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Nothing Else to Wear: Jordanian Bedouin Under the British Mandate and Hashemite State

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Abstract

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The concept of nationalism and the nation-state, although late arrivals in the Middle East, represent the most successful exports in Western history. Nationalism often operates by embracing certain groups, while excluding others. Jordanian national identity, for example, has systematically marginalized the Bedouin through a process of state penetration into tribal life that caused critical economic, political, legal, and cultural changes. The decline of the Bedouin in public life can be traced to the British mandate from 1920 to 1946 and its effects. Later Jordanian governments adopted similar restrictive policies, while utilizing aspects of Bedouin cultural such as dress, food and music for state use. British land reform and efforts to discourage nomadic pastoralism hampered Bedouin economic activity. Despite these changes, social groupings and customs remain central to the Bedouin. The comparative lack of state interference in the social arena has allowed this aspect of Bedouin identity to continue even today. Although attention has been focused on the "Jordanian/Palestinian" split in Jordan, the decline of the tribal Bedouin at the hands of the state has merited less scrutiny because they do not fit within the confines of the state system. The process of de-socialization by which the state produces citizens especially hurts the Bedouin because they rely on social relations as the basis for their societal self-understanding.

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Introduction

Who am I? This question has been asked by many throughout the ages in an attempt to come to terms with the relationship between individual and society. A person answers this question by taking a look at the surrounding social environment and then choosing where to place him or herself within it. The process of identity formation is not a static one; rather it is a dynamic series of interactions that culminate in the "individual's transformation from an inert thing to a social being."[1] A person establishes this position vis-à-vis society primarily through the performance of certain actions or "gestures."[2] The sociologist Erving Goffman terms this presentation a "performance," which he defines as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants." Goffman terms all such attempts to influence performance as a "front," a set of actions whose purpose is to "define the situation for those who observe the performance."[3] Thus, through the performance of certain actions that carry definite meanings, individuals are able to create and recreate identity within a social order. Membership within a certain group depends upon a constant execution of these

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[1] Riad Nasser, *Palestinian Identity in Jordan and Israel: The Necessary 'Other' in the Making of a Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), 15.

actions, and so it is essential that they be carried out continuously rather than only once.[4]

In the advent of the modern state system, the state has come to monopolize the discourse of the presentation of self from its citizens. The question of definition becomes tied up with the question of power. Nationalism, a theory that had its origins in nineteenth-century Europe with such thinkers as Johan Gustav Herder, was spread to the four corners of the world primarily through the colonial process. It remains in many ways the most successful Western export in modern history, and the story of how it came to mesh with the various political system and ideologies in various places remains a large field of study. The present work aims to trace the origins of Jordanian nationalism and its development during the British colonial period 1920-1946, which will be shown to be an extremely important era for its formulation. The process can be described in terms of a state penetration into all areas of civil society, be they economic, political, agricultural, or residential. While this discussion will focus on the country of Jordan and the effects that this penetration had on the Jordanian Bedouin, the processes described herein should not be assumed to stop at

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[4] Goffman notes the active nature of this construction with his concept of "dramatic realization" in which an "individual infuses his activity with signs that dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain obscure. Ibid., 30. Thus a performance must be an active one confirmed by actions.

the border's edge, as "the same general process of the extension of central state power into the range has occurred everywhere in the Arab world." [5]

Chapter 1: Making a Nation

The concept of nationhood can be viewed as a distinctive expression of political identity. The existence of separate nations carries with it the idea that belonging to a nation creates certain social meanings for an individual. Nationhood and its consequences can be seen as being, "constructed out of social interactions, but having a reified existence taking on a life of their own." [6] Despite the fact that nations are constructed, the idea of nationhood itself has come to be expected as a universal in the estimation of Linda Layne, who states that "in the modern world everyone can, should, will have a nationality." [7] In the modern Middle East, this fact becomes even more apparent than in Western Europe, which has a longer and more established tradition of nation states and nationalism. Part of the problem when discussing nationalism as it relates to areas outside of Europe in general and the Middle East in particular lies not only in the fact that most of the examples are drawn from European experiences, but more importantly that most of the concepts and

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[5] Donald Cole, "Where Have All the Bedouin Gone?" *Anthropological Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 251, http://www.jstor.org/pss/3318400.

[6] Nasser, *Palestinian Identity*, 1.

[7] Linda Layne, *Home and Homeland: The Dialogics of Tribal and National Identity in Jordan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 8.

theoretical models derive from a European world view and thought process.[8] By and large, nationalism as it relates to the Middle East was imported via the conduit of colonialism and resulted in a reshaping of local attitudes on a wide variety of subjects, from the use of space to social structures to economic systems.

The present work focuses on the ways in which the imported system of nationalism and its result, the creation of the modern nation state, fundamentally and drastically altered the lives of ordinary people in Jordan. The colonial period represented a crucial time for the importation of state-centric nationalism in a variety of places around the world. Sugata Bose, in his work *A Hundred Horizons,* writes of this phenomenon occurring in the context of the Indian Ocean: "The centralized state, *which was created in the colonial period* was an entirely new political innovation in the Indian Ocean region."[9] (emphasis added) Indeed, it was precisely this newness and unfamiliarity with a centralized controlling government that extended its influence into areas of society never before encroached upon by the state that made the transformation so dramatic. The lengthened reach of the state constituted the central aspect of the colonialist endeavor and the largest source of the myriad problems caused by colonialism. This process, in short, occurred too widely and too rapidly, without regard to damages it incurred along the way. Bose observes that during the colonial period the state, "penetrated society much more deeply than it

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[8] Nasser, *Palestinian Identity*, 2.

[9] Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 24.

had before" in a number of areas including law, land rights, religion, and customs.[10] According to Bose, this development was entirely new to the area and not particularly positive: "The notion of indivisible and unitary sovereignty" constituted a major difference with the ways of governance characteristic of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires.

The nomadic Bedouin became a special target for the newly created states because of difficulty to effectively contain them as well as their potential to serve as challenges to the established political order. According to the British officer Colonel J.V. Jarvis, who served in Jordan during the mandate, "ordinary laws by which settled populations are governed cannot be applied to a people who can pick up their tents and move thirty miles in a day, who possess no immovable property, and who are systematically against the government and against its police."[11] While the government of Jordan did try to rule the Bedouin tribes using a modified system of tribal law, it was clearly a concession against its best interests, and one that it later eliminated.[12] The Bedouin elusiveness and independence made their society more resistant than most at the time of the state penetration. This penetration affected all aspects of daily life and accelerated their decline at the dawn of the age of modernity. Either they were deprived of their independence and distinctiveness, or else they were

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[10] Ibid., 25.

[11] C. S. Jarvis, *Arab Command: The Biography of Lieutenant-Colonel F. G. Peake Pasha* (London: Hutchinson, 1943), 124.

[12] Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 52, 63.

criminalized and stamped out by force of arms. As a result, many nomads "were either forcibly settled or branded 'criminal tribes,'"[13] and often both processes occurred simultaneously.

In order to understand the process of how the state in Jordan dealt with its Bedouin inhabitants it is first necessary to provide a brief outline of early Jordanian history. The Hashemites had taken part in the Great Arab Revolt in 1916 on the eve of World War I in a bid to increase his power and autonomy from the Ottomans. After receiving a set of nebulous promises from the British known as the Hussien-McMahon correspondence about what he would receive in exchange for his support, Hussein decided to cast his lot in with the British. Although he claimed to be *malik al-bilad 'arabiyya*, or king of the Arab countries, the British addressed him only as "King of the Hijaz". After the war, Faysal who was commander of the Allied armies in Syria and Transjordan, proved unable to press his cast at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. After being crowned King by the Syrian General Congress that year, Faysal was defeated and expelled. With British backing Faysal became King of Iraq on August 23, 1921 until he was killed in a military coup on July 14 1958.

This move greatly upset Abdullah, Faysal's younger brother, who had been coveting the throne of Iraq for himself. After Faysal's defeat at the hands of the French, Abdullah entered Jordan and arrived in Amman on March 2, 1921 intent on reclaiming the Syrian throne for the Arab cause. While in Amman, however,

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[13] Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, 25.

Abdullah worked out an understanding with Winston Churchill to become Amir of the area known as Transjordan. On March 22, 1946 the Amir Abdullah was made King of the newly independent Kingdom of Jordan. After the 1948 War, Jordan formally annexed the West Bank of Palestine into Jordan in 1950. On July 20, 1951 King Abdullah was assassinated outside the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. In 1956 John Glubb, creator of the Jordanian national army known as the Arab Legion and a key colonial administrator, was expelled from Jordan under nationalist pressure.[14] On July 31, 1988 Jordan relinquished its claims over the West Bank and recognized the Palestinian authority as, "The sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."[15]

Why Jordan?

The extent to which these imported concepts clashed with Middle Eastern ones, and particularly tribal ones, came to form the basis of the conflict that developed between tribalism and nationalism in Jordan and countries like it. In this respect, Jordan was not unique, but rather it was the country that had to deal with the issue the most because of the disproportionate impact that the Bedouin had in Jordanian society by virtue of their sheer numbers relative to the total population in comparison to most other Arab countries. According to Riccardo Bocco, the British

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[14] Above summary taken from C.E. Dawn "Hāshimids." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by: P. Bearman , Th. Bianquis , C.E. Bosworth , E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2010. Brill Online.

[15] King Hussein b. Abdullah, "Address to the Nation", July 31, 1988 http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/88_july31.html

estimated that at the end of the 1920s out of a total population of 300,000, 120,000 were semi-nomads and 50,000 were nomads.[16] In other words, over half of the population of the area consisted of tribes who practiced varying levels of nomadism. And even these numbers are suspect as there is no way of ever really knowing how many "Bedouin" or "nomads" lived in the country back then or even today as such definitions remained flexible and open to various interpretation. Thus, Jordan does not represent the only Arab country where modernity clashed with tribalism, where progress clashed with tradition, where the ways of the past ran up against modern innovations, but it does offer a window onto this pitched battle, which is more apparent there than in most other countries.

Perhaps the closest parallel to the establishment of the state over a strong and developed Bedouin network came from the case of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to a book by Saudi intellectual Dr. Abdullah Al Ghdami, the first order of business for King Abdul Aziz in his quest to establish the Saudi monarchy was the pacification and sedentarization of the Bedouin tribes throughout the peninsula. Al Ghdami terms the Bedouin as "dangerous" for the new state venture because they were, "Not in harmony with the new state system and the new administrative

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[16] Ricardo Bocco, "The Settlement of Pastoral Nomads in the Arab Middle East: International Organizations and Trends in Development Policies, 1950-1990" in *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa: Entering the 21st Century,* ed. Dawn Chatty (Leiden, Neth: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005), 313.

discipline that did not conform to their existence."[17] As a result of this disconnect between state and Bedouin, Abdul Aziz, viewed the Bedouin situation as dangerous and developed the plan of settling the Bedouin in the Hajr as the foundation upon which he would build the Saudi state.[18] As a result, Agriculture minister Amir Sultan, Abdul Aziz's son, embarked on a program to encourage and promote sedentarization and farming by building schools, mosques, post offices, modern methods of communication, and paved roads in addition to a land reform program. This same general process would to Jordan and its Bedouin population. As a result, one can conclude that the incorporation of Bedouin into "civil society"[19] and their neutralization becomes a requirement for those states, like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, with large tribal populations.

