Hotel in Amman on 6 June 1933. The meeting drew leading figures from Palestine and Syria, including Shukri Al-Quwwatli.¹³⁴

Plans for a joint congress of Palestinian independents and the Jordanian People's Congress to discuss measures to prevent Zionist penetration into Trans-Jordan had been underway since May 1933, initially with the intention to meet in Salt. As preparations began there, allies of Mithqal Al-Fayez who boycotted the Jordanian People's Congress¹³⁵ accused the Congress' Executive Committee of 'fleeing' Amman to evade his influence and instructed supporters in Salt to block the meeting. Clashes ensued between the Executive Committee's supporters and those of Mithqal Al-Fayez, leading to injuries and arrests. The Executive Committee then postponed the Congress to early June and held it in Amman instead.

Five hundred invitations were distributed. The opening ceremony focused on internal conditions and Zionist designs on Trans-Jordan. In this milieu, a party formed in Amman on 6 August 1933 and gathered a number of prominent figures, including Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha, Naji

¹³⁴ *Filastin* [Palestine] Newspaper, No. 78; 31 May, 1933, p. 2.

¹³⁵ See: *Al-Jami'a Al-Arabiyya* Newspaper, No. 1093, 6 June, 1933, p. 4.

Al-Azzam, Sa'eed Al-Sleibi, Mustafa Al-Muheisen, Sa'eed Al-Mufti, and Najib Al-Shraideh.

The Programme and Resolutions of the Jordanian People's Congress

The Jordanian People's Congress convened expressly to denounce and resist Zionism and its designs on Trans-Jordan, to refrain from dealings with Jews, to adopt political reforms, to call for national unity, and to affirm loyalty to Emir Abdullah and his heirs.

The Congress' declaration included the following:¹³⁶

- The members of the Jordanian People's Congress convened today—truly representative of the Emirate—declare their loyalty to His Highness the Emir and to his successors after him.
- Since the press has devoted much discussion to the question of Zionism in Trans-Jordan, the Jordanian People's Congress—convened on the basis of resisting Zionism—denounces Zionism, affirms its resistance to it, and resolves to safeguard the noble heritage and positions of our forefathers.

Although energetic, this political experiment proved short-lived as the organisation dissolved after Naji Pasha Al-Azzam resigned the presidency on 18 October 1934. Nevertheless, Sheikh Haditha's membership in both the Executive Committee and the Permanent Bureau positioned him at the heart of interwar Jordanian mobilisation. He linked Bani Sakhr leadership to urban nationalist currents,

¹³⁶ For the full declaration see Appendix III.

worked for institutional and constitutional government, and anti-Zionist coordination with Syrian and Palestinian counterparts. He helped translate tribal legitimacy into an organised national programme, an alliance that shaped Trans-Jordanian politics through the 1930s.¹³⁷

Political Parties

The Jordanian Solidarity Party (1933)

Sheikh Haditha had been a member of several political parties earlier in his career, such as the **Independence Party (1920)** which was part of the broader Arab independence movement that sought to unite Arab lands and resist foreign influence. The **Jordanian Solidarity Party** (*Hizb Al-Tadamon Al-Urduni*), Founded on 24 March 1933, was the first distinctly Jordanian, countrywide party to articulate a programme for defending Trans-Jordan as a unified entity and the rights of its inhabitants. Its declared aims were to safeguard Trans-Jordan's political status, secure the rights of its people, and foster genuine concord and solidarity between them. It also aimed to promote a substantive civic culture and its membership was limited to those who settled east of the Jordan prior to 1922.

The founding committee comprised Haditha Al-Khrai-sha, Mithqal Al-Fayez, Rfeifan Al-Majali, Muhammad Al-Sa'd, Sa'eed Abu Jaber, Qassim Al-Hindawi, Saleh Al-Oran, Hashim Kheir, Najib Abu Al-Sha'ar, Ahmad Al-Sa'oub, Salti Al-Ibrahim, Shams Al-Din Sami, and Metri Al-Zureikat. Shortly thereafter Salti Al-Ibrahim, Qassim Al-

¹³⁷ Al-Musa, Suleiman, Al-Madi, Munib. *Tarikh Al-Urdon fil Qarn Al-'Isbrin* (1958–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, p. 331, 333–4.

Hindawi, and Ahmad Al-Sa'oub withdrew their membership from the party which was not long-lived.

The Second Legislative Council (1931)

The Second Legislative Council (Chamber of Deputies) convened following its election on 10 June 1931, during the tenure of the cabinet of Sheikh Abdullah Siraj, and it continued to function until completing its full constitutional term. Sheikh Haditha was a member and represented the Northern Bedouins. In the address delivered by Emir Abdullah at the opening ceremony of the first session of the Second Legislative Council, he referred to the government's attempts to amend the contested articles and clauses of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, saying that it had been hoped to present these details to the Council prior to any further steps, while expressing confidence that the anticipated negotiations would soon commence. The members of the Legislative Council pressed the government to pursue amendments to the Treaty. Consequently, on 12 August 1931, the Executive Council submitted a memorandum to Emir Abdullah requesting that he seek Britain's agreement to fulfil their demands.¹³⁸

After four consecutive years of drought, fears of famine mounted in Trans-Jordan; indebted farmers saw their harvests swallowed by taxes and moneylenders, leaving them struggling year-round. In response, the government extended relief through agricultural loans, and deferred and cancelled tax payments in 1931–32. It funded £7,000 in public works in the south and created a distribution com-

¹³⁸ Al-Musa, Suleiman, Al-Madi, Munib. *Tarikh Al-Urdon fil Qarn Al-'Ishtin* (1958–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, p. 341.

mittee. Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha served on that committee working alongside officials and tribal leaders, including Rfeifan Al-Majali, Hussein Al-Tarawneh, and Hamad bin Jazi, to organise targeted loans to the neediest people.

In the 1932-33 season rain came late and led to the ruin of about 60% of the 'afeer (dry-sown) crops. Rain shortage was usually accompanied by a rise in grain prices and a fall in livestock prices, which constituted a burden on the farmers. Zionist propaganda became active in urging Jordanians to convene an economic conference and began promoting it in late 1932. It was being referred to as the 'Bread Conference', its apparent aim being the cancellation of outstanding taxes and the provision of loans to farmers at moderate interest. The newspaper *Filastin* (Palestine) published an article entitled, 'No Land and No Bread—A Complaint We Submit to the Emir,' bearing the signatures of Awad Al-Faqir and Auda ibn Hami Al-Asfar; both Huweitat sheikhs. From the start of 1933 the active call to convene the economic conference began, and in February 1933 Mithqal Al-Fayez invited notables to deliberate on the economic situation. In February 1933, Haditha joined a coalition of political and social leaders, including Legislative Council members Hashim Kheir and Shams Al-Din Sami and a range of Christian and Muslim notables. These included: Rashid Al-Khuzai'i of Ajloun, Nimr Al-Humoud of Salt, Touma Hamarneh of Madaba, Salti Bishara, Jibra'il Hamarneh, 'Isa Qawar, Hasan Al-Shurbaji, Sa'eed Halawa, Sido Al-Kurdi, Haj As'ad Al-Barak, Suleiman Sukkar, and Raji Bishara. Together, this coalition coordinated a national response to the crisis. The resulting telegram to Emir Abdullah and the British High Commissioner in Jerusalem framed economic hardship as a threat not only to liveli-

hoods but to the very survival of the Jordanian polity, warning that land foreclosures and fiscal rigidity risked dismantling the very country:

The Jordanian people, for whom you have established a national entity, believe that the continued collection of past dues, the sale of their properties by the Agricultural Bank, and the obstruction of access to capital—amid the suffocating hardship afflicting the country—indicate the existence of a new policy aimed at dismantling their country and oppressing it. For this reason, they implore Your Highness, in earnest supplication, to rescue the country by lifting it from its plight through whatever means and development projects you deem appropriate ...

In response, the government established emergency relief mechanisms, including tax reductions and loan schemes administered through a special committee on which Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha served as the representative of Bani Sakhr and whose role extended well beyond relief administration. Alongside him were other senior officials and tribal leaders such as Shukri Sha'sha'a, Rfeifan Al-Majali, Hussein Al-Tarawneh, Omar Al-Ma'ani, Salih Al-Oran, and Hamad bin Jazi. This committee not only distributed funds but also functioned as a barometer of social stability, as reports of armed food raids and the emergence of quasi-bandit groups underscored the fragility of order.

During the drought crisis of the early 1930s, Bani Sakhr emerged at the centre of national debates over survival and fiscal justice. As their parliamentary representative, Sheikh Haditha played a pivotal role in relief committees and cross-regional political coordination that

linked tribal distress to broader questions of state responsibility and legitimacy.

The Fourth Legislative Council (1937)

Sheikh Haditha served in the **Fourth Legislative Council**, elected on 16 October 1937 and serving its full constitutional term, as the representative of the Northern Bedouins. On 5 August 1939 the council resolved to amend the Basic Law (Constitution) of Trans-Jordan, revising Article 20 to set a Council of Ministers (*Majlis Wuzara'*) composed of a prime minister and up to five ministers, and to replace the title 'Executive Council (*Al-Malis Al-Tanfizi*)' with 'Council of Ministers' (*Majlis Al-Wuzara'*).

Member of the First National Assembly in the Senate (1947)

The Jordanian Constitution issued on 1 February 1947 provided that legislative authority is vested in the National Assembly (*Majles Al-Ummah*) and the King. The National Assembly consists of two chambers: a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies is composed of representatives elected in accordance with the Elections Law, which must ensure fair representation of minorities, and the term of the Chamber of Deputies is four years.

Articles 37 and 39 further stipulated that the Senate shall consist of a number not exceeding one-half the number of members of the Chamber of Deputies, including the President, and that its members are appointed by the King from among those who enjoy public confidence. Membership in the Senate is for eight years, with one-half of the members renewed every four years by lot; the term of the President of the Senate is two years.

This first Jordanian Senate (Upper House) convened after its members were appointed by Royal Decree on 2 October 1947, following the independence of the Kingdom in 1946 and the new constitution of 1947. The first Senate played a crucial role in the early legislative development of the country. It was led by Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda and was composed of only ten members:

Haditha Al-Khraisha; Muhammad Abu Tayeh; Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda; Abd Al-Rahman Al-Rsheidat; Abdullah Al-Kleib; Nawfan Al-Saud; Wasif Al-Bsharat; Shawkat Hameed; Sabri Al-Tabaa', and Saleem Al-Bakhit.

Member of the Second National Assembly During the Unity of the Two Banks (1950)

After the loss of the occupied part of Palestine in 1948, the Arabs of the West Bank found it in their interest to unite with Jordan. For this purpose, they convened three large popular conferences: the first in Amman on 1 October 1948; the second in Jericho on 1 December 1948; and the third in Nablus on 13 December 1948. These conferences brought together large numbers of notables from the West Bank. Among the decisions taken by these three conferences were calls for Palestinian–Jordanian unity; the affirmation that Palestine was an indivisible whole; the view that uniting Palestine with Jordan was a prelude to comprehensive Arab unity; and the pledge of allegiance to His Majesty King Abdullah as a constitutional monarch over Palestine and Trans-Jordan, with the two territories considered a single kingdom.

The decisions of the three conferences were presented to King Abdullah, who referred them to the Cabinet and to the National Assembly, and they were approved unani-

mously. On 3 May 1949, Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda submitted the resignation of his cabinet to make way for a government that would include figures from the West Bank. His Majesty King Abdullah asked him to form the new cabinet, which he did on 7 May 1949. The government supervised the elections for a new Chamber of Deputies that included representatives from both banks. At the same time, a Royal Decree was issued forming a new Senate that likewise included members from both banks.

The Second National Assembly (*Majles Al-Ummah*) was formed after the decision to unite the two banks of the Jordan, bringing together representatives and notables from the East Bank and the West Bank. Following this decision, amendments were issued to the Constitution and the electoral law, doubling the number of senators and deputies. The Senate thus comprised twenty members, while the Chamber of Deputies comprised forty.

The second Senate convened after its members were appointed by Royal Decree on 20 April 1950. It consisted of the following members: Haditha Al-Khraisha; Muhammad Abu Tayeh; Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda; Samir Al-Rifa'i; Falah Al-Madadha; Raghib Al-Nashashibi; Mahmoud Kreishan; Ma'arik Al-Majali; Sharif Sharaf ibn Rajih; Sulayman Al-Taji Al-Faruqi; Muhammad Ali Al-Ja'bari; Abd Al-Latif Salah; Nawfan Al-Saud; Sulayman Tuqan; Farid Irsheid; Sabri Al-Tabba'; Isma'il Al-Bilbeisi; Hussein Khawaja; Saleem Al-Bakhit; and Wadi' Da'mas. Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda was appointed President of the Senate. The Senate continued its work until it was dissolved before the end of its constitutional term on 3 May 1951.



Top row from right to left: Naji Abu-Nowar, Hussein Al-Tarawneh, Mithqal Al-Fayez, Rashed Al-Khuza'i, Sulayman Al-Soudi Al-Rousan, Haditha Al-Khraisha, Salem Al-Hindawi, Shams Al-Din Sami, Farhan Matrouk Al-Bayaydah, Ali Khulqi Al-Sharayri, Abdel-Mahdi Al-Shamayleh, 'Isa Madanat, Za'al Al-Majali, Muhammad Mutee' Al-Zheir Al-Jbour, Salti Al-Ibrahim

Statesmanship: Trans-Jordan's Relations with Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia

Iraq

A climate of harmony and mutual understanding prevailed between Iraq and Trans-Jordan from the establishment of the Jordanian and Iraqi states in 1921. This was due in large measure to the presence of the two brothers, Emir Abdullah and King Faisal, at the helm of government in the two countries. In addition, there were no immediate causes for direct friction, as the vast desert separated their populated regions; moreover, the existence of a single Mandatory power (Britain) also contributed to the absence of conflict.

Both governments worked to foster understanding among the Bedouin tribes on either side. To this end, a

tribal conference was convened on 25 July 1927 at Ramadi, bringing together two delegations representing both the governments and the tribes of their respective countries. The purpose of the conference was to examine disputes between the tribes of both sides and to bring raiding to an end. The Jordanian delegation included the sheikhs Haditha Al-Khraisha, Mithqal Al-Fayez, Khalaf Al-Mur, Hamad bin Jazi, Muhammad Abu Tayeh, Adhub Al-Zaben, and Turki Al-Haydar, all of whom were sheikhs of Bani Sakhr and the Huweitat. At this conference, the sheikhs agreed to a comprehensive reconciliation in accordance with the Bedouin custom of *hfaar wa dfaan*, whereby past grievances are forgiven and raiding is to cease. The agreement was formally recorded, and the sheikhs of both sides pledged to abide by its terms.

The construction of the Iraq–Haifa oil pipeline, crossing Jordanian territory, provided the principal impetus for the formal regulation of relations between Iraq and Trans-Jordan. This strategic project was accompanied by a 1931 concession granted to the Iraq Petroleum Company and a treaty of friendship establishing close cooperation and coordinated border security was concluded on 26 March 1931. The pipeline and its associated infrastructure, including roads, pumping stations, and communications networks, linked the two states even further, while wartime cooperation following the 1941 Rashid Aali Al-Kailani coup further deepened their military and political ties. When the Rashid Aali coup took place in Iraq in 1941, Prince Abd Al-Ilah, the Regent of Iraq, sought refuge in Amman, accompanied by a number of senior Iraqi figures. The Jordanian Desert Patrol contributed to the suppression of the coup, and throughout the remaining years of the war

a detachment of the Arab Army was stationed in Iraq, consisting of several infantry companies tasked with protecting and guarding certain military installations. Although post-war negotiations aimed at unification in 1945–1946, they proved inconclusive.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, cumulative understandings culminated in the 1947 Treaty of Brotherhood and Alliance, which agreed to a ten-year partnership¹⁴⁰ based on mutual defence, political coordination, and regional solidarity.