The lack of an established urban center or urbanized region in Jordan contributed to the challenge posed in building a nation-state and the task of sedentarizing and pacifying the Bedouin. Compared to the area of the Hejaz that it bordered on the south, "the tribal and Bedouin character of Transjordan was the purer," as "the established urban traditions of Hijazi cities had no parallel in Transjordanian towns such as Amman and Salt." [20] The lack of an established urban

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[17] Halima Mutha, "The Amir Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, the First of the Supervisors of the Bedouins, the Most Important of Plans for the Establishment of the State," *Al Sharq al Awsat*, August 6, 2005. (translation mine)

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1993), 83.

tradition and the strong Bedouin component to the local inhabitants provided an opening for the state in Jordan to create its own vision of the country without any organized urban resistance or opposition. In the eyes of the Jordanian government and the British, the territory of Transjordan presented an opportunity to create a country in their own image, as though they were painting on a blank canvas. A good example of this vision came in the selection of Amman as the capital, a city that had existed as a Circassian settlement, as "this move transferred the people's focus to a new political and economic center, befitting the creation of a new state structure."[21] Since Amman had not existed as a major city up until the arrival of the Hashemites in 1921, "every institution henceforth constructed in the city would symbolize the growth and substance of Hashemite rule."[22] Thus the growth, development, and expansion of Amman into an urban metropolis wholly resulted from the policies of the Hashemite monarchy and the British who built it up. It was a physical symbol of Hashemite achievement and did not have any historical ties to anything else so that its Jordanian character could not be challenged or questioned. Since Jordan as a nation had to be built literally from the ground up, so too did symbols of Jordanian nationalism like the capital.

This process of constructing symbols was not only true for the city of Amman; in a larger sense it applied to the entire country of Transjordan. By virtue of

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[21] Betty Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan: The Street and the State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 39.

[22] Ibid.

the fact that Transjordan at that time held little meaning for the population, the British and the Hashemites came to define what Jordan would represent as a country and what it meant to be Jordanian. They did this primarily through excluding and co-opting two separate minority groups into the larger Jordanian national identity. These two groups were the Bedouin tribes and the Palestinian refugees, and while great differences exist between them in terms of their origins, lifestyles, and self-conceptions, a complete understanding of Jordanian national identity is impossible without an extensive study of how these two groups shaped its formation. On the one hand, the Bedouin were pacified, tied intimately into the state project, and later served as the cultural basis of Jordanian national identity. The Palestinians, on the other hand, were to a large extent excluded from the Jordanian identity by virtue of their national cause and country incorporated ideologically into Jordan and later annexed. However, while both groups helped shape what Jordanian identity meant, they were in some way excluded from it by virtue of their enduring separateness from the general populace. Understanding the reasons behind the persistence of these divisions and the ways in which these groups maintained their distinctiveness helps to answer the question of their ability to remain so.

Because of the modernist paradigm, the existence of nations as socially meaningful constructs has come to be taken for granted and accepted as fact. If the nation may be accepted as a meaningful construct, how did this concept come to exist? Like other culturally constructed concepts, the nation may be best understood in context. One's culture only relationally by constructing opposite other cultures

against which ones own culture may be defined.[23] It is important to remember that "no culture is closed onto itself. Every culture is haunted by its other."[24] As the English poet John Dunne once wrote, "No man is an island."[25] In any consideration of culture and identity, a comparative approach that takes into account the differences between distinct groupings is not only preferable, but necessary. Any critical evaluation of culture that fails to take into account the context of the area of study is rendered effectively worthless. The "other" against which culture is evaluated occurs not just from without, but more importantly from within. By excluding and co-opting both Palestinian and Bedouin cultures from participating in a Jordanian national culture based on modernism, Jordan's rulers have effectively neutralized them and rendered them impotent as threats. Tragically, these practices that were designed to remove the political threat from the tribal system contributed to its demise and destruction.

The Colonizer's Role in Identity Construction

While it is clear that identity is primarily a comparative action, the one who is allowed to make such a comparison remains more ambiguous. Critical to the question of "who gets to define whom" is the concept of power and its relative presence or absence. Often the degree to which groups possess power "transforms

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[23] Nasser, *Palestinian Identity*, 3.

[24] Ibid.

[25] John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions Together with Death's Duel* (Gloucester, UK: Dodo Press, 2009), 97.

the nature of the relationship into a hierarchical order where one category is dominant and the other is dominated."[26] In this situation, the dominant group is the one that is permitted to engage in identity construction: "Power allows the dominant to construct knowledge about self and other, which in turn influences both the self-conception of self and that of the other."[27] This relationship often lends itself to abuse, and can result in one group being dominated and dehumanized at the expense of the other. This power differential is particularly relevant in regard to the colonized people and the colonizer. Knowledge and colonial power often went hand in hand, as Edward Said wrote in *Orientalism*, "Knowledge of the subject races… is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power; more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control." [28] As a result, a the colonizer who possesses a greater degree of power and is in a position of authority, it is able to influence the identity formation of the colonized. Thus, the group in power may not only create an image for itself of the colonized other, but this image may also impose itself in the end upon the colonized other and influence its own self-conception.

The imposition of the will of those with power upon those who lack power was nowhere more evident than with regard to the suppression of the Bedouin. As part of their drive for the organization and ordering of Transjordan, the British

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[26] Nasser, *Palestinian Identity*, 5.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 36.

attempted to extend the network of roads, telegraph lines, and police stations across the country, particularly with an eye toward bringing the tribal elements under control. When approached by Frederick Peake, the British representative to Jordan, the Layathna tribe of Petra replied angrily, "We won't have your road, or your telephone, or police." In response to this, Peake shouted emphatically, "You shall have my road, my telephone, and my police."[29] Peake was able to enforce his boast through the use of arms and bend the Bedouin of Petra to his wishes. The later adoption of Petra as a national symbol by the Jordanian government was built on the foundation laid down by Peake's efforts at Bedouin pacification. This incident also acts as a microcosm of the process by which the British came to dominate the Bedouin and forced them to comply with British desires by superior force of arms. One Bedouin shaykh acknowledged this disparity of arms by noting that while the British had airplanes, tanks, and armored cars, the tribes could only employ "primitive" weapons such as swords, pistols, and knives.[30] Just as the British were able to control the Bedouins by force of arms, they and later Jordanian governments also shaped their identities and cultural practices by applying pressure to exploit their advantage in the power differential.

Concurrent with and perhaps just as important as the decision of which individuals should be included within the boundaries of the group is which ones

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[29] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 124.

[30] Andrew Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination: Oral History and Textual Analysis in Tribal Jordan* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1997), 90.

should not. As mentioned above, a group is defined primarily by its relation to other groups; this act of definition inherently excludes certain individuals. Just as important as questions such as "Who am I?" and "Who are we?" or the statement "We are not you" is its complement: "You are not us." The very act of definition "entails the exclusion or silencing of the voices of others" and the use of "symbolic violence against the excluded other."[31] In the determination of who is included in the national character or essence, certain others who are present must be excluded. The construction and framing of a nation is an ongoing process, not a single event accomplished "by mobilization of hegemonic discourses which attempt to reach homogeneity by the means of exclusion and othering."[32] It is through this process of excluding the other against which the self is to be judged that a "national culture" emerges, narrating a story or mythology about the nation that incorporates a past, historical boundaries and roots. The story that is created is told from the point of view of those who have the power to do so and emerges as the predominant set of truths regarding the nation itself for all of its members. [33]

The exercise of hegemony over civil society has been developed most fully by the Italian Marxist political historian Antonio Gramsci. According to Gramsci, there are two main ways by which the government enforces its will upon civil society.

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[31] Nasser, *Palestinian Identity*, 237.

[32] Ibid., 30.

[33] Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 121.

The first is "spontaneous" consent, which he describes in this manner: "Given by the masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group." This consent is gained because the dominant group possesses a sufficient amount of "prestige" to convince the masses to surrender voluntarily. The second type of persuasion Gramsci describes is the "apparatus of state power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively."[34] The first method he characterizes as "hegemony," while the second he terms "direct domination". Both of these methods were in use in the colonial state, including Jordan. In the first instance, the new Hashemite rulers tried to persuade others by recourse to their religious descent from the Prophet Muhammad,[35] pointing to their roles in leading the Great Arab revolt against the Ottomans and playing up the monarch's function as chief of the Bedouin tribes. All of these methods served to persuade by consensus, as described by Gramsci, to allow the inhabitants to relinquish some power voluntarily and allow the state to change their social life. In addition, coercive methods such as land reform and the suppression of armed rebellions, especially by Bedouin, served to persuade those who did not consent.

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[34] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, trans. and ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 12.

[35] For a Hashemite family tree linking them directly to the Prophet, see King Hussein's memorial website. *Hashemite Family Tree* in A Living Tribute to the Legacy of King Hussein I, http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/rfamily_hashemites.html. (accessed March 25, 2010).

The Inventing of Traditions

The combination of modernity with the veneer of tradition represents one of the hallmarks of nationalisms that developed under colonial administrations. As part of the new Jordanian nationalism, several "new cultural norms" were constructed that were "modern inventions dressed up in traditional garb to satisfy nationalism's claims of a national culture for which it stands." [36] Although these norms were to some extent based on tradition, they were substantially altered so that while they might resemble traditional ones, in reality they were derived from modernity. Thus, they may be considered "not so much traditional as traditionalized." [37] While the culture might appear traditional, in reality it represented a modern innovation that diverged considerably from authentic tradition. Such a traditionalized or traditional "style" culture gave enough legitimacy so that it could be packaged and marketed for both domestic and foreign consumption, especially for the foreign tourist.

Prominent among this so-called "Disneyization" of Bedouin culture in the construction of national identity was the development of "Bedouin style" music, including the songs of Lebanese-Armenian singer Shamirah Tawfiiq who in the mid-seventies became known as the "quintessential 'Bedouin'" singer, not only in Jordan but across the Arab world." [38] In the process, traditional Bedouin musical genres were

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[36] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 7.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 74.

dropped in media broadcasts in favor of a "new genre… sold to the urban and Bedouin population as *Bedouin* songs and music". This was interspersed with some Bedouin dialectical changes in order to give it an "authentic Bedouin flavor."[39] At the same time that Bedouin culture supposedly came to form a greater piece of Jordanian national culture, that tribal culture was itself placed under attack by a fabricated imitation of tradition in order to render it more accessible and understandable to the general public. Yet even those scholars who focus on the Bedouin seem to overlook the potential for national exploitation in the production of Bedouin culture. Donald Cole writes, "Bedouin theme parks, camel races, museum exhibits, poetry recitals, and television talk shows, sustain continuation of national identity and honor it as a part of national heritage."[40] Such a positive spin masks the larger reality that these tools may be used just as easily to corrupt as honor Bedouin tribal heritage for purposes of state gain.

These innovations of traditional culture result in what historian Eric Hobsbawm calls "invented traditions," which represent a "set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition which automatically implies continuity with the past."[41] These "invented traditions" enable

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[39] Ibid., 76.

[40] "Where Have All the Bedouin Gone?" 236.

[41] Eric Hobsbawm "Introduction: The Invention of Traditions" in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1.

the state to create a modern entity of governance while simultaneously drawing upon traditional loyalties and laying ideological claim to a certain past. Inherent within the idea of "invented traditions" is the idea that that the state represents a natural outgrowth of the past and not a radical change or shift away from it. Often these invented traditions can be traced back to the colonial period. The British showed special talent inventing traditions for their subject populations, as they did in Africa where "British administrators set about inventing African traditions for Africans" in an effort to bridge the gap between British and African societies. As a result, "their own respect for 'tradition' disposed them to look with favor upon what they took to be 'traditional' in Africa." [42] The British searched these cultures for those formal and ceremonial aspects that they recognized as analogous to the kinds of ideas that they prized in their own culture and invented what they could not find. These invented traditions were bequeathed to the nation-states that evolved from the former colonies, with the latter adopting many of these invented traditions as tools of national culture.[43]

These invented traditions seek to establish the claim that the way things are now is the way that they have always been, while seeking to downplay the constructed nature of the modern situation. The assertion that "things have always been this way" is a false one, but it has been used to justify everything from the

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[42] Terrence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa" in *Invention of Tradition*, 212.

[43] Ibid. See Ranger's Discussion of African Attempts to Make Use of European Neo-Tradition, 237.

existence of the Jordanian nation, to the state of unending warfare between the settled populations and the Bedouin as articulated by British colonial administrators,[44] to the assertion that Bedouin tribes have always been a key source of support for the Hashemite monarchy,[45] to the unbroken line of genealogical descent from Nabateans to Bedouins to modern Jordanians.[46] When viewed by the people who live in Jordan today, such arrangements appeared natural, perhaps inevitable, as though things had always been a certain way and always must be.

This assumption itself is a construction just like that of the nation, for according to the modernist theory of nationalism as articulated by Eric Hobsbawm, "nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around."[47] In other words, the narrative does not flow naturally out of the entity but is created by it. This principle, which seems counterintuitive at first blush, is one that pervades the modern condition and serves in many ways as the basis for the state and everything that it does. If nothing else, nationalism represents the narrative of the state, and as Romila Thapar reminds us, "Narrative does not speak. It is spoken." In this retelling of the narrative by the historian, he or she "invests it with nuances, emphases, and

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[44] Godfrey Lias, *Glubb's Legion* (London: Evans Brothers, 1956), 64.

[45] Paul A. Jureidini and R.D. McLaurin, *Jordan*: *The Impact of Social Change on the Roles of the Tribes* (Washington, D.C.: Praeger, 1984), 4.

[46] Massad*, Colonial Effects*, 75.

[47] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 10.

interpretations."[48] As a result of the differences in these accounts, various versions with different emphases are created so that the event itself becomes surrounded by and often times indistinguishable from its interpretation. Tharpar urges the historian to study and dissect these differences, saying that "we need to understand why there are variants and what is their individual agenda."[49] Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of those who feel immune to reproach, those who hold power, including the state that comes to insist on its own version of events as reality. This paper is at least in part an attempt to dissect the myth of the nation state, using the case study of Jordan, and isolate its agenda.

Chapter 2: De-Socialization and Identity

National Identity and National Culture

Once the forces of nationalism are let loose, the first task for the would be nation-builder is to create a nation that can serve as their home base and a national culture that is supposed to flow seamlessly from this creation. The importance of possessing a national culture and, by extension, a national identity that citizens can point to when asked to define their nation is difficult to overstate. The concepts of national identity and national culture that flow from it occupy a central role because the "nation and its members 'have' a culture, the existence of which both flows from

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[48] Romila Thapar, *Narratives and the Making of History: Two Lectures* (Delhi: OUP India, 2000), 48.

[49] Ibid.

and proves the existence of the nation itself."[50] To a large degree, the nation depends upon the national culture as a proof or justification for its very existence. Were it not for some conception of what the nation means and how it is different from other nations, it could not remain a cogent, independent entity. Nationalists attempt to "claim and specify the nation's possessions," trying to construct a unique history and culture that both ties into and naturally progresses from the people who have it.[51] Perhaps because the Bedouin did not attempt to construct a narrative in this way, their narrative and identity could be more easily co-opted by the state. Precisely because Jordan represents such a recent and artificial creation, it is in need of a national identity to assert its independent existence.

In the context of Jordanian national identity, the Bedouin formed an important part of its construction but even today do not share completely in its definition. While "Jordan's tribal heritage has been expropriated by the state as a symbol of national identity,"[52] the Jordanian state has used and continues to use the Bedouin as the tie that binds Jordan to the land and gives it a sense of authentic identity. By using the Bedouins as symbols for the entire nation, the "evolutionary implication is that at some point all those who are here today identified and who identify themselves as Jordanians must have lived like Bedouins in their evolutionary childhood before they

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[50] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 138.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., 103.

became modern urban adults." [53] At the same time, the Bedouins are produced as an "other" against which modern Jordanians judge themselves. This construction has the added bonus of excluding Jordan's Palestinian citizens from a share in the national identity because of the implication that all Jordanians must be descended from Bedouins. This presents an interesting dilemma, as the tribal basis of Jordanian identity and the modern character of the Jordanian state seem to conflict with one another. In the eyes of those who would like to see Jordan as modern, clearly the Bedouin and their tribal culture do not fit the bill. The modernist narrative does accord a place for the Bedouins, not in modernity, but rather "in a past time, a traditional time, another time, an allochronic time." [54] The few Bedouin who continue living the traditional nomadic lifestyles are portrayed as "living ancestors" who form a "living museum" [55] for tourist consumption in a way that almost makes them seem like "living fossils" of a bygone age.

Critical to understanding the confrontation between the modern national identity and the Bedouin is Benedict Anderson's concept of the nation as an "imagined community."[56] Anderson defines the nation as an "imagined political

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[53] Massad, *Colonial Effects,* 77.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Cole, "Where Have All the Bedouin Gone?" 258.

[56] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1991), 24.

community-- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."[57] The creation of this new type of community engendered a radical shift that "resulted in shaping new images of self as members of a large collective,"[58] which he attributed to new forms of mass media connections including print capitalism that enabled them to think this way, Whereas previously, "community was considered the collective where identities were negotiated by face-to-face relations, now the collective has expanded and it includes individuals beyond the immediate community."[59] The nation must be constructed in this way because the nation as entity relies upon the commonalties and connections among people who are spread out over a wider area. Without the ability to imagine connections between them, these people could never conceive of themselves as belonging to a single entity. However, in the process of imagining connections between people who are further away, the individuals may become alienated from those who are close by as social face-to-face interactions become less important.

De-Socialization and the Bedouin World View

In order for the citizen as a political entity to come into being, he or she must first be severed or separated in some way from the immediate surroundings and re-socialized (or de-socialized as one would prefer to see it) to think in terms of the

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[57] Ibid., 6.

[58] Nasser, *Palestinian Identity*, 18.

[59]Ibid., 22.

bigger, national picture. Here the critique of Karl Marx in distinguishing between "authentic man" and "abstract citizen" becomes useful in describing how this process takes place. According to Marx, "man as a member of civil society….is man in his sensuous, individual, and most intimate existence." Such a man "is recognized only in the form if an egoistic individual" whereas "political man is only the abstract and artificial man, man allegorical moral, person."[60] He is an "abstract citizen" who remains cut off from or alienated from his surrounds in some way. Thus, the job of the modern state is to create such an "abstract citizen" by replacing his social ties with created and newly imagined political ones so that the political becomes more important for him than the personal.[61] As a result of this devaluation of the social at the expense of the political, "nationalism becomes a substitute for social cohesion through a national church, a royal family, or other cohesive traditions or collective group self-presentations."[62] Gramsci also describes the "desocialization" project, saying that the state aims to sever ties to extraneous social groups "so as to disintegrate them, to detach them from the broad masses and obtain 'a force of non-party men linked to the government by paternalistic ties of a Bonapartist-Caesarist type.'"[63] Although this view was originally advanced in relation to the Western

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[60] Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, ed. Rodney Livingstone and Gregory Benton (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), 234.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe 1870-1914" in *Invention of Traditions,* 303.

[63] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 227.

European nation state, it applies to the imported colonial nationalism that took shape in Jordan as well. through the creation of a new Jordanian state , the Hashemite monarchy, which claimed religious authority for itself by virtue of its lineage stretching back to the prophet, weakened the social ties within society in general, and within the Bedouin community in particular, and tried to replace them with Jordanian political nationalism.

The Bedouin conceive of the world in which they live primarily in terms of social relations between people. A good example of this phenomenon may be seen in the way that the Bedouin regard space. As Linda Layne outlines, for the Bedouin it is the people who make the places what they are. Accordingly, she cites how in Western nomenclature, one generally designates the name of the room based upon the type of activity that goes on in said room: bathroom, bedroom, dining room, laundry room, study. Among the Bedouin, however, such conceptions are completely foreign and do not form an important part of the Bedouin domicile. Rather, according to Layne, "one can sit, eat, visit, sleep, and wash one's face after a nap, perform ablutions, and carry out a variety of activities on a mattress."[64] Such mattresses may be moved around depending on where the people who use them want to take them. Thus, "spaces are defined more by reference to the kinds of people who are likely to use the space than by the purpose for which the space is used."[65] For example, the two most prominent divisions within the tent are the *shigg*, men's section, and the *raba'a*,

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[64] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 65-66.

[65] Ibid.

women's section.[66] Because of this relative flexibility in terms of what occurs where, "spaces are defined by people and not by place" as opposed to being fixed and permanent.[67] Therefore, a house in terms of the Bedouin is conceived of primarily not as a physical structure, but rather a social one: the actions of individuals make the house.[68] While Layne here is primarily talking about housing and the use of space, the importance of the social aspect of life for the Bedouin may be seen as the single overriding principle behind their worldview. Time and again, whether in terms of housing, mobility, law, land use, or status, the social and dynamic aspect displays itself as the critical component in all facets of Bedouin life.

It is this social aspect that most directly comes into conflict with the vision of the state, which must break apart these types of social bonds before replacing them with others that are more conducive to state projects relying on the ability of people to imagine being part of a larger national community. Whereas Anderson focused upon the mass media and print capitalism in terms of creating an environment conductive to the creation of his imagined communities, in reality the advent of modernity itself may be seen as a kind of giant wave that crashed down upon society and totally reoriented its members in profound ways. The process of modernization, of course, must be viewed as a gradual one, occurring over the long term with certain bursts here and there. The primary event that accelerated the advent of modernity in

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[66] Ibid., 65.

[67] Ibid., 149.

[68] Ibid., 65.

the Middle East was the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in 1920 and the arrival of France and Britain into the Middle East in 1921. The process was at work before that time, but at least in Jordan the arrival of the British and the creation of the Hashemite Kingdom under their tutelage and guided by their design accelerated the changes immeasurably.

Who is a Real Bedouin?

Despite the transformation to a reliance on agriculture on a large scale, it would be a mistake to think that Bedouins had never before engaged in serious agricultural activities. While many think of the Bedouin as traditionally not engaging in agricultural pursuits, this was not in fact the case. For the Bedouin who lived in the Valley especially, agriculture played a large role in their traditional economic activities. The combination of multiple types of income such as "pastoralism, agriculture, trade and wage labor" to form a "mixed economy"[69] was historically common for the Bedouin. In spite of accounts to the contrary, the Bedouin neither despised agriculture nor found it beneath them; they could and had engaged in it in the past. Because of their agricultural pursuits, Glubb did not consider the Valley Bedouin to be Bedouin at all, but classified them as fellahin or "peasants," since they were "all cultivators. Some lived in tents but they owned and cultivated land. They did not move into the desert…I should not call [them] Bedouins."[70] Glubb Pasha

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[69] Ibid., 46.

[70] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination,*, 70.

evidently had extremely strict criteria as to the exact definition of a Bedouin. Glubb described the characteristics that constituted his image of a Bedouin as follows: "The first requisite is that the Bedouin must be a nomad who breeds and keeps camels." Any non-nomad was automatically ruled out. Also ruled out, according to Glubb, were those tribes breeding sheep or donkeys, who could not be considered Bedouin since "they do not breed camels." The second condition that Glubb listed was that the Bedouin "must also be able to trace his descent from certain recognized pure-bred Bedouin tribes."