Syria

Just as tribal mediation underpinned the consolidation of relations with Iraq, it also proved central to managing Trans-Jordan's relations with Syria, where cross-border raiding posed comparable challenges. A reconciliation meeting was held in the city of Dar'aa and it brought together prominent sheikhs from both sides of the border, including Nuri bin Sha'laan, sheikh of the Ruwala; Traad bin Jandal, sheikh of the Mawali; Farhan bin Mu'jil, sheikh of the Ashaj'a; Ibn Ismeir, sheikh of the Wuld Ali; as well as Mithqal Al-Fayez, Adhoub Al-Zaben, Muhammad Al-Zuhayr, and, of course, Haditha Al-Khraisha. The meeting was held under the supervision of Glubb Pasha and a representative of the French authorities in Syria. Following deliberations on raiding and the means of bringing it to an end, the assembled sheikhs of Bani Sakhr, the Huweitat,

¹³⁹ Musa, Suleiman, *Imarat Sharqi Al-Urdun: Nash'atuha wa Tatawwuriha fi Rub' Qarn* [The Emirate of Trans-Jordan: Its Origin and Development over a Quarter-Century]. Amman: Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research (Aal Al-Bayt Institute, 1990), p. 308–10.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Musa, Suleiman, *Al-Madi, Munib, Tarikh Al-Urdun fil Qarn Al-'Ishtin* (1958–1959) [Jordan's History in the 20th Century], 2nd ed., Ministry of Culture, Amman; 2021, p. 415.

and the Syrian tribes unanimously agreed to hfaar wa dfaan.¹⁴¹ This understanding was subsequently formalised through an agreement concluded in Amman on 2 February 1930, which regulated relations between the nomadic tribes of Trans-Jordan and Syria.¹⁴²

Saudi Arabia

The Committee to Oversee the Bedouins (*Lajnat Al-Isbraf 'ala Al-Badu*) was formed under the chairmanship of Prince Shakir and included Haditha Al-Khraisha among its members. Raiding between the tribes of Trans-Jordan and the Nejdi tribes continued until 1933, when a treaty was concluded between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Trans-Jordan. Under the terms of this treaty, a joint committee from both sides was entrusted with examining cases of raiding and adjudicating them. Until the spring of 1930, Jordanian tribes faced organised raids originating from the Arabian Peninsula. Bin Musa'id led a large force of the Ikhwan, which launched several attacks against Jordanian tribes. The readiness of the Desert Patrol to fight alongside Jordanian tribes in repelling attacks helped to consolidate trust between the Bedouin and government forces, thereby enabling progress toward the establishment of peace and security.

After the 1933 treaty, Saudi Arabia appointed Prince Abdel-Aziz bin Zeid as Border Inspector while the Jorda-

¹⁴¹ Al-Fayez, Prof. Mufleh Al-Nimer, *The Clans of Bani Sakhr: History and Positions up until 1950* [ʿAsha'ir Bani Sakhr: Tarikh wa Mawaqif Hatta Sanat 1950], Armed Forces Printers; p. 112.

¹⁴² Musa, Suleiman, *Imarat Sharqi Al-Urdun: Nash'atuha wa Tatawwuriha fi Rub' Qarn* [The Emirate of Trans-Jordan: Its Origin and Development over a Quarter-Century]. Amman: Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research (Aal Al-Bayt Institute, 1990), p. 322.

nian government appointed Glubb as its corresponding inspector. Relations between Trans-Jordan and the Saudi state were not stable at the outset. Groups of followers of Abdel-Aziz Aal Saud attacked Jordanian territory in 1922 and again in 1924. After the second raid, Trans-Jordan withdrew its garrison stationed at Kaf in Wadi Al-Sirhan in September 1924, enabling the Saudis to advance and take control of the area.

In September 1924, Saudi forces attacked the Hijaz, compelling the Hashemite King Hussein bin Ali to abdicate the throne and travel to Aqaba, which, together with Ma'an, had remained under Hashemite rule in the Hijaz until only six months earlier. King Hussein bin Ali resided in Aqaba for approximately eight months, during which he attempted to send reinforcements to his eldest son Ali, who had succeeded him as King of the Hijaz. In April 1925, however, the Saudi Sultan, Abdel-Aziz Aal Saud, threatened to attack Aqaba and Ma'an. The British informed him that those areas were under their Mandate and that they would arrange for King Hussein bin Ali's removal from Aqaba. King Hussein departed for Cyprus and one month later, the Ma'an district was formally annexed to Trans-Jordan.

Britain tried to regulate relations between Trans-Jordan and Nejd and, on 2 November 1925, it concluded the Hadda Agreement (also known as the Hadda Protocol) with Abdel-Aziz Aal Saud, defining the boundary between the two territories. Under it, the governments of Nejd and Trans-Jordan pledged to prevent raiding, punish tribes that engaged in it, and establish a joint court to examine incidents of aggression and adjudicate disputes. Nevertheless, raiding did not cease entirely. During the winter of 1927–1928, Saudi tribes launched raids against Bani Sakhr clans

in the eastern Badia, resulting in approximately three hundred casualties on both sides. Indeed across all three frontiers, recurrent raiding placed a disproportionate burden on Bani Sakhr, whose territorial position in the central and eastern Badia exposed them most directly to cross-border violence and retaliation. Bani Sakhr fought valiantly to defend their land and honour and according to King Faisal Aal Saud, the armed resistance that Bani Sakhr put up against Ibn Saud and the Wahhabi Ikhwan was ‘the reason that Saudi Arabia’s borders do not extend all the way to Palestine and why the Aal Sauds never became the rulers of the Levant.’¹⁴³

King Faisal bin Al-Hussein and the British government mediated between the two countries and, on 21 March 1933, the governments of Saudi Arabia and Trans-Jordan exchanged letters of mutual recognition. On 2 April 1933, Emir Abdullah and King Abdel-Aziz exchanged telegrams of greeting and goodwill. A series of meetings and agreements took place after this and gradually, incidents of raiding diminished year by year.

Within these processes, and through his membership in the Committee to Oversee the Bedouins (*Lajnat Al-Ishtaf ‘ala Al-Badu*), Sheikh Haditha occupied a key intermediary position, linking state authority with tribal society and helping to ensure that formal treaties with Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia were translated into practical security and enduring stability across Jordan’s borderlands.

¹⁴³ Al-Rdeini, Awwad. *Al-Urdun Li-Man?* Amman: Al-Dustour Press, 2013. Accessed 4 June 2016. <http://www.zamancom.com/?p=5619>

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HADITHA AND THE 1941 IRAQI CRISIS

From Anti-Colonial Jihad to a New Front

By 1941, Haditha Al-Khraisha's political and moral compass, honed through years of anti-colonial struggle in Syria and Palestine, pointed him to Iraq and the Rashid Aali Al-Kailani uprising. In April–May 1941, Iraqi Prime Minister Rashid Aali Al-Kailani overthrew the Hashemite regency of Abd Al-Ilah bin Ali and Prime Minister Taha Al-Hashimi to roll back Britain's 1930 treaty constraints and remove British influence from Iraq. Iraqi forces surrounded the RAF base at Habbaniya on 30 April; Britain countered from Basra and via the Habforce¹⁴⁴ column through Trans-Jordan; including units of the Arab Legion under Glubb. Despite token German and Italian aid routed through Vichy-controlled Syria, British air and mobile columns broke the siege, advanced on Baghdad, and by 31 May restored the regent and Rashid Aali fled into exile. The uprising was the most serious wartime challenge to British hegemony in the Fertile Crescent. The Habforce and the Arab Legion's role drew Trans-Jordan directly into the conflict, with lasting effects on Jordanian military and political life.

¹⁴⁴ Habforce (Habbaniya Force) was a rapid-deployment British military formation created in April 1941 during the Anglo-Iraqi War to relieve the besieged RAF Habbaniya airbase from Iraqi forces loyal to the Rashid Aali coup.

In April–May 1941 London pressed Trans-Jordan's forces into support roles: the Desert Patrol (*Quwwat Al-Badia*) and the Frontier Force (*Quwwat Al-Hudud*) were tasked to help relieve Habbaniya and secure the desert approaches. Glubb coordinated with British commanders in Palestine and Iraq to move Trans-Jordan's mobile columns east.

Haditha's Call to Conscience

As British pressure mounted, Haditha took a public stand. Tribal raids were as old as time and to the Bedouins an essential part of the nomadic lifestyle which they saw as a vocation. To Sheikh Haditha tribal raids were a completely different thing from Arabs shedding the blood of other Arabs in a conflict he saw as driven by the British. According to reports sent from Amman by the Accredited British Representative, Alec Kirkbride, Haditha urged his tribesmen to resign from the Badia Force rather than fight Arabs at Britain's behest.¹⁴⁵ Fully aware that his counsel would provoke British reprisals, Haditha withdrew temporarily to Saudi Arabia to avoid immediate measures—an exile that itself underscored both his influence and his readiness to bear personal cost for defiance and principle.¹⁴⁶

Events on the ground bore out Haditha's warning. As the Badia Force moved from Azraq toward the Iraqi frontier, men encountered returning elements of the Frontier Force near H3–H4 who said they had refused to fight Iraqis, insisting their terms of service were defensive and limited to Trans-Jordan's borders. The message spread

¹⁴⁵ Kirkbride to High Commissioner, 9 Sept. 1941 (CO 831/58; also CO 831/85).

¹⁴⁶ Alon, Yoav, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007, p. 144.

quickly among the desert troops that this was an English war against Arabs.