Much like the case of who is a "true" Jordanian and who is a "true" Palestinian, the classification of who is a "true" Bedouin rested on certain assumptions about cultural authenticity. Glubb obviously considered himself somewhat of an authority on Bedouins, and so felt competent to judge who qualified as Bedouin. Glubb admitted that he himself was not a Bedouin, nor could he ever be one, saying "you and I could never become Bedouins," and yet his opinion of who fell within the bounds of Bedouin membership mattered more than the Bedouin's themselves. Some Western anthropologists have similarly defined "the 'true' Bedouin" as those "who depend mostly upon camels rather than sheep and goats for livelihood, live in black (goat hair) tents, and do not settle in permanent homes."[71] Thus for Glubb, if a certain group did not possess all of the component criteria on his Bedouin checklist, it could not be considered authentically Bedouin. At the same time Glubb was encouraging the Bedouin to abandon their traditional economic activities

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[71] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 126.

and occupations and adopt a more modern system of his own devising. In the end, it became a Catch-22 where the Bedouin could never be completely in the right.

Nor is this concept limited to the case of the Bedouin, but rather it has been extended to a wide variety of so called "traditional" people and cultures. For example, in North and South America the "real Indian" is seen as one who "still engage(s) in winter subsistence hunting." By framing the construction of a "real Indian" (or as the case may be a "real" Bedouin or perhaps even Jordanian), one "dismisses as false or less than worthy those who have changed or departed from a static ideal."[72] In both cases the key factor seemed to be the maintenance of "traditional" economic pursuits that involved contact with the natural world. But by confining legitimate identity in this way, the outside definer was setting up the "native" for failure as he could not possibly stay static in the face of modernization and the deprivation of resources that restricted his ability to continue living in this way. If one takes away the means of such a lifestyle and yet demands that legitimacy within the group depends upon it, then the application of authenticity becomes impossible for anyone. According to Layne, "such an organic model of tribal culture helps to explain why the demise of the Bedouin has been so frequently predicted."[73] Over the years there have been tremendous changes in the relations between the state and the tribes and tribal economic structure that have often been seen by outsiders as portents for a general Bedouin decline to come.

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[72] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 14.

[73] Ibid., 13.

Chapter 3: The British and the New System

Glubb: The Shaper of the Vision, Inventor of Traditions 1930-1956

John Baggot Glubb, head of the Transjordanian Frontier Force and a key figure in the pacification of Jordanian Bedouins, was in many ways the architect of a cultural transformation among them as well. While he conscripted Bedouin into the force and worked to strengthen it as a fighting unit, he also worked to alter the Bedouin's cultural norms and practices, creating a new set of "invented traditions." The description of these changes as "modern innovations dressed up in traditional garb"[74] is especially apt as clothing played a pivotal role in the creation of this traditionally styled modern culture and served as a prime example of the kind of Bedouin image he wished to cultivate. Clothing may be viewed as a particularly important symbol, since it represents the external façade that a person chooses to present to the world, in the same context as the ideas of sociologist Erving Goffman, discussed above. As such, clothing acts much like the traditional veneer of national culture. Joseph Massad notes that Glubb had a very particular vision of the Bedouin Arab soldier in his head that he wished to translate into reality: "He knew exactly what the new Arab soldier should look like, what he… should wear, how he should move, what he should know, what he should view as tradition and culture."[75] All of these elements would converge into John Glubb's greatest and most enduring

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[74] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 7.

[75] Ibid., 117.

creation, the Arab Legion, *al-Jaysh al-Arabi*, which became important at least as much for its impact on the formation of Jordanian identity and culture, especially among the Bedouin, as it was for its military muscle.

Glubb himself thought a great deal about the impact that dress has upon a military body and what he wanted the Legion's uniform to say about its members. Glubb noted that a "change of clothing signifies that the wearer has abandoned his sentimental attachment to the past. It is an open confession of faith; he seeks to be Europeanized."[76] This certainly did not fit in with Glubb's image of what the Bedouin should wear. According to his book *The Story of the Arab Legion*, the uniform was "cut in the same manner as their ordinary dress, long robes almost reaching the ground and long white sleeves, but the outer garment was khaki in colour. With a red sash, a red revolver lanyard, a belt and a bandolier full of ammunition, and a silver dagger in the belt."[77] Clearly Glubb intended for the uniform to be somewhat of a spectacle that would attract the attention of everyone who saw it. Glubb noted the stunning sight of the soldier in full regalia: "The effect was impressive. Soon the tribesmen were complaining that the prettiest girls would accept none but our soldiers for their lovers."[78] And elsewhere he stated that they "are certainly the most picturesque body of men in the Middle East, and when the tourists are on the Petra run during the winter the Beduin (sic.) patrol are photographed from

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[76] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 118.

[77] James Lunt, *Glubb Pasha: A Biography* (London: Harvill Press, 1984), 78-79.

[78] Ibid., 79.

daybreak to dusk." [79] Clearly, much more than utilitarian concerns guided Glubb's design, and he wished to make the Legion uniforms as authentically Bedouin looking as possible, or, perhaps more accurately, as close to what he considered to be authentically Bedouin looking, as he did not consult with Bedouins as to what they would consider authentic but rather decided what their culture should look like for them.

Indeed, while Glubb reoriented Bedouin behavior, loyalties, and lifestyles, he seems to have had as his central goal the preservation of the image of Bedouin culture. Using the armed forces, Glubb was able to combine his twin missions of building up a loyal armed forces and affecting a cultural change in the Bedouin that would be beneficial to the British and Jordanian governments. In a lecture given to the Royal Central Asian Society in 1937, Glubb said, "I believe it is possible for Arab troops to learn the lessons which Europe can teach in organization, discipline, and scientific weapons, without departing from their hereditary customs, manners, and dress." [80] Like the Jordanian government that came after him, Glubb permitted the Bedouins to retain those aspects of their culture that proved innocuous or beneficial to his project, such as the traditional uniforms and their apparent aversion to politics. As he proudly said, "They are content to be only professional soldiers, with no political ambitions." [81] Through his civilizing mission, Glubb was able to attain a kind of

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[79] Nasser, *Colonial Identity*, 120.

[80] Lunt, *Glubb Pasha*, 79.

[81] Ibid., 94.

perfect synthesis, in his eyes, of tradition and modern discipline. One author noted this of the tribal elements in the Bedouin army: "Although they still retained many of their old ways and values, they were now dependable, responsive, and disciplined components of a regimented organization serving the central authority."[82] Disciplined, trained, and instructed in the ways of modern warfare, these Bedouin soldiers represented in Glubb's vision a perfect blend of traditional window dressing and a programmed loyalty to the state and the shaykh-monarch.[83] It was a model that would be adopted by the Jordanian government in their attempt to construct a Jordanian national identity and culture.

Creating and Enforcing a New Identity

While it has been established that in order for nationalism to become widely accepted among a given population the central government must first dissolve competing social ties, the question remains how this should be done. First, prior to the state being able to prorogate its new version of social ties, the old ones must be weakened or eliminated. Thus, in order to create, one must first destroy: "To produce the new the old has to be repressed."[84] In the process of creating the socialized citizen, certain groups of people must be excluded from within the acceptable definition: "The very production of a normalized subject required the production of

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[82] Ibid., 96.

[83] Jureidini and McLaurin, *Social Change*, 35.

[84] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 4.

its other the abnormal whose abnormality has to be repressed and buried to reveal the normal as the essence."[85] In much the same way that the slag must be separated from the precious metal by smelting, the refined citizen-subject must first be separated from the primordial un-socialized individual through the process of creating and cultivating a distinct national identity.

Not only was it necessary for the new political order, in this case the state, to destroy the old order to assert its legitimacy, but such a negation eventually created the cornerstone of the new cultural identity. Gramsci explained this in these terms: "Cultural policy will above all be a negative, a critique of the past; it will be aimed at erasing from the memory and at destroying."[86] Gramsci noted that because people always belong to multiple "private associations," often in conflict with one another, the state had to adopt a "totalitarian" policy in order to address this problem. This policy had two main pillars, the first to ensure that the members of the new party "find in that party all the satisfactions that they formerly found in a multiplicity of organizations." This action resulted in "breaking all the threads that bind these members to extraneous cultural organisms." The second phase entailed "destroying all other organizations or… incorporating them into a system of which the party is the sole regulator."[87] According to Grasmci, the government itself "operated as a party"

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[85] Ibid., 8.

[86] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 263-264.

[87] Ibid., 265.

that "set itself over and above the (other) parties," [88] Such a description goes far to explain why tribalism and tribal ties played such an important part in the new Jordanian state. In order to achieve the kind of "de-socialized" citizen described by Marx and Gramsci, the state must both appropriate all of the functions formerly performed by tribalism and then sever all of the ties to tribal social organizations that lie outside the preview of the state. The extent to which this process was successful within Jordan is debatable, but its attempt cannot be denied.

This process often leaves behind ideological casualties in the form of old ideas that are destroyed in order to make room for new innovations. As a result, "attempts by state authorities to create a homogeneous national identity were perceived as repression even 'ethnocide' or genocide by victimized groups." [89] The creation of a Jordanian national culture and the development of state authority may be seen as such a destruction of culture, or ethnocide. Genocide, however, may be a bit strong, and no evidence exists to support the claim in this instance. Yet, even the so-called benefits that the Bedouin received as a result of state intervention, such as a privileged position in regard to military positions, a practice that originated under the British, were carried out with the goal of their pacification and subjugation to state power. Perhaps the greatest irony inherent in this process is that the state used one marginalized group, namely the Bedouins, to suppress another marginalized group, the Palestinians, particularly in 1970 and 1971 during the Black September incident.

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[88] Ibid., 227.

[89] Ozkirimli, *Theories on Nationalism*, 125.

The Jordanian state "used the Bedouins as instruments of repression"[90] or as a giant club to beat back any and all opponents to the Hashemite regime. As a result of this arrangement, the Bedouin felt "used by the government when it was in danger and ignored when it was safe."[91] These grievances, building up over time, boiled over in 1979 when protests led by Bedouin army officers exploded on the streets of Amman concerning wrongs done in regard to state economic policy.[92]

Critical to the dominant power's ability to enforce its conception of group identity onto society is the absence of an alternative organizing structure, or deliberate and purposeful ignorance of systems already in place. The being defined, in the eyes of the definer, must be apriori undefined or in need of a definition. This approach to identification chooses to "predicate the formation of identity upon a reality that appears abstract and independent of the persons or groups who perceive and participate in it." In this context the definer uses "a framework that seems to precede and exist apart from the actual individuals or objects considered."[93] It is only by employing this independent framework based in abstract space that a conceptual identification may be made of a group, which is wholly apart from the wishes, feelings, and ideas of the group itself. The most attractive aspect of this method to the framer is that it appears primordial and scientific, as if this separate framework

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[90] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 63.

[91] Ibid., 66.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 7.

had always existed and thus stands beyond reproach. This framework often becomes totalitarian and serves to monopolize the discourse so that it must be used. Because of this, the underlying assumption behind this theory is that "everyone …fits unambiguously into one or another of the frames."[94] The underlying purpose of the framework is to divide, classify, and evaluate each and every member of society based upon the group to which he or she belongs.

The process of identification with the nation-state becomes totalitarian in scope, seeking to edge out all competing narratives including tribalism. However, the primacy of nationalism should not always be assumed to be the case or to constitute a de facto basic position within the consciousness of the population at large. Such an assumption would be a mistake: "We cannot assume that for most people national identification is always or ever superior to other forms of identification."[95] There is nothing inherent in nationalism that makes it by definition superior to other forms of identification, or even important at all for that matter. However, nationalism often demands such a position for itself, as Gramsci noted in his "totalitarian policy," primarily because it represents at least in the Middle East a radical departure from prior forms of organization and is especially sensitive to threats to its primacy because of its newness.[96] Supported by the threat of force and the ability to use it,

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[94] Ibid., 8.

[95] Ozkirimli, *Theories on Nationalism*, 119.

[96] Gramsci writes that the "totalitarian policy" is most likely to occur, "when the given party is the bearer of a new culture" that results in a "progressive phase." The

nationalism becomes an all-encompassing totalitarian lens that demands attention and comes to monopolize the discourse. It may be symbolically compared to an "ill-fitting shirt". While you may think that the "sleeves are too short, the collar too tight," once put on, it becomes nearly impossible to take off: "There is no escape. There is nothing else to wear. One doesn't have to succumb voluntarily to this ideology of the nation, one is sucked into it."[97] The state becomes the source of authority and ideological power par excellence because it stands at the top of the nationalist pyramid. The state is not the one that must adapt to the society; the society must adapt itself to the state.

What is the primary benefit to the colonizer from defining the colonized "other" in terms that are favorable to its own interest? The answer to this question may be found in a statement made by Captain Charles Richard, a French colonial official, regarding the Algerians. Captain Renauld stated, "The most important thing is to gather into groups this people which is everywhere and nowhere; the essential thing is to make them something that we can seize hold of."[98] The assumption behind the concept is that there exist certain "discrete, static, bounded groups that keep their unique identities and cultures while contributing to a larger structure."[99] These

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nation-state for the Middle East certainly represents a "new culture" and progressive rhetoric has been employed to back it up frequently. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 265.

[97] Slavenka Drakulic, *The Balkan Express: Fragments from the Other Side of the War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 50-52.

[98] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 7.

[99] Ibid., 4.

groups require "the presence of an observer outside of the system to see the pattern." [100] This practice of regarding individuals as all belonging to a particular group and consequently all possessing certain characteristics that may be identified solely with the help of an outside observer is known as the "pigeonhole" method of identification. Clearly, the colonizer stands to benefit from imposing an identity upon a group by being able to dictate how the given group "should act" or "ought to act" given their group characteristics.

For the British, Transjordan itself and the Bedouin in particular must be placed under a certain order or framework that fit within preconceived colonial notions about what they should be. These notions have had a lasting impact upon the people of Jordan, who adopted and incorporated them into their quest to form a national identity. This desire to bring order out of chaos was not only limited to the British in Jordan, but was extended to other colonial areas, as Timothy Mitchell wrote regarding the impetus behind British imperialism in Egypt, "The Orient refused to present itself like an exhibit, and so appeared orderless and without meaning. The colonizing process itself was to introduce the kind of order now found lacking" [101] By placing the Middle Eastern peoples within a frame, the British were not only able to

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[100] Ibid., 6.

[101] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), xv.

control their behavior, but also provided "the novel ontology of representation."[102] Thus, by introducing a new system of order and boundaries within society, the colonial power was able to change the image of the indigenous people not only to the outside world, but also to themselves.

The British in particular engaged in a rigorous program of classification across the span of their empire as a prerequisite to ordering an efficient system of colonial rule. Crawford Young argues that the British both created new ethnic groupings within their African colonies and altered those groupings that were already in existence. While Young admits that there were definite benefits to British rule as a result of these acts, since "the science of colonial domination required a process of sorting and labeling,"[103] this did not mean that the British were always actively trying to exploit these divisions. In many cases, they seemed almost to be making them unconsciously because "the standard presumption was of discrete, bounded groups, whose distribution could be captured on an ethnic map."[104] While Young may quote Apthorpe and assert that "the colonial regimes created tribes as we think of them today"[105] in Anglophone Africa, the British themselves did not see what they were doing in that way. Rather, from their perspective, the divisions already existed and

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[102] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 120.

[103] Crawford Young, "The Construction of African Nations" in *Nationalism* ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 225.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid., 226.

they were merely bringing them to light as part of the general process of introducing proper governance. Indeed as Crawford notes, for the British, "the concept of the colonial state… presumed the colonial infrastructure to be an administrative overlayer coordinating a congeries of 'native states'."[106] They were thus all assumed to be part of the same framework and the policies directed toward them could be applied more or less uniformly on this basis. For example, the "habit" of classifying different ethnic groups had come from their experiences in India where religious, linguistic, and communal distinctions had been important. [107] Thus, the same framework of classification that had been used in India, the crown jewel and most important colony of the Empire, came to be applied to Africa and the Middle East as well.

Even ethnic groups that had already existed before the arrival of the British experienced profound changes as a result of the impact of classification. For example, as a result of cooperation with British rule in Uganda, the Buganda ethnic group saw its territory doubled, to include areas which had not been historically part of it, while the Nyoro ethnic group suffered as the Bunyoro area it controlled shrunk. As a result, "during the era of British rule, Ganda identity acquired much more extensive ideological elaboration at its core and successfully assimilated most of its expanded perimeter." By contrast, the British encouraged the principality of Toro in its insurgency and classified it as its own entity administratively and linguistically,[108]

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[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 226-27.

despite the fact that it had been considered culturally part of the Nyoro cultural sphere before the onset of the eighteenth century. In addition, various numbers of ethnic groups deemed similar to each other were simply assimilated into a single grouping, so that in parts of Uganda, "ethnonyms were applied to congeries of groupings in which the British recognized close similarities of language, genealogical charters, and sometimes regional rites."[109] Ethnicity appears from these examples to be something malleable and subject to change as occurred later on with various groupings of Jordanian Bedouins who were added or erased from the state's registries.[110] As a result of these and other efforts, "policies pursued in the edification of the colonial state dramatically altered the existing cultural geography, though this was not necessarily their conscious purpose."[111] In the very act of what they considered to be objective classification, in reality the British significantly altered the power dynamics and cultural identities of these various ethnic groupings. Intended or not, these changes had significant effects on the post-colonial histories of these nations that were forced to deal with them.

Demonizing the Old to Make Way for the New, or As If They Owned the Place

Critical to the disparity between modernity and tribalism was the tendency of proponents of the former to view the latter ideology as equivalent to anarchy,

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[109] Ibid.

[110] Lane, *Home and Homeland*, 17.

[111] Young, "The Construction of African Nations," 225.

savagery, and general chaos. Repeatedly, modernist-minded observers from government officials to British administrators to Jordanian newspaper columnists cast the Bedouin and the tribal system in this light. By first discrediting the old tribal system, the British could then argue for replacing it with a new and improved modern one. According to Kamal Salibi, before the arrival of the state, "Bedouin sheikhs riding with cavalier nonchalance in the desert, *as if they owned the place,* wearing their Arab headdress at a rakish slant, and expecting privileged hospitality wherever they chose to stop. (emphasis added)"[112] However, with the arrival of the Amir Abdullah in Amman, a remarkable transformation took place where "the general unruliness of Transjordan began to give way to the sort of organization that inaugurated its transformation into a country."[113] Here Salibi described the state as the savior of order and rationality against the unruly forces of tribal raids and arrogant Bedouin overlords who terrorized the settled population with impunity. By employing this kind of negative picture to describe the miserably wretched condition of Transjordan before the arrival of the state on the scene, the state made itself both relevant and necessary. Without this justification, one might reasonably ask whether a state was in fact necessary. With it, the state became both necessary and desirable to the extent that not only did the area need the presence of the state now, but it had always needed it in the past.

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[112] Salibi, *Modern History*, 91.

[113] Ibid.

From the Bedouin point of view, they *did* "own the place" and had a natural right to expect some considerations of their perspective before the British and the Hashemites took action. The Bedouin had certainly been there longer than Abdullah or the British, and yet they were viewed as the problem that stood in the way of governing the land, rather than the masters of the land themselves. In the words of one Shaykh, "The British brought Abdullah here. Who consulted with us? Are we not the people of this country? Do we not have our own leaders?"[114] The answer, at least according to the British, was "No". They were not the people of the land; they were the scourge that terrorized the people of the land. If they had their own leaders, these did not matter and they served only to stir up resentment against the legitimate government. And the new government did not have to consult them for their opinion, at least to the extent that they could get away with it, because the government was right and they were wrong. Almost across the board, every British officer took the view that the Bedouins were a threat to peace and that they must be brought to heel by any means necessary. While Glubb may have taken a somewhat kinder view of Bedouin culture and customs, he nevertheless adopted the view that the Bedouin must be brought under control.

The creation of the state rests on the assumption that the status quo as it existed before the state was unacceptable in some way or unstable. Engels made this point, when he wrote in his *Origins of the Family*, "It is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split

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[114] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Geneological Imagination*, 90.

into irreconcilable antagonisms"[115] that leads to the formation of the state as a product of society. The state becomes necessary "in order that these antagonisms and classes with conflicting economic interests might not consume themselves and society in a fruitless struggle."[116] As a way of preventing this disintegration of society, the state must step into the void and attempt to pacify the various conflicting forces within society that threaten to destroy it. In Engel's view, the state comes out of societal needs for stability, but places itself above it so that it is of society, but not in society. Without the framework of the state, society would turn within itself and conflicts would break out, therefore, "the state prevents classes and 'society' from consuming themselves."[117] The central role of the state, in his view, would be to stabilize competing economic interests within society so that they do not tear apart the social fabric.

The prevailing image that the British sought to convey of their mission in Jordan was that of bringing order out of chaos. In fact, that was exactly the phrase that the British viceroy of India Lord George Curzon used to describe why the British wished to establish their power in the region: "The history of your States, and of your families, and the present condition of the Gulf, are the answer…We have found strife

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[115] Nicos Pulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, trans. Timothy O'Hagan (London: Humanities Press, 1975), 48.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 50.

and we have created order."[118] Like the Bedouin raiding that the British administration was supposed to control, in the Gulf region the specter of piracy was referred to as the favorite justification for the British extension of authority. "A hundred years ago," proclaimed Curzon, "there were constant trouble and fighting in the Gulf; almost every man was a marauder or a pirate."[119] In this context, piracy became "a category of subversive Asian activity" [120] that had to be brought under control, much as the raiding by the Bedouins had to be stopped. Evidently without colonial help, at least in the eyes of the colonial British, the world could simply not run itself effectively. Naturally, if what had existed before was chaotic, then it had to be brought into order and fashioned in the British image. Colonel Jarvis made this point in particular, when he wrote that the British felt compelled to organize the government of Transjordan as "it is against his traditions" to run a government full of discrepancies, corruption, and weaknesses. "The administration" he concluded, "must be perfect and watertight" [121] leaving no room for error or any semblance of ambiguity or question as to who was in charge and how things were run.

Concurrent with the desire to combat chaos was the insistence that everything had to be placed in some kind of order and nothing could be left by itself outside of such an order. In short, exceptions in an ordered British system could not

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[118] Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, 37.

[119] Ibid., 43.

[120] Ibid., 44.

[121] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 65.

be made, as these exceptions threatened to destroy the larger whole. He noted that the inability to make exceptions to the so-called rule was a part of the British character "with its reputation for equity and justice." Jarvis contrasted this with the policies of the previous administration, "During the Turkish occupation such exceptions were recognized and nobody seemed to expect anything else."[122] Such a method of tolerating exceptions, Jarvis regarded as a "simple" and "Oriental" way of approaching the situation. The world, in short, from the British perspective, had to be ordered, and it was left to the British to impose that order.