At Rutba and along the H₃ corridor, a group of Badia officers, predominantly Bani Sakhr but also from the Huweitat, resolved not to fight outside Trans-Jordan. Among those who stood firm were Fahhad Faris Al-Khraisha, Tafur Saleh Al-Khraisha, and Kassab Khnayfis Al-Khraisha; from the Zaben: Mazhour Al-Draybi and his brother Barjas Al-Zaben were named; from the Huweitat: Jaser Abu Shreiteh and Dabshi Madhan also refused. Their stance was simple; they would defend Trans-Jordan, but they would not shed Arab blood in Iraq.

Confronted with refusal at H₃–H₄, Glubb Pasha assembled the men and asked them to choose: those willing to go to Iraq should stand to one side; those unwilling, to the other. About fifty stepped away. Witnesses recalled Glubb crying before he steadied himself and told the men he would not compel anyone to fight outside the country. Badi Awwad, of Bani Sakhr's al-Khadeir clan, and one of the officers of the Desert Force who refused to fight in Iraq, related to the historian Sa'd Abu Dayyeh later that when one rebellious soldier saw Glubb feigning tears, he said to him: 'Weep, it's better than an Arab mother weeping.'¹⁴⁷

Glubb then moved to contain the crisis; dissenters were sent back toward Azraq; later, many were dismissed, pressured to resign, or quietly excluded from civil and military hiring. Glubb imposed a one-year ban on Bani Sakhr enlisting in the Army until King Abdullah intervened and lifted the ban. Years later, after Glubb's removal in 1956,

¹⁴⁷ Abu Dayyeh, Sa'd, *Al-Aswaq Al-Urduniyyah* Newspaper, No. 1257, Amman, Wednesday, 6 August, 1997.

some of the men, including Fahhad Faris Al-Khraisha, were brought back into service, which underlined the essentially political nature of the rupture.

Operationally, the refusal did not derail the British relief of Habbaniya as Badia and British columns pushed on; but it changed Glubb's tactics. In subsequent operations (notably in Syria), he ensured that tribal sheikhs travelled with columns, both to reassure the ranks about the legitimacy of the mission and to head off any reprise of the 'no Arab blood' objection.

Bani Sakhr in the Eye of the Storm

For Bani Sakhr, the episode fused honour, service, and limit. The tribe had joined the Badia Force in significant numbers, helped pacify the eastern Badia, and contributed to Trans-Jordan's state-building. Yet Haditha's injunction held: defend home, do not kill kin. That ethic explains both the initial enlistment which reflected loyalty to the Emir and order, and the later refusal which reflected loyalty to the wider Arab cause.

In the immediate wake, dissenters paid a price—lost posts, closed doors, and a season of quiet exile for Haditha. But the moral economy of the episode endured. Within Trans-Jordan's political culture, the episode became a touchstone for the idea that Arab arms should serve Arab liberty, not imperial aims.

The servicemen explained that, acting on Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha's instructions, they refused to accompany Glubb, leaving the commander in genuine peril because the dissidents controlled the unit's heaviest weapons—mortars, an anti-tank gun, and Vickers and Lewis machine-guns. Glubb's overriding fear was that the mutiny would



Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha on his horse

spread, especially under influential figures like Mazhour Al-Draybi of Bani Sakhr's Zaben clan. Had Haditha summoned the Bani Sakhr men back to Amman, he noted, he could have tipped the balance entirely, placing Glubb's future, and the fortunes of states, effectively in Haditha's hands.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Dayyah, Sa'd, *Al-Aswaq Al-Urduniyyah* Newspaper, No. 1257, Amman, Wednesday, 6 August, 1997.

THE CHECHENS AND THE DRUZE

Sheikh Haditha's Role in Rebuilding Azraq

The historian Jawdat Nashkho noted in his documentary research on the settlement of the Chechens and Circassians in Jordan that Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha deserved primary credit for the rebuilding of the town of Azraq. He was the first to settle the Chechens there, granting them lands and farms, and giving them something more important still: safety and security. The neighbouring Bedouin tribes had refused to receive this new Chechen presence or accept their residence among them, but they ultimately did so out of respect for Sheikh Haditha, his high standing, and the force of his word among the tribes of Al-Ruwala, Al-Sirhan, and Bani Sakhr. These tribes were said to owe him loyalty, recognise his authority, and abide by his guarantees, commands, and prohibitions.

The Russian authorities released the memoirs of Hajj Abdullah Al-Naqshbandi, written in 1911 in which he described the arrival and settlement of the first contingent of Chechen migrants, accompanied by their imam, Sheikh Jamal Al-Din Al-Kailani. They received a message from the Caucasus expressing the desire of hundreds to come to the lands of Islam and to abandon the lands of unbelief. Hajj Abdullah therefore instructed his *muridin*, followers of the Kailani Qadiri Order, to prepare to travel east of Zarqa to search for land suitable for settlement. His aim was the oasis of Azraq, in the heart of the desert, ninety-five kilome-

tres away. The road was surrounded by danger because of bandits, yet the Chechen *muridin*—eighteen horsemen—obeyed Hajj Abdullah's command and set out on an exploratory journey in search of the promised oasis. They travelled day and night without stopping, but failed to reach their goal and returned. Hajj Abdullah, however, ordered that a new exploratory party be prepared under his personal command and he took with him one of the scholars of the Order, Jamal Al-Din Al-Kailani.

The exploratory party numbered seventeen men. They departed Zarqa on Thursday, 5 Jumada Al-Awwal, 1330 AH (1911), two hours after daybreak. By sunset they reached a place thick with trees known as Shajar Al-Mu-haylan, nine hours from Zarqa. After a brief rest, the party continued by night until five hours had passed. At daybreak they found themselves in empty land and did not know which direction to take, but their leader instructed them to head east, where a mountain of moderate size appeared. One member of the party, Hajj Mirza ibn Salmirza, climbed to the summit and saw the waters of Azraq and its greenery. The party descended into that land and dispersed to survey it. Once they regrouped, they went to Azraq Castle in the forenoon and found Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha there. He honoured their arrival and welcomed them. The next morning, Sheikh Haditha accompanied the exploratory party as they searched for good land with abundant water. The party then inspected the palace at Azraq, noting the solidity of its construction and the massive size of its stones and they saw the mosque in its centre. The palace had two stone gates, each 1.75 metres in height and 1.25 metres in width. On a large stone above the gate was inscribed: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. The poor servant

in need of God, Izz Al-Din Abu Bakr, teacher of the great king Ali ibn Al-Hajib, ordered the building of this blessed palace in the time of his grandfather, in the year 400 AH.’

The search for new land in the Azraq area stemmed from the desire of many Chechen families in the Caucasus to migrate to the Holy Land. Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the exploratory party, made clear his wish to settle Chechen families in Azraq while he was in Sheikh Haditha’s home. Haditha welcomed the idea and said: ‘Hajj, I will stand as guarantor (*kafil*) for my tribe and the Sirhan tribe, and we will help you here as much as possible. The Bedouins of the desert want a town to be established in Azraq, and they welcome the presence of wheat and a mill so they will not have to go to Hawran or to Amman. Other Bedouins dislike the establishment of a village here but Sheikh Nuri Al-Sha‘laan and the tribes of Al-Ruwala respect my guarantees and protection, and they will ask about nothing if I stand as guarantor for you. I will mediate and reach an understanding with him.’

After the Chechen delegation spent the night with Sheikh Haditha, they departed the following morning, after he provided them with a guide for the road, and the delegation reached Zarqa on 7 Jumada Al-Awwal, 1330 AH (1911).

Sheikh Haditha and the Druze

French–Druze hostility in 1925 grew out of Mandate policies that curtailed Druze autonomy in Jabal Al-Druze, interfered with local leadership structures, and escalated into arrests and repression which sparked the Druze-led uprising that became the Great Syrian Revolt. On 20 August 1925, as Druze revolutionaries gathered at Ayn Al-Mazra‘a to deliberate on the precautions they should take against French

treachery, reinforcements arrived from Hawran, from Bani Hasan, and from Bani Sakhr, led by Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha. Those who arrived witnessed the horrific traces left by the French force of the Michaud expedition which was the French Mandate's armed relief-and-punitive column, led by General Roger Michaud, sent in July 1925 to march on Jabal Al-Druze. Later, during a gathering of tribal leaders with King Abdel-Aziz ibn Saud, some leaders began to satirise the Druze, provoking the displeasure of Sheikh Haditha, who was present among them.