The Bedouin System and the Modern State

The Bedouin system most widely diverged from the modern nationalist system in the importance it placed on dynamic social interactions in contrast to the latter, which attempted to "desocialize" its citizens. Describing the comparative independence of the Huwetat Bedouin of Southern Jordan at the beginning of the twentieth century, Bocco writes that "mobility, group cohesion, strategies of alliance and military force constituted critical elements of control of a territory and of survival for a tribe of pastoral nomads."[123] The Bedouin had created a system of living and acting that for all intents and purposes replicated the functions of a state, but did so in a more flexible, less organized, more social manner. This system was both dynamic and alive, constantly, changing and evolving in a "dynamic flow of social interaction"

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[122] Ibid., 121.

[123] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 52

that involved a dizzying array of activities where "livestock was stolen and defended, bought and sold, consumed and reproduced, given and received." [124] Contrary to the views of some British observers, the Bedouins did not live with a system of chaos and disorder bereft of any stability, but rather they possessed an active governing system that regulated economic, social, and political interactions. The malleable nature of the Bedouin pastoral society based on competition between tribes can be compared to the Swahili trading societies of the East African coast. Mark spear describes the system in which various classes of patrician traders, or *wangwana,* competed for influence: "Such a system was not static; prominent families and wards could only maintain their position as long as they could retain political and economic power." [125] Like the Bedouin, these Swahili merchants constantly needed to assert their place and identity within a fluid social hierarchy based upon their political power and economic success.

Therefore, the creation of the modern state under the guidance of the colonialist power by its very existence and efforts to exercise its own authority inevitably came into conflict with the Bedouin and their way of life. The two were in a very real sense mutually exclusive. Bocco comments, "The emergence of a state made tangible by its military, politico-administrative, and economic systems meant the loss of military autonomy and a progressive limitation of mobility for such tribes

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[124] Ibid.

[125] Thomas Spear, "The Shirazi in Swahili Traditions, Culture and History," *History in Africa* 11 (1994): 292.

and threw into question the whole notion of, "tribal territory". [126] The examples listed by Bocco detailing the curtailment of the various aspects of Bedouin tribal independence at the expense of the state represented only the tip of the iceberg. In many ways, the process of state subjugation accelerated the trends of modernity that had begun in the region during the late Ottoman period to an incredible extent. This same process has continued unabated until this very day, as gradually the Bedouin grew less and less distinctive coincident with their decline in independence.

Because it was the Bedouin who represented the greatest departure from the standards of modernity imposed by the British and later the Jordanian government, they were the ones who suffered the greatest amount of "symbolic violence". Yet, while conspicuous for the degree to which they were affected by state efforts at incorporation and institutionalization, the Bedouins were by no means the only ones affected by them. The Bedouin received the greatest blow from the new imposed colonial state system because their lifestyle diverged most widely from the norm of modernity. Because of this, adapting to the new state system remained hardest for them, and while they did profit from some of the new state initiatives, such as the recruitment into the armed forces, in the end the confrontation with this system resulted in the destruction and near annihilation of the Bedouin lifestyle and independence. There simply was not enough room for a discourse that differed so much from the accepted norm of modernity as enforced by the state.

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[126] Ibid.

In a certain sense, the formation of a Jordanian nation inside the framework of a Jordanian state was both natural and inevitable. Benjamin Neuberger notes that despite the fact that some African scholars address separate ethnic groups as their own nations, nevertheless "they sometimes cannot avoid envisioning a projected Nigerian nation."[127] In the same way, the numerous divisions within Jordan, whether they be between Bedouin and settled or Palestinian and "native" Jordanian, necessitated the creation of some type of larger Jordanian nation as an assimilative force. Since the French Revolution, according to Neuberger, as a result of the ideal "one nation, one state" construction, the multinational state "will either proceed toward the evolution of one nation in a nation-state or the breakup of the nation-state will become inevitable." [128] While the process may have been delayed in Jordan for a while, and a measure of flexibility surrounding the contours of the nation continued, in the end political pressures necessitated such a definition.

While it appears clear that the framework for the Jordanian state preceded the Jordanian nation, one may ask to what extent the development of the nation was planned or accidental. In Britain and France, various monarchs who were not particularly nationalists created the nation by "communication and economic integration, by administrative penetration and educational-cultural assimilation, and

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[127] Benjamin Neuberger, "State and Nation in African Thought" in *Nationalism*, 233.

[128] Ibid.

enforcement of one law."[129] This method of forming a nation consisted of "states led by non-nationalist leaders (i.e. monarchs) who almost accidentally built nations."[130] In post-colonial Africa, however, nationalist leaders actively sought to build a nation in order to fill the "states led by nationalist leaders whose objective is to give the external shell of state an internal national content." In the words of one Zamibian leader, "Our aim has been to create genuine nations from the sprawling artifacts the colonialists carve out."[131] In Jordan, the process advanced using both of these methods, initially employing the first, and subsequently switching to the second. It was the latter shift that led to a reevaluation in terms of Jordanian national identity and resulted in a "filling in" of the gaps left by colonialism by using traditional Bedouin culture as a basis for neo-national Jordanian culture.

Chapter 4: Retaining Elements of the Old 1920-1946

By and large, in order to have a national identity constructed for it, a country must first acquire clearly defined boundaries and some sense of organic identity. Ambiguity and fuzzily defined boundaries either physical or ideological are to be avoided at all cost. Within the nationalist discourse, "there is no place for imprecision, for mixture, for hazily defined boundaries."[132] In the case of Jordan, not only were such fuzzy boundaries tolerated, but for a long time actually encouraged

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid., 235.

[132] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 28.

and left without adequate definition, as Layne argues, "it is precisely on these qualities that the Jordanian state thrives."[133] While at the beginning of the construction of a state, boundaries may be etched in pencil rather than pen so that "the lines of construction will as yet be "broad lines", sketches which might (and should) be changed at times so as to be consistent with the new structure as it is formed."[134] In Jordan, however, not only were these spaces left blank at the beginning, but they continued to be so long after ample time had passed in which they could have been filled. While simultaneously embarking upon a system of definition and clarification of its culture, Jordan and its rulers still sought to exploit some advantages of the old tribal system for the benefit of the Hashemite regime.

Over time, the state tried to shift Bedouin loyalties in the army and from the monarch personally to the state "through the gradual replacement of tribal consciousness and tribal support for the king as tribal shaykh by a national consciousness and popular support for the king and government as national institutions."[135] Given this change, the development of a nationalism based upon the Jordanian state became of the utmost necessity. Yet how successful this process has been is questionable. In the work cited above that emphasized the need to shift from tribal to national consciousness, other very different perspectives are also acknowledged. Writing in the mid-eighties, Joureidini and MacLauren comment that

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[133] Ibid., 48.

[134] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 264.

[135] Jureidini and McLaurin, *Social Change*, 53.

one would "find it difficult to conceive of Jordan without Hussein,"[136] and although Jordan is "the Hashemite Kingdom in name- it is Hussein's Kingdom in the public mind."[137] These words imply that the king assumes the role almost of "shaykh of shaykhs." The degree to which Jordan exists as a separate concept free from the leadership of a king and based upon the western model of nation-states represents an unresolved issue to some extent. For the tribes, "the role of Jordan is still to a large extent an alien concept."[138] The extent to which non-tribal based Jordanian nationalism and the country of Jordan have acquired a meaning among the population at large remains an interesting question that merits further research.

Given these assertions, the development of an independent Jordanian nationalism based upon the state itself rather than a personal loyalty to the monarch that had been of primary importance up until the modern day appears to have been incomplete. However, the kingdom obviously did survive the death of Hussein and the change in leadership to his son Abdullah in 1999. Despite this fact, portraits of King Hussein abound in Jordan where they often hang next to pictures of Abdullah, thus providing a visual reinforcement of genealogical ties. In many ways, Jordanian nationalism, as it was in the time of Hussein continues to be under Abdullah based upon personal support for the monarch as representative of the state. On an internet message board one Jordanian posted a poem dedicated to Abdullah last year on the

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[136] Ibid., 56.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid., 63.

occasion of his tenth anniversary of rule. In it he writes glowingly of his king, saying, "Every year and Jordan is you. Every year and you are Jordan. You sit like your ancestors lofty and mighty like pillars." He continues to describe Abdullah as a radiant star and "the sun of the country" underneath a picture of a smiling monarch in full military dress uniform surrounded by flags. He describes the flag of Jordan as, "The waving Hashemite flag."[139] All of these descriptions show clearly the personal and familial basis of Jordanian nationalism that is based heavily upon personal charisma and the veneration of ancestors. Not once in the poem does the poet ever mention his love of Jordan as a country, perhaps an indicator that he does not think in this way. This poem is only one example of the type of hagiographic literature that one can find in Jordan and other places that offers praise to the ruler. It also forms a part of the larger public monarch worship that one can see very prominently in Jordan in the form of portraits, posters, songs, and the like.

By leaving certain factors undefined, the Jordanian state was able to shape the contours of its identity through "agile response" and "flexible specificity…poised to meet any conceivable challenge." From the very inception of Jordan, King Abdullah possessed a fluid vision of Jordanian borders that would make developing a country-specific nationalism problematic. By invoking the Hashemite role in the Great Arab Revolt and refusing to define the exact borders of Jordan definitively, "Abdullah could simultaneously claim the apparently contradictory right to leadership

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[139] Edwani Asil "Every Year and My Country Jordan and its Leader Has a Thousand Blessings," www.bdrl130.net/vb/t561829.html. (translation mine)

of a nation-state and a regionwide, pan-national identity."[140] While it is doubtful whether Abdullah actually believed that he could realistically achieve the dream of a larger regional leadership in the face of colonial opposition, from the very beginning he viewed Jordan as a springboard to a greater project. From the time of his arrival, "what Abdullah had in mind was not a Transjordanian administration, but a nuclear Pan-Arab government for the whole of Syria based in the available territory of Transjordan."[141] It came as no surprise, then, that the national identity of Jordan continued to be undefined for a long period of time after its creation, since Abdullah did not seem to have considered the nation to be in its final form. While building the framework of a modern nation state and the structure of a Jordanian government, ideologically Abdullah saw Transjordan as "the country of every Arab."[142] In the early days of its existence and for a long time afterward, not only did the Hashemite administration fail to create any real sense of Jordanian nationalism in the European model, but it took steps that inhibited its development and relied on old tribal alliances to support their rule. This ambiguity with regard to its national border and identity played a key role in substantiating and perpetuating the ongoing Jordanian claims over Palestine after 1948.

Exploiting Aspects of the Old Tribal System

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[140] Anderson, *Nationalist Voices*, 39.

[141] Salibi, *Modern History*, 94.

[142] Ibid., 99.

The attachment of the Bedouin to the state was done not for ideological but for practical purposes. Precisely because the state could not or did not choose to create a national identity that could be used to form a nationalism, tribal identity and tribalism continued to be supporting factors for the Hashemite regime long after they ceased to be relevant in other countries. In a very real sense, it was the Bedouin support for the monarchy that allowed it to continue to delay its national identity formation and espouse the dream of Arab nationalism and a greater Syria under Hashemite leadership. After he had first "secured the recognition of his authority by the establishment of his authority by the established regional and tribal leaderships, which alone at the time, were in a position to make or break his political aims," [143] Abdullah then proceeded to leave the Jordanian entity nebulous while attempting to entertain ambitions of a wider Arab nationalist movement.