Sheikh Haditha had answered the call to join the Druze at the Battle of Al-Mazra'a in which the French were defeated, but he arrived a day or two after it had ended and saw the scale of the French disaster, and what the revolutionaries had done to a heavily armed and equipped campaign. Many poets recorded the magnitude of the French losses which left more than ten thousand dead. When the revolutionaries later withdrew to eastern Trans-Jordan, after it proved unable to meet their demands and under pressure from the French government which asked the British to expel the revolutionaries from territories under their occupation, the revolutionaries had no refuge left but the Hijaz. The Hijaz was then under the rule of Abdel-Aziz ibn Saud. According to tribal custom, when asylum is sought, the refugees request the permission of the ruler of the land. Haditha arrived with the revolutionaries and asked the leaders' opinion. Their response was negative and insulting towards the Druze, for several reasons—most importantly that the Druze had experienced several clashes with tribal groups, and because they had prevented Bedouin groups from imposing control over the lands of Jabal Al-Druze, something regarded as normal at the time. Another

reason was that colonialism had created a deep rupture between the religions and sects of the Arab peoples, alongside the emergence of some rigid Salafi calls that centred on the logic of excommunication. Sheikh Haditha was angered by this and Prince Abdel-Aziz Al-Sudeiri who was also in attendance could see this and asked Sheikh Haditha to say what was on his mind. Haditha delivered the following poem:

العزَّ عَزَّ اللهُ والي الأنفاس
والعزَّ الآخر ل لايسين العمايم
عزَّك بني معروف عالخيل جلاس
وبمقابل الجمعين كلهم لزايم
الدروز لو ركبوا على الخيل فراس
يا مير الله يعزهم دوم دايم
المرجله من دور آدم لهم ساس
وعيرا بها بمصقلات العزايم
قيدومهم الليا مشي يقطع الراس
ويزگردن البيض زرق اللنايم
ويا ما تقرب حيهم كل محتاس
يعزوه ولو أنو بأحمر الدم عايم
كم من أمير يشرب الخمر بالكاس
خلو عليه الطير يا مير حايم
يوم المدافع عجبها تقول حنداس
وبزر القرنجي مثل رشق الغمايم
حمر البيارق أشرفت روس الطعاس
وعدوهم يا مير باللحد نايم
دروزي تعزهم على كل الأجناس

فِعْلَيْنِ وَطَيْبِ نَفُوسِ شَمَخِ عِظَائِمِ
 يدوسوا العراضى يعزم كاللوح درَاسِ
 وضعيفهم بالحرب أبو الهمائمِ
 إسلام يعطوا الحق أصفى من الكاسِ
 والحق معهم يسندوه بدعائمِ
 الصدج منى شهادة ترفع الراسِ
 ولا أنا من اللي بينزون السمايمِ
 يا الله ياللى والى كلّ الأنفاسِ

*Glory is God's alone, Lord of each living breath,
 And glory, too, for turbaned men, with honour for
 their crest.*

*Your glory, Bani Ma'rouf; on horse you take
 your seat,
 Before two gathered hosts at once, you never yield
 retreat.*

*The Druze, when they mount their steed, are
 horsemen tried and true,
 O Emir, may God honour them still, and make it
 ever due.*

*Manliness has been their quality since Adam's
 earliest days,
 And they have proved it time and again with firm
 resolve and stays.*

*Their vanguard-chief moves in the darkest night,
 A head-taker in the charge, while white blades sing,
 and coward-souls lose sight.*

*How many a desperate one draws near their tents
 in need,*

*They rush to aid though he swims in blood-red
deed.*

*How many an Emir drinks his wine, cup after
shining cup,*

*Leave him to circling birds, O Emir, let them
hover up.*

*When cannon-fire rose thick, its dust turned day
to shade,*

*Like pitch-dark night itself, a gloom the guns
have made.*

*And corn-seed scattered in the air like cloudburst-
driven rain,*

*While thunder spoke in iron tongues across the
fighting plain.*

*Red banners rose above the heads of war in flight,
And their foe, O Emir, lay in the grave, sunk out
of sight.*

*Druze whose honour stands high here;
stout deeds and good souls, with lofty aims sincere.*

*They trampled armies as a mill grinds the grain,
And even their weakest in war is fierce, feared again
and again.*

*In Islam they gave what is right; more pure than
any glass,
And right stood with them; they upheld it firm, and
let it pass.*

*And truth from me is witness, lifting high the head,
For I am not of those who sow the poisons
others spread.*

O God, Lord of every breath that lives and
cannot hide,
Hold back from them the evil of each slanderer and
oppressor's pride.

Sheikh Haditha's Legacy

God ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

*O mankind! We have indeed created you from a male
and a female, and have made you nations and tribes
that you may come to know one another. Truly the
noblest of you in the sight of God, is the most God-
fearing among you. Truly God is Knower, Aware.*
(Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

And Abu Al-Darda'—May God be pleased with him—
reported: The Prophet ﷺ said: “Nothing will be heavier in
the Scale of the believer than good character.” (*Sunan Abu
Dawoud* 4799)

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha was one of the most conse-
quential sheikhs of his generation. God endowed him with
the reason of a philosopher, the wisdom of a venerable
sheikh, and the contemplation of a sage. He was a devout
man of religion and weighed matters in the scales of the
Muslim faith which guided him throughout his life. When
he died, Sheikhs around the country *kaffu al-dlaal*, meaning
that they poured their coffee pots onto the coals of their
fires and put them out as a sign of mourning, and many
composed elegiac poems in his honour. Sheikh Haditha's
legacy belongs to a wider moment in the modern history of
the Arab and Muslim Ummahs, when the collapse of the
Ottoman order and the advance of European mandates red-
rew borders, destabilised communities, and tested the an-

cient moral codes of *dakhlah* and chivalry. In that era of displacement and anti-colonial struggle—from Palestine to Syria to the deserts of Trans-Jordan—Sheikh Haditha defended the long-standing regional ethic of asylum not as rhetoric but as practice, accepting the burdens, risks, and responsibilities that came with sheltering the vulnerable.

He also served as an intermediary between Emir Abdullah and the Jordanian street, translating local pressures into intelligible demands and ensuring that authority took root without severing the social fabric that sustained it. His stance was firm, yet ultimately within the Emir's political frame, underscoring his dual role as a loyal Hashemite ally and a national figure capable of shaping outcomes on the ground without rupturing with the centre. The same social and tribal networks that anchored Haditha in Al-Muwaqqar and among Bani Sakhr also connected him to urban notables and Syrian revolutionaries, making his tented diwan function as a node where anti-French activism, Jordanian nationalism, and Hashemite state-building intersected.

In 1951 Sheikh Haditha performed the Hajj pilgrimage and returned to Al-Muwaqqar unwell. He died on 4 January 1952 / 7 Rabi' ul-Thani, 1371 AH and was buried in Al-Muwaqqar, Jordan. He left behind a legacy of jihad shaped by the old codes of the desert: protection for the fugitive, sanctuary for the vulnerable, and a pledged word that carried the weight of law. In his world, honour was not ornament but obligation: coffee that conferred sanctuary, wisdom that bridled vengeance, mediation that held back bloodshed, and a diwan whose open door turned strangers into guests—and guests, in time, into trusted friends.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

THE LAW TO OVERSEE THE BEDOUINS (1929)

We, Abdullah ibn Al-Hussein, Emir of Trans-Jordan,

Pursuant to Article (19) of the Basic Law,

And in accordance with the decision of the Legislative Council convened on 4 Muharram 1348 AH / 11 June 1929 CE,

Ratify the following law and order its promulgation:

The Law to Oversee the Bedouins (1929)

Article I

This law shall be called the Law to Oversee the Bedouins of 1929 and shall come into force from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Article II

The term 'Bedouins' in this law shall mean the nomadic tribes of Trans-Jordan, namely: Bani Sakhr, the Sirhan, Bani Khalid, Al-'Isa, Al-Salayta, Al-Ka'abnah, Al-Huweitat, Al-Mana'in, Al-Najadat, Al-Hajaya, their followers (*ta-wabi'ahum*), and all other nomadic tribes that enter Trans-Jordan from time to time.

Article III

A committee shall be formed in Trans-Jordan consisting of Prince Shakir, the Commander of the Arab Army, and a

third person to be appointed by His Highness the Emir for such period as he deems appropriate from among the non-nomadic tribal sheikhs. Should Prince Shakir or the third member be unable to attend for any reason, His Highness the Emir shall appoint another person to take the place of the absentee.

Article IV

The functions of the committee established under the preceding article shall be:

(a) To oversee the Bedouins and monitor their movements and migrations.

(b) When necessary, to designate the places where it deems it essential for them to settle. Anyone contravening the committee's decision in this regard shall be subject to the penalty prescribed in paragraph (e).

(c) To hear and determine, with final authority, cases falling within the jurisdiction of the Tribal Courts in accordance with the Tribal Courts Law.

(d) To withdraw, at its discretion and with final authority, any case under consideration before a tribal court.