While it is clear that the Hashemite regime was determined to remove the Bedouin tribes as a political threat and alter some aspects of their behavior such as raiding and feuding that went against state interests, it would be a mistake to think that the state was actively determined to stamp out Bedouin cultural traditions altogether. This would have had a most unfortunate effect by alienating the Bedouin element whose support the state in its early years was actively attempting to recruit and indeed needed in order to build up its military capabilities. Rather, the state attempted to get rid of the "objectionable" aspects of Bedouin culture that conflicted with its wishes and reinforce those "beneficial" ones that would imbue Jordan with its

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[143] Ibid., 108

own distinctive Bedouin-based culture. In summary, the policy pursued by Glubb and the Hashemites was to evaluate tribal traditions in a clear framework and "decide which of them is good and beneficial for public welfare and amend what needs to be amended and look into what needs to be reviewed."[144] Indeed, what remained objectionable from the point of view of the government was not so much the fact that tribal identities existed, but rather the extent to which they came into conflict with the priorities of the state. Certain aspects of Bedouin tribal aspects would not only be tolerated by the state, but held in high esteem as useful, perhaps even desirable.

The Army and Its Role in Social Transformation

One such aspect that would be exploited by Glubb was the tradition of fighting and the tribal expertise in combat, a quality that he came to view as almost an innate racial characteristic of the Bedouin. In the words of P.J. Vatikiotis, who estimated that in 1967 the Jordanian army was thirty to forty percent Bedouin, the "traditional-occupational ethos of the Bedouin as a warrior"[145] made them excellent soldiers; this impulse needed only to be turned away from intertribal feuds toward constructive service in the army. As an additional benefit, noted Vatikiotis, the "political and ideological considerations… do not appear to affect the Bedouin's attachment or loyalty to the Legion's military ethic or ideal." In stark contrast to the other newly independent Arab countries where military coups seemed to be

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[144] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 61-62.

[145] P.J. Vatikiotis, *Politics and the Military in Jordan: A Study of the Arab Legion, 1921-1957* (London: Frank Cass, 1967), 20.

displacing the carefully crafted, imperially minted governments left and right (Iraq 1958, 1963, Syria 1955, 1963, Egypt 1952), Jordan remained stable and endured, supported by a military with a tribal backbone. Because of this lack of political attachments, Jordan's military appeared to lack "a professional military ethic"; the Jordanian tribesman's motivation was based upon his "identity with values of a warrior,"[146] an almost primal instinct as opposed to the modernist attitudes of his Arab brethren in surrounding armies. Yet "the tribesman in the Legion was…militarily more professional exactly because he was less political."[147]

In this context, the King of Jordan is viewed by the largely tribal military not as some sort of commander-in-chief or head of state, concepts that they do not understand and which have little or no pull on their emotional loyalties, but rather as the "shaykh of shayks," almost a kind of super-Shaykh who rests at the top of the tribal pyramid beyond all the other lesser shaykhs. It is in this context that the tribal soldiers view their king, "sustained by the primacy of the monarch chief and not of the nation-state."[148] Clearly, these are Bedouin "elements" that can be exploited by the state in order to gain control over the Bedouin and secure their loyalties by using symbols they understand and to which they can relate. Because the Bedouin lack the "imagination" in terms of the modern state-based system to conceive of themselves as belonging to a nation called Jordan, words like "nation" and "citizen" and "Jordan"

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[146] Ibid., 21.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid., 20.

do not carry any special meaning. Rather, the Jordanian rulers have wisely constructed a narrower tribal discourse within the larger national discussion that refers to the Hashemite "tribe" and the "shaykh of shaykhs,"[149] familiar tropes in their memories to which these Bedouin would be willing to and did pledge their loyalty, provided that they see it in their personal interest to do so. Thus, concurrent with the dominant narrative of the modern nation state that occupies the majority of the discourse within Jordan, a separate "tribal" narrative has been carefully woven into Jordan that allows the Hashemites to secure loyalties on tribal terms using a tribal frame of reference.

One aspect of the Jordanian military's apparatus that appeared distinctively un-modern were the so-called Cadet Schools of the Legion. Because the state felt that "the government schools were saturated with politics and many school-teachers were communists,"[150] and every effort was made to exclude politics as much as possible, a new network of Arab Legion schools was opened. These schools taught thousands of young boys in preparation for entering the military, stressing "service to king and country, duty, sacrifice, and religion."[151] This system of education started early, as the boys entered at ten and graduated at seventeen, immediately afterward joining the military. Although basic literacy was taught in these schools and other skills necessary to perform military duties, the lessons were on the whole rather limited.

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[149] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 113.

[150] Ibid., 150.

[151] Ibid.

Glubb opposed non-military education as he thought that "teaching men to read and write seems simultaneously to introduce them to forgery and deceit."[152] What is particularly striking is that the Legion "inbred its recruitment policy consisting of children of Legionaires from one generation to the next."[153]

These features bear a striking resemblance to the Janissary corps of the Ottoman Emperor. Like the Bedouin that formed the backbone of the Arab Legion, the Janissaries were a distinctive group separate from the rest of society consisting of young Christian boys from the Caucasus and the Balkans. Also like the Bedouin in the Cadet Schools, they were recruited quite young and trained for a period of time in a school using a regiment of military education. They were also instilled while in school with a tremendous sense of personal loyalty to the Ottoman Emperor himself, just as the Bedouin cadets were taught unquestioning loyalty to the king. Also, the Janissaries were valued for their superior skills as warriors (although they were highly literate, unlike the Legion troops) and their lack of political or other outside attachments and came to form a special crack core of troops, similar to the "'Praetorian Guard' of a prince-ruler"[154] that characterized the early period of 1920-1948. And, also like the Bedouin, eventually the children of the Janissaries came to expect a hereditary position within the Janissary corps itself. All of these similarities surely cannot be an accident and show how, despite its modern ministries and

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[152] Ibid., 152.

[153] Vatikios, *Politics and the Military*, 27.

[154] Ibid., 6.

departments, at least in its early years the Jordanian government possessed elements of an empire similar to the Ottomans with the King taking on a function similar to that of the Emperor. This situation might almost be expected, since the imposition of a modern state on the territory of Jordan represents such a radical change that some intermediary steps were necessary. This is not to say that the early Jordanian state did not accelerate the process of modernization to a great extent, but merely to mention that some vestiges of earlier forms of political attachment continued to exist at least during its infancy.

Chapter 5: Where the New Order Fell Short

Land Reform 1927-1933

What the British often failed to realize in the quest they pursued with almost missionary zeal to bring order out of perceived chaos were the consequences of such radical and profound changes on the social system. British land reform policy was a prime example of this, a policy that aimed at "settling questions of title to cultivatable land, mapping it, registering it through massive surveying and title settlement,"[155] all of which, of course, was only the first step in establishing an efficient system of agricultural production and taxation. In an idealistic vein, the British preferred to see this radical transformation as a public service that they were performing for the Jordanian people that would allow them to use their own land more effectively and efficiently. To this end, the British commissioned Sir Earnest

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[155] Fischbach, *Land Policy*, 82.

Dowson in 1923 to conduct a "full cadastral survey," the central goal of which was to "demarcate village boundaries and divide land into blocks of equal value,"[156] a process that had already been completed in Egypt. In order to ensure that these boundaries would remain permanent, iron nail marks were driven into the ground.[157] Much more than mere nails driven into the earth; these iron marks provided a graphic visual representation of the attitude that the British took that Jordanian land must be defined, brought under human subjugation, and exploited. This image calls to mind the enclosure movement that had taken place during the Middle Ages in Britain for many of the same goals.

Fundamentally, the British land reform movement in Jordan represented a clash between modern and pre-modern or traditional attitudes about the relationship of humanity to land. Despite topological differences, the various villages of Jordan held in common a system of "traditions of membership in the village community, of social regulations of the cycle of ploughing, harvesting, grazing, and of collective responsibility for the payments of the agriculture tax."[158] In other words, farming in Jordan was essentially both a communal and social activity in all stages of the process. Even the objective unit of measure, the *feddan*, or plough-team, not only served to designate absolute distance, but also "to state abstractly the structure of

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[156] Ibid.

[157] Ibid. 82-83.

[158] Martha Mundy, "Village and Individual Title: Musha and Ottoman Land Registration in the Ajlun District" in *Village, Steppe, and the State* ed. Eugene L. Rogan and Tariq Tell (London: British Academic Press, 1994), 62.

relations binding people together in the process of an agricultural product"[159] such as the capacity of individuals to cultivate land and the individual's share of the tax. While the standardization of land measurements carried out under the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 reduced confusion regarding local variations in measurements, it also reduced local autonomy regarding land usage to the Ottoman authority.[160] The same, in fact, may be said of the British reform effort itself, although its ultimate economic value is still far from clear. The loss of autonomy of rural communities in this respect paralleled the loss of autonomy by the Bedouin tribes and was the result of the same root cause of the state penetration of civil society.

Perhaps part of what the British saw as disorder in the division of land ownership was actually only diversity. During the Ottoman period, a system of *Huwara* land developed where communal village land, or *musha'* comprised 2/3 of the land in Jordan, and was divided into a number of large blocks that were in turn sectioned into shares. An individual could possess a certain number of shares of the common land in a certain block. Also, taxation was assessed on the basis of a lump sum on the village as a whole, rather than each individual landholder. Although *musha'* was the most common way of owning land, individual and other group sharing arrangements were also present. Martha Murthy comments on this in her article on land ownership during the Ottoman period, "The structure varies not only

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[159] Ibid. 63.

[160] Ibid.

village to village, but also more systematically between regions."[161] Olive trees, for example were also owned in shares, whereas palm trees were more often held individually, as was land on less desirable, broken terrain. The prevailing image that came across was not so much one of tumult as one of incredible diversity and a fluidity of social relations that fueled land use. It bears in many ways a striking resemblance in this aspect to the tribal system of production, one that was also primarily based on social relations. As Jarvis has already noted, the British refused to tolerate any "exceptions" whether in societal relations or land ownership, and so both were labeled as deviant when in fact they were only different.

In the British colonial mind, however, diversity transformed into disarray, and was thus in need of a corrective in order to fall in line with British conceptualizations of land and space. As Michael Fischbach writes, "The British land program was based not on Trans-Jordanian realities, but upon experiences elsewhere in the British Empire",[162] including Egypt and India, so that it bore a kind of one-size-fits-all mass produced approach that was not particularly fitting. In a way, the same may be said of the British administration in general in that it failed to account for local realities as much as it should have and instead relied on a more universal, state-centric approach that not only did not fit the area but completely ignored and actively tried to destroy the system then in place. Much as Abdullah would later do with Jordanian tribes, the British did not take much care to deal with the prior communal systems, but rather

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[161] Ibid., 67.

[162] Fischbach, *Land Policy*, 105.

preferred to act as if they did not exist and proceed to do whatever they wanted. In the end, the program succeeded in its attempt: "To enforce a British conceptualization of law and private property in the country and reduce or eradicate important indigenous social aspects of landowning such as holding land in unpartitioned joint ownership."[163] *Musha'* remains as dead today as a viable economic system as Bedouin tribalism remains as a political system. Both of them were casualties of the British efforts at "improving" the lives of the Jordanian people.

So did it work? The effectiveness of the British land policy in substantially improving the economic output of Jordan remains very much in question. According to Fischbach, taxes increased only slightly, from 78,641 dinars to 88,274 dinars in the span from 1933 to 1946.[164] Ultimately, Fischbach pronounced that the program "failed to realize significant progress and led to unforeseen problems." [165] The most serious of these problems stemmed from the alienation of the people from the land, a feeling that led to the increasing tendency to sell their former property to larger land owners as they could no longer afford to farm it. Despite the fact that the British designed their system in order to increase the efficiency of land use, it ended up backfiring and having the opposite effect. Fischbach noted, "For all its alleged agricultural inefficiency, the presence of Musha, vague boundaries, and uncertain title

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[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid., 103.

[165] Ibid.

had served to retard the alienation of land to outsiders."[166] Much as would later occur with international aid organizations and the Bedouin sedentarization, the British did not stop to consider the impact that these changes would have on Jordanian society after their implementation.