(e) To investigate any raid (*ghazu*) or breach of security in which Bedouins are involved, whether occurring before or after the implementation of this law and wherever it may have taken place, and to impose penalties of fines, imprisonment, or both, provided that imprisonment shall not exceed one year.

(f) The committee shall have authority to seize the movable and immovable property of Bedouins whom it holds responsible and to sell such property to recover personal

claims and fines imposed upon them. Immovable property shall not be sold except in satisfaction of personal claims.

Article V

No order, decision, or judgment issued by the committee shall be effective unless ratified by His Highness the Emir.

Article VI

The Commander of the Army shall execute the decisions of the committee.

ABDULLAH IBN AL-HUSSEIN

APPENDIX TWO

TEXT OF THE NATIONAL CHARTER (25 JULY 1928)

Relying upon the pledges given to the Arabs in general by their ally, Great Britain, during the Great War;

and upon the official promises made by her to Trans-Jordan in particular;

and upon Article (22) of the Covenant of the League of Nations;

and upon President Wilson's Fourteen Points, which were recognised by the Allies, who officially promised on their basis the liberation of oppressed peoples;

and upon the official pledge issued in 1918 by the Foreign Ministries of England and France to the liberated Arab countries.

We, the representatives of the Arab Emirate of Trans-Jordan, assembled in our National Congress convened in Amman, the capital of the noble Emirate, on 25 July 1928, hereby declare a National Charter for our country in the following clauses:

1. The Emirate of Trans-Jordan is an independent Arab state, sovereign, with known natural frontiers.
2. The affairs of Trans-Jordan shall be administered by an independent constitutional government under the leader-

ship of His Royal Highness Emir Abdullah bin Al-Hussein and his descendants after him.

3. Trans-Jordan does not recognise the concept of the Mandate except according to a conception based on impartial technical assistance in the interest of the country; this assistance may be defined by an agreement or by a treaty concluded between the Emirate and Britain, the Arabs' ally, on the basis of reciprocal rights and mutual benefits, without that infringing on national sovereignty.

4. Trans-Jordan considers the Balfour Declaration, regarding the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine, to be contrary to Britain's covenants and promises to the Arabs, and conduct opposed to the civil laws of the world.

5. Elections to the Chamber of Deputies must take place according to the rules of proper representation; and any departure from that, and any failure to adopt ministerial responsibility before the elected Chamber, does not express the nation's wishes, will, and national sovereignty within constitutional norms, but is considered an election without true representative value. The election of members on an improper basis does not entail recognising that their exercise of legislative, financial, or political powers has the legitimate force acknowledged by the people; rather, their actions are to be regarded as part of the actions of the Mandatory authority.

6. The people of Trans-Jordan reject any conscription that does not proceed from a constitutional government responsible in the country.

7. The people of Trans-Jordan reject bearing the expenses of a foreign occupying force, and consider any money imposed upon them for that purpose to be usurped from the hard-earned money of citizens; workers and farmers.

8. The resources of Trans-Jordan, should its civil government be organised, are sufficient for the establishment of sound constitutional administration therein. As for the financial assistance paid by the British Government to Trans-Jordan, the Jordanian people consider it necessary expenditure for British lines of communication and for the military forces belonging to it; therefore Britain has no right to supervise the country's finances.

9. The people in Trans-Jordan consider any exceptional legislation that is not founded on justice, public interest, and the interests and needs of the people to be null.

10. Trans-Jordan does not recognise financial loans that were contracted prior to the [elected] Chamber of Deputies.

11. State lands (*al-aradi al-amiriyyah*) may not be disposed of before being submitted to the Chamber of Deputies and its approval obtained; and any sale before the convening of the Chamber is considered null.

25 July 1928

SIGNATORIES

Executive Committee, Amman: Hashim Kheir; Sa'eed Al-Mufti; Tahir Al-Juqqa; Shams Al-Din Sami; Shahir Al-Hadid; Tariq Suleiman.

Balqa: Mithqal Al-Fayez; Haditha Al-Khraisha; Muhammad Al-Hussein; Nimir Al-Hmoud; Salim Abu Al-Ghanam; Majid Al-Adwan; Salim Al-Bakhit; Yusuf Tannus.

Ajloun: Rashid Al-Khuza'i; Suleiman Al-Sudi; Ali Niyazi Al-Tall; Abdul-Aziz Al-Kayid; Salti Al-Ibrahim; Muhammad Al-Atiyan.

Kerak: Hussein Al-Tarawneh; Eteiwi Al-Majali; Atallah Al-Suheimat; Salamah Al-Sharayha; Mustafa Al-Muhsin.

Ma'an: Hamad bin Al-Jazi; Ibrahim Al-Rawwad; Khashman Abu Karaki; Muhammad Qubbah.

Other participants in the Congress which issued the Charter were: Muhammad Al-Awwad; Ismail Al-Salim; Tahir Abu Al-Samn; Ahmad Al-Khatib; Salih Khalifah; Falah Al-Hamad; Sa'eed Atiyah; Abdul-Razzaq Al-Salim; Abdullah Farah; I'sa Qa'war; Sa'eed Abu Jaber; Abdullah Al-Dawud; Fawaz Al-Nabulsi; Abdul-Hamid Al-Omari; Muhammad Al-Mubarak; Hussein Khas; Abdullah Du'aybis; Mutliq Abu Al-Ghanam; Hamid Al-Sharari; Suleiman Matar; Muhammad Mahmoud Al-Rifa'i; Sidu Al-Kurdi; Abdul-Rahman Jardaneh; Ali Al-Kayid; Abu Al-Kheir Al-Mufti; Ismail Haqqi; Yusuf Al-Bilbeisi; Muhammad Sa'eed Halawa; Rida Al-Ghdayyin; Falah Al-Simrein; Salim Al-Sa'd; Muhammad Al-Fteish; Turki Al-Kayid; Naji Al-Azzam; Muhammad Al-Sa'd; Salim Al-Hindawi; Murad Saqr; Muhammad Abu Al-

Baqr; Saud Al-Ali; Abtan Al-Aziz; Hussein Hasan Mhar-
ram; Rashid Al-Muflih; Salim Muhammad; Za'al Al-'Od-
tallah; Muflih Al-Sa'd; Mansur Al-Qadi; Naji Yusuf Abu
Nowar.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Abu Nowar, Ma'an, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Vol. 1: The Creation and Development of Transjordan, 1920-1929* [in Arabic], Al-Rai Press, 2000, p. 380.

APPENDIX THREE

THE PROGRAMME AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE JORDANIAN PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

1. The members of the Jordanian People's Congress convened today—truly representative of the Emirate—declare their loyalty to His Highness the Emir and to his successors after him.
2. Since the press has devoted much discussion to the question of Zionism in Trans-Jordan, the Jordanian People's Congress—convened on the basis of resisting Zionism—denounces Zionism, affirms its resistance to it, and resolves to safeguard the noble heritage and positions of the forefathers.
3. To work for reform of the present governmental situation and the formation of a national government answerable to the nation.
4. To seek the remission, without exception, of arrears of Emiri (state) revenues (*al-amwal al-Amiriyyah*) up to the year 1932.
5. To exempt drought-stricken villages from this year's taxes in proportion to the extent of the drought that afflicted them.
6. To seek amendment of the British-Jordanian treaty.

7. To seek a reduction of taxes and fees to a level commensurate with the country's economic conditions.
8. To demand the amendment of the licensing law (*qanun al-rukhass*), which does not accord with the spirit of justice.
9. To seek the postponement of all Agricultural Bank debts for long periods so that farmers can pay in instalments without suffering any unfairness.
10. To require the Iraq Petroleum Company to observe the terms of the agreement and to confine employment to the people of Trans-Jordan.
11. To request the expansion of the scope of the Department of Agriculture in a manner enabling it to advance agriculture according to modern principles.
12. To provide primary education and to send scholarship students to learn agricultural sciences.
13. To seek sufficient funds to revitalise the conditions of the Jordanian farmer, from Arab capital at reasonable interest.
14. To implement the secondary-college project, given the country's pressing need for it, and to establish two schools—one in Jafr and the other in Azraq—to educate the children of the nomadic tribes (the Huweitat and Bani Sakhr and their followers).
15. The Congress calls upon all the noble Jordanian people to agree and unite, reconcile hearts, and close ranks.
16. To elect an Executive Committee for the Jordanian People's Congress convened today in place of the Executive

Committee that dissolved naturally through the withdrawal of most of its members and the remainder forming for themselves a political party under the name 'The Jordanian Executive Committee Party (*Hizb Al-Lajnah Al-Tanfithiyyah Al-Urduniyyah*)'. And since the Second Jordanian Congress did not approve the continuance of that committee nor elect an executive committee for itself; and since this Congress is composed of a majority of the members of the First Congress and of all the leading figures in the country who did not attend the First Jordanian Congress; and since the same members of the previous Jordanian Congress were those who established the first Executive Committee, and since they likewise have the right to dissolve the committee they established when it was a duly elected, legitimate committee—they now exercise this right and announce the dissolution of the present Executive Committee, some of whose members had no right to claim membership, not having been duly elected.

INDEX

A

Abdullah I, Emir / King, 7-8, 37, 43, 52-55, 57, 59-61, 68, 77-78, 81-88, 90, 92-95, 97-98, 108, 110-113, 115-118, 120, 124-125, 136, 142, 144-148, 153, 155, 157, 161-163, 165-167, 172, 175, 177-178, 181-183, 188, 191-192, 202, 205-207 (Appendix), 209 (Appendix), 213 (Appendix)

Abu Al-Huda, Tawfiq, 82, 84-85, 181-182

Abu Ghneimeh, Muhammad Subhi, 42(fn) 29, 43

Abu Tayeh, Auda, 57, 105, 134, 136

Abu Tayeh, Muhammad, 58, 136

Accredited British Representative, 58-60, 127-128, 166-169, 171, 190

Adwan, Majid bin, 7-8, 58, 60, 146-147, 152, 161, 211

Adwan Revolt, 145

Adwan, Sultan, 145-147

'Ahd, (Covenant Society), Al-, 34-38, 42

Ajloun, 43(fn), 116, 123, 131-132, 134, 152, 178, 211 (Appendix)

Allenby Bridge (King Hussein

Bridge), 68

Anatolia, 29

Anaza tribe, 18-21, 94, 101

'Anbar School, Al-, 2, 43

Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, 31, 67, 162-163, 165-166, 169-173, 177, 213 (Appendix)

Aqsa Mosque, Al-, 67-71

Arab Independence Party (see Independence Party)

Arab Legion (Arab Army), 61-65, 72, 90, 99, 102, 105-106, 109, 112, 139, 185, 189, 205 (Appendix)

Arab Revolt, The Great, 23, 30, 34, 36-37, 39-40, 42, 52-53, 59, 61, 72, 91, 136, 163

Areisi, Abdel-Ghani Al-, 29

Arslan, Emir Adel, 34, 73, 115

Arslan, Mazhar, 117, 123, 132, 134, 139

Atrash, Sultan Pasha, Al-, 23, 39, 58, 60, 111, 115, 119-120

Atrash, Zeid Al-, 120

Azraq, Al-, 2, 24-26, 95, 111-112, 116, 119-122, 124, 190-191, 194-196, 214

B

Bab Al-Wad, 63

Baghdad, 65, 88, 94, 189

- Balfour Declaration, 52, 55, 70,
132, 137, 164, 209 (Appendix)
- Bali, Hamad bin, 29-30
- Balqa, 9, 28, 57, 96, 104-106,
118, 130-131, 135, 138, 145-
148, 161, 211
- Balqa Alliance, 145-147
- Bani Hasan, 131, 142, 197, 131
- Bani Ma'rouf, 7, 23, 199
- Bani Sakhr (Skhour), 1, 3-4, 6-7,
18, 20-23, 25, 30, 34, 43(fn),
56-57, 62-66, 70-72, 83, 86,
88-90, 95-108, 112-113, 116,
118, 120-122, 124-126, 128,
130-131, 134-136, 138, 140-
143, 145-147, 153-154,
158-160, 175, 179, 184-185,
187-188, 191-194, 197, 202,
205 (Appendix), 214
(Appendix)
- Battle of Maysalun, 30, 50, 53, 57,
110-111
- Battle of Swagah, 6
- Beersheba Agreement, 159
- British High Commissioner, 51,
94-95, 117, 122, 123, 128,
132, 134, 169, 178, 190(fn)
- Brunton, Captain Dunbar, 18,
117, 134-135, 138-140
- Bukhari, Jalal Al-, 29-30
- Buraq Commission, International,
69-70
- Buraq Wall, Al-, 67, 69-72
- Buraq Wall Revolt, 67-72
- C
- Chechens, 24-27, 194-196
- Circassians, 77, 134, 139, 141,
152, 194
- Coalition Party (*Hizb Al-I'tilaf*),
27
- Committee of Union and Progress
(*Jam'iyyat Al-Ittihad wa Al-
Taraqqi*), 32-34, 37, 44
- Committee to Oversee the
Bedouins, 156, 158-159, 186,
188, 205-207 (Appendix)
- Conference, General Muslim, 70
- Congress, Arab, 35, 42
- Congress, Arab-Syrian, 42
- Congress, General Jordanian
People's (*Mu'tamar Al-Sha'b
Al-'Aam / Mu'tamar Al-Sha'b
Al-Urduni* 1933), 164, 170,
173-175, 213-215 (Appendix)
- Congress, (First) General National
(*Al-Mu'tamar Al-Watani Al-
'Aam* 1928), 163, 174,
- Congress, General Syrian, 42(fn),
46, 50
- Constitution (Basic Law), 55, 67,
160-162, 165, 167, 170-171,
173, 180-182, 209
- Crane, Charles, 46
- D
- Damascus Protocol, 36
- Dar'a reconciliation meeting, 7,
159, 185
- Desert Force, 65-66, 191
- Druze, 7, 30, 39, 111, 119, 123,
147, 194, 196-197, 199-200
- Druze, Jabal Al- (Arab, Jabal Al-),
7, 111-112, 115, 121-123, 197

- E
 'Eastern Question', The, 40
 Economic Conference, First
 Jordanian, 151-152
- F
 Faisal I ibn Al-Hussein, Emir /
 King, 34, 36-38, 43-47, 50, 52,
 57, 93, 110, 121, 133, 183,
 188
 Farazdaq, Al-, 9
 Fatat, *Jam'iyyat Al-Arabiyyah Al-*
 (the Young Arab Society), 30,
 34-38, 42-43, 51
 Fayez, Mithqal, Al-, 7, 11, 42(fn),
 43(fn), 57, 60-61, 68, 70, 87,
 89-91, 96, 117-120, 124, 134,
 136, 147, 152, 156, 161, 165,
 174, 176, 178, 183-185, 211
 (Appendix)
 French Superior War Council, 31
 Frontier Force, Trans-Jordan, 108-
 109, 190
- G
 Ghouri, Emile, Al-, 73-75, 79
 Glubb Pasha, 7, 18, 109, 156, 185,
 187, 189-193
 Golan Revolt, 121-122
 Great Syrian Revolt, 23, 86, 111,
 116, 119, 122, 124, 128-129,
 196
- H
 Haram Al-Sharif, Al-, 67-71
 Hejaz Railway, 103, 136, 145
hfaar wa dfaan, 7, 143, 159, 184,
 186
- Husna, 20
 Hussein bin Ali, Sharif, 30, 36-39,
 42, 61, 81-82, 147
 Husseini, Haj (Muhammad) Amin
 Al-, 70, 73-74, 76-80, 82
 Hussein-McMahon
 Correspondence, 36
 Huweitat, 5-7, 34, 95, 100, 105,
 109, 116, 134-136, 160, 178,
 184-185, 191, 205 (Appendix),
 214 (Appendix)
- I
 Independence Party, (Arab
 Independence Party) (*Hizb Al-*
 Istiqlal), 31, 37, 43, 50, 120,
 123, 134, 136, 138, 164, 170,
 176
 Irbid, 29, 124, 132, 134, 142, 144,
 152, 161, 166
 Irsheid, Farid, 182
 Istiqlaliyyun, 51
- J
 Jamal Pasha, 28-30, 35
Jam'iyyat Al-'Ahd, (see 'Ahd,
 (Covenant Society), Al)
Jam'iyyah Al-Qabtaniyyah, Al-,
 34,
 Jarir, 9-10
 Jazi, Hamad bin, 58, 152, 178-
 179, 184
 Jerusalem, 56, 62-63, 64(fn), 65,
 67, 69-71, 80-81, 94, 128, 147,
 162, 178
 Jew, Jewish, 31, 45, 47-49, 52, 55,
 57, 62, 66-68, 70-71, 173, 175,
 209 (Appendix)

Jubata Al-Khashab, 28-29

K

Ka'abnah, Al-, 1, 7, 56, 125-126,
133, 206 (Appendix)

Kailani, Sheikh Jamal Al-Din Al-,
25, 194-195

Kailani, Rashid Aali Al-, 184, 189

Kailani, Rashid Aali Al- Revolt,
184, 189-191

Kayed, Abdel-Aziz Al-, 132, 211

Kayed, Adib Al-, 156

Kayed, Ali Al-, 132-133, 211

Kayed, Turki Al-, 28, 42(fn),
43(fn), 211

Kerak (Karak), 40, 97, 111, 119,
124, 133-135, 152, 165, 211
(Appendix)

Kerak (Karak) Revolt, 40

Khirshan, 2, 4-6, 62-63, 65, 73,
103-104, 112, 120, 122,
130(fn), 153

Khraisha, Abdullah Mjalli, Al-,
63, 64(fn)

Khraisha, Ali Abdullah, Al-, 1-2,
74

Khraisha, Ali Haditha, Al-, 2, 5,
74, 76-78, 113-115, 129, 160-
161

Khraisha, Barakat Traad Al-, 58,
64-66

Khraisha, Dari Mshash Al-, 58,
63, 64(fn)

Khraisha, Fadil Argoub Al-, 63,
64(fn)

Khraisha, Hakim Haditha Al-, 2

Khraisha, Hamad Abu Dkheina
Al-, 58, 63, 64(fn)

Khraisha, Jad'aan Al-, 2

Khraisha, Jaddu' Al-, 2

Khraisha, Jamal Haditha Al-, 2

Khraisha, Khalid Mjalli Klaib Al-,
56, 58, 63-64(fn), 80

Khraisha, Mijhem Haditha Al-, 2

Khraisha, Mjalli bin Ta'aan Klaib
Al-, 52

Khraisha, Mshaash Al-, 2, 5-6

Khraisha, Nawwaf Haditha Al-, 2

Khraisha, Nayef Haditha Al-, 2, 5,
18, 58, 62-63

Khraisha, Rfeifan Khaled Al-, 58,
63, 64(fn)

Khraisha, Saleem Sat'aan Al-, 5

Khraisha, Shayesh Nayef Al-, 18

Khraisha, Turki Haditha Al-, 2

King-Crane Commission, 45-50

King, Henry, 46

Kirkbride, Alec, 58-59, 112, 134,
190

Koura, 88, 91, 132, 138, 143-145,
148

Koura Revolt, 91, 143-145

Kuthayyir 'Azza, 9

L

Land Borders, 153-154

Law to Oversee the Bedouins, 160,
205-207

League of Nations, 49, 69, 166,
170-172, 208 (Appendix)

M

Magharbeh (Moroccan) Quarter,
69

Mahamid, Fadel Al-, 28

Majali, Dleiwan Al-, 152

Majali, Eteiwi Al-, 211, 156

- Majali, Ma'arik Al-, 182
 Majali, Qadr Al-, 40, 42(fn)
 Majali, Rfeifan Al-, 133, 176, 178-179
 Majali, Za'al Al-, 161, 183
 Maysalun, (see Battle of Maysalun)
 Moroccan Quarter, (see Magharbeh Quarter)
 Mreiwed, Ahmad, 28-30, 43, 117-118, 121-123
 Mufleh Al-Obaidat, Kayed Al-, 29-30, 42(fn),
 Muwaqqar, Al-, 2, 9-10, 29, 65, 74, 85-86, 95, 97, 103-104, 112-113, 116, 124, 202
- N
- Najd (Nejd), 23, 39, 93-94, 100, 146, 158, 186-187
 Najd (Nejd) Revolt, 39
 National Charter, 162, 165, 171-172, 208-210 (Appendix)
 National Identity, Jordanian, 31, 155
- O
- Ottoman Empire, 32, 35-36, 39-40, 46
- P
- Palestine, 23, 31, 45, 47-49, 52, 54-73, 77, 79, 119, 124, 132, 134, 158, 174, 181, 188-190, 202, 207, 209 (Appendix)
 Paris Peace Conference (see Versailles Conference)
 Peake, Frederick (Peake Pasha), 89-92, 95, 97-98, 112, 116, 122-124, 144, 156, 158, 173
 Philby, 88(fn), 94-95, 97-98, 147(fn)
 Picot, M. Georges, 51
- Q
- Qahtaniyyah Society (see *Jam'iyyah Al-Qahtaniyyah, Al-*), 34, 42
 Qasr Al-Muwaqqar, 9
 Quwwatli, Shukri Al-, 58, 60, 114-115, 174
- R
- Raqim, Al-, 9
 Reserve Force, 97-98, 102, 138-139
 Rikabi, Ali Rida Al-, 36-37, 95, 98, 144
 Ruwala, 25, 87, 91, 101, 108, 185, 194, 196
- S
- Sahab, 74, 138-140, 143, 145, 148
 Salt, 18, 90, 117, 124, 131-132, 134-136, 138-140, 152, 161, 174, 178
 Salt, Local Government of, 130, 132, 134
 Sardiyyah, 125, 130, 142
 Saud, Aal, 94, 188
 Saud, Abdel-Aziz ibn, 93-95, 100-101, 109, 114, 187, 197
 Saudi Arabia, 114, 130(fn), 183, 186-188, 190
 Saud, King Faisal Aal, 188
 Seabrook, W.B., 4, 11, 66

Shahbandar, Abdul-Rahman, 113,
115-116, 119-120
Sha'laan, 91, 98
Sha'laan, Mijhem, 119
Sha'laan, Nouri Al-, 7-8, 23-25,
87, 185, 196
Shammar, 20-21, 93, 101-102,
105
Shararat, 101, 107-108, 132, 160
Sharif Hussein bin Ali, (see
Hussein bin Ali, Sharif)
Sirhan, tribe Al-, 12, 25, 29, 66,
130, 141-142, 160, 194, 196,
205 (Appendix)
Sirhan, Wadi Al-, 95, 97-101, 119,
187
Solidarity Party, Jordanian, 31,
163-164, 170, 176
Sultan Abdul-Hamid, 32
Supreme Muslim Council, 70-71,
73, 82
Sykes-Picot Agreement, 50, 52,
137
Syria, Greater, 42, 50, 62, 111,
118
Syrian National Congress, (see
Congress, General Syrian)
Syrian Revolution, 111, 120-121,
125, 129

T

Tall ('Arar), Mustafa Wahbi Al-,
42-43, 166
Tarawneh, Hussein Al-, 165, 167,
178-179, 183, 211 (Appendix)
Treaty, Anglo-Jordanian, (see
Anglo-Jordanian Treaty)
Turkification, 33, 37

U

Umm Al-Amad, 57, 60-61, 90, 95-
97, 102-107
Umm Al-Amad Conference, 61
Unity of the Two Banks, 181-182

V

Versailles Conference, 44, 46, 48,
49-50

W

Wadi Al-Sirhan (see Sirhan, Wadi
Al-)
Wahhabi Ikhwan, 87, 93-109,
146, 186, 188
Wahhabi Incursions, 93-109
Wajhat, 153-154
Weizmann, Chaim, 45
Western Wall, (see Buraq Wall)
Wilson, President Woodrow, 45,
49, 208 (Appendix)

Y

Yazid ibn Abd Al-Malik, 9
Yemen, 38-39
Yemeni uprising, 38

Z

Zaben, 'Addoub Al-, 7-8, 105, 156
Zaben, Hatmal Al-, 6, 105, 108
Zionist movement, 44-45, 47-49,
54-55, 63, 66, 70-71, 82, 133,
137, 173-176, 178, 213
(Appendix)

عَوَافِيهِمْ كَالْحَمْلِ الَّذِي فِيهِ عِظَامٌ كَالْعِظَامِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

Sheikh Haditha Al-Khraisha (c. 1882–1952) was one of the most influential tribal leaders in Trans-Jordan in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Sheikh of the Bani Sakhr tribe, he played a significant role in shaping relations between tribal society and the nascent Jordanian state. Renowned for his leadership, diplomacy, and steadfast sense of justice, Haditha lived through a period marked by imperial ambition, regional upheaval, and the emergence of new political realities. His tented diwan was a safe haven where anti-colonial jihad, Jordanian nationalism, and Hashemite state-building intersected.

Drawing on archival materials, oral histories, and accounts from his contemporaries, this biography follows Sheikh Haditha's political and martial life through his support for the Palestinian cause and the Arab struggles in Syria and Iraq for independence from colonial rule. It reveals a world in which honour, loyalty, and leadership were not ornament but obligation shaped by the old codes of the desert: protection for the fugitive, sanctuary for the vulnerable, and where men lived and died by their word.



THE ROYAL ISLAMIC STRATEGIC STUDIES CENTRE

JORDAN SERIES • BOOK NUMBER 44

ISBN 978-9957-635-90-9



9 789957 635909