The British effort to standardize land use, in the end, destroyed the very social system upon which society depended. As a result of the "imposition of law and order," the cultivators were removed from "the social confines of land ownership" and "thrust… into a society and economy increasingly oriented toward the impersonal logic of the marketplace." Although the system might appear "confused" to the British, it "had worked to keep family holdings together and prevent the fragmentation into small, uneconomical plots."[167] The British land reform and its destruction of the social and familial nature of land holdings contributed to the fragmentation of both the land and the system that kept it functioning, leading to increased borrowing against the value of the land from 1937 to 1945 by 400 per cent, following a series of droughts and crop failures.[168] For the Bedouin in particular, the land reform program inaugurated significant changes in terms of land use. The program, like earlier Ottoman land reform laws, did not recognize any Bedouin claims on traditional pastureland. It did, however, recognize rights over summer

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[166] Ibid., 105-06.

[167] Ibid., 106.

[168] Ibid., 98-99.

camping grounds and lands used for crop agriculture.[169] Naturally, this encouraged a greater degree of sedentarization and a reduction in nomadic pastoral patterns.

The alienation of the people from the land as a result of sundering social ties and replacing them with artificial state-created ones parallels the alienation of a person from society by the state in order to form the "political man" that Marx discusses, or in other words, to turn someone into a citizen of the state. While such alienation may in some analyses be to a certain extent inevitable, its effects could have been lessened considerably had the British dealt with the existing system differently, perhaps with greater cooperation and humility and less arrogance. They could conceivably have tried to strike a better balance by preserving some institutions, such as *Musha'*, and ensuring the continuity of the social aspects of land owning, while at the same time pursuing more efficient land use and better record keeping. Fischbach draws a similar conclusion, when he writes, "The preservation, not destruction of tribal ownership was in fact necessary to prevent such alienation."[170] While there can be little doubt that the old land system could have benefitted from some reforms, the British made matters worse by scrapping the system altogether and replacing it completely with a modern one. Had they instead tried to work with the traditional system for reform instead of against it, the result could have been much more beneficial.

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[169] Bocco, "Settlement of Pastoral Nomads", 315. See Rogan for the Ottoman refusal to recognize Bedouin pasture land and pressure to cultivate. "Bringing the State Back," 47.

[170] Ibid., 106.

Dire Economic Straits and State Opportunities

While the ambitious British land reform program may have harmed the Bedouin pastoral economy, it would be a mistake to say that it was the only factor contributing to its demise. By the time the British took over, the economic system was already breaking down, and the reforms merely sped up this process. In the 1930s, this deterioration had already been occurring to such an extent that many Bedouin tribes were facing imminent starvation, thirteen of them in the year 1931 according to Glubb.[171] Not surprisingly, these dire economic straits led to an increase in recruits for the Desert Patrol, which exploited these conditions to increase its recruitment. The efforts by Glubb and other British administrators to stem the tide of raiding as well as the British land distribution policy that aimed to increase agricultural production and hit tribal grazing lands especially hard contributed to the malaise: "The contraction of the market for camels, the abolition of raids by which Bedouin traditionally built their herds, and restrictions imposed by the division of the Syrian desert… heralded the collapse of the Bedouin economy."[172] Faced with such grim propositions, the Bedouin often had little choice than to turn from their traditional economic pursuits of nomadic pastoralism and adopt either wage labor or agriculture. Thus, the procession of this wave of poverty contributed to a period "of starvation and decay, leading to extinction on the one hand or changeover to life of

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[171] Riccardo Bocco and Tariq M.M. Tell, "Pax Britannica in the Steppe: British Land Policy in Transjordan" in *Village, Steppe, and the State*, 121.

[172] Ibid., 123.

the settled cultivator on the other."[173] The Bedouin often did not so much chose to change their lifestyles as have this choice thrust upon them, either by force of arms or more often by hunger and poverty.

Thus, the British considered it part of their task to encourage the transformation of the Bedouin economy from nomadic pastoralism to a more agriculture and wage based system. This transformation was accompanied by a certain amount of arrogance by the British, who believed they knew what was best for the Bedouin even if the Bedouin themselves did not. The British believed that, after overcoming the Bedouin's "exaggerated sense of individual and collective self-esteem,"[174] they would eventually come around as long as they felt that they were being treated as equals and not as lesser subjects. Given a period of reflection, the Bedouin would conclude that their best interests would be served this way: "No matter how much they stood to gain from continuing anarchy, they realized that orderly government offered a better way of life."[175]

Despite the haughty tone, these statements were not categorically wrong, and may in fact contain a kernel of truth. The political decline of the Bedouin during the age of the advent of government coincided with their economic decline that had been ongoing for some time. With or without the British, in other words, their livelihoods

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[173] Salibi, *Modern History*, 106.

[174] Ibid., 99.

[175] Ibid.

were declining as the modern age ushered in new and improved services that circumvented those provided traditionally by Bedouins. As Colonel Jarvis notes, "The demand for camels… is not so good as it was; the carrying trade is gone for all time in many parts of Arabia; and the ease with which an efficient Government can protect a trade or pilgrim route by means of patrol cars and telephone has obviated the necessity for paying a yearly *surra*, or subsidy, to local sheikhs for the maintenance of good behavior." [176] Is it any wonder, then that the Bedouin in the early days joined Glubb's army in such numbers, or that they gradually adopted agriculture and abandoned nomadic pastoralism? To put the matter simply, farming paid and "the sheer profit potential of farming accelerated the transformation from a primarily pastoral economy to a highly intensive system of agriculture." [177] Government projects such as the East Ghor Canal Project initiated from 1973 through 1980 improved agricultural production and encouraged settlement in the Jordan Valley,[178] but sometimes at the expense of the Bedouin lifestyle. Yet even economically, the results turned out to be a mixed bag, with some successes, but many failures, as further discussion will reveal. Thus, while the economic condition of the Bedouin may have improved as a result of the transition to agriculture, their independence, lifestyle, and sense of distinct group identity have all been eroded.

The Adwan Rebellion: A Lesson in Inflexibility 1923

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[176] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 132.

[177] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 45.

[178] Ibid., 46.

The way in which the British and Abdullah insisted on not cooperating with or acknowledging the Beoduin tribal order on its own terms created a number of problems that were otherwise unnecessary. Despite the feeling among the Bedouin that they deserved some form of consultation prior to decision making, the British obviously did not feel that way. Instead, King Abdullah and the British often treated the tribal leaders with arrogant contempt, preferring to view them as part of the problem rather than part of the solution. This did not stop the Jordanian government from meddling in internal tribal affairs for state benefit. For example, Abdullah cultivated an especially close relationship with Mitqal al Fayez, chief of the Bani Shakr Bedouins, whose territory occupied the strategically important location surrounding Amman and the inland desert in the direction of Saudi Arabia where Wahhabi raids were increasingly threatening the Jordanian state. This antagonized Sultan al-Adwan, shaykh of the Adwan Bedouins, historical enemies of the Bani Shakr, who also claimed leadership over all of the Bedouins of the Balqa regions.[179]

As a result of these grievances, a rift developed between Abdullah and Sultan al-Adwan that gradually developed into a rebellion. While originally Abdullah attempted to placate the Adwan by granting the Sultan an audience and promising to address some of his grievances to avoid a confrontation, this uneasy truce did not last. The Adwan formed an alliance with "a new generation of urban intellectuals" who had "been growing increasingly envious of the Lebanese, Syrians, and Palestinians who had monopolized the most important positions in the government and

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[179] Salibi, *Modern History*, 106.

administration."[180] Prominent among these intellectuals was Mustafa Wehbeh al-Tall, better known by the pen name *Arar*, the great Jordanian nationalist poet of Irbid, who first coined the phrase "al-urdun lil-urduniy'un"[181] or Transjordan for the Transjordanians. This resulted in the strange marriage of convenience between the most modern and ancient concerns, with the Sultan al Adwan espousing nationalist causes such as "popular demand for a constitutional, parliamentary government" and "the redress of some urgent fiscal grievances," while his real concerns centered on "Who were the real masters of the Balqa region?" (i.e. the Adwan, and not the Bani Shakr)[182] After the government arrested Mustafa al-Tall, Sultan al-Adwan feared that he was next and led his forces in a march on Amman in 1923, which was repelled by Arab Legion troops under Peake's command.

The Adwan rebellion represented a failure on the part of the government to recognize the importance of tribal political dynamics and act accordingly. Afterwards, Abdullah remained defiant and refused to grant clemency to the Adwan prisoners whom he sent into exile in the Hejaz. Defiantly, Abdullah refused to bend, stating that "the Adwan will not be granted clemency. The cause of this discord is the Adwan."[183] The Adwan rebellion was caused much more by the ineptitude of a government that failed to recognize the situation on the ground and felt it could

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[180] Ibid.

[181] Anderson, *Nationalist Voices*, 45.

[182] Ibid., 107.

[183] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, 90.

dictate the terms it wanted without paying any attention to tribal relations and then proceeded to impose its own will onto them. King Hussein, on a trip visiting his son, chided Abdullah for his blindness and arrogance. The episode is worth quoting at length as it illustrates clearly the authority that Hussein still had over Abdullah and the extent to which tribal authority frightened Abdullah. "In the Hijaz you're known as the *Shurayf*," Hussein chided, attaching the Arabic diminutive infix "ey" to the word *sharif*, resulting in the meaning "little *sharif*". He continued,

> The Adwan have become your enemies, but the people say they (i.e. the Adwan) are the shaykh of shaykhs (sic.). You're leading the horse by its tale, not by the reins. You don't understand things. You're the one who's caused this to happen. And I won't let you leave here until you've brought the Adwan back.[184]

When Abdullah objected that "the Adwan want to kill me and become the Amirs in my place. They want to be kings," His father replied, "Because they were kings in this land before you. Those Adwan were here before you. You came here yesterday. They were here before you. I want you to break bread with them and open a new page and when they make requests of the British you relay those requests… We ended Turkish oppression. Do you want to bring British repression on them?"[185] After this, Abdullah, Hussein, and the Adwan leadership had lunch, and the Adwan pledged their support to the Hashemite monarchy, largely because the leadership knew that they had no choice if they wished to remain relevant. While the Adwan

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[184] Ibid., 91.

[185] Ibid.

may have been, in the words of Hussein," Kings in this land before you," [186] Abdullah certainly did not see it that way nor did the British. Rather than viewing tribal rule as anarchy as the British did, Hussein recognized something that they did not: that the strong tribes like the Adwan constituted a kind of leadership whether they liked it or not. This leadership, however, was made subservient to the Hashemite-British alliance soon after its creation, which was never completely acknowledged in the historical record.

One factor that helped to obscure the fact that the Hashemites were neither from nor had any connections to Jordan was the tradition of their descent from the Prophet Muhammad through his paternal great grandfather Hashem through his daughter Fatima and her husband Ali b. Abi Talib. As one Jordanian schoolteacher points out, "The Hashemites are from another genealogy and another region. They came from the Hejaz. They have history of their own; they have ancestors and origins of their own." [187] So the question becomes how does one transform this foreignness from a liability into an asset. The answer lies in a quote on the home page of King Hussein's government Web site, "Direct descendents of the Prophet Muhammad, the Hashemite family is a unifying factor interwoven into the life of modern Jordan."[188] At first glance, being descended from the prophet Muhammad and "interwoven into the life of modern Jordan" do not seem to be synonymous or even related, and yet this

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[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid., 307.

[188] http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/hashemites.html.

is precisely the claim that the site is making; that having a holy genealogy means that they are entitled to Jordanian leadership.

The assumption of leadership claims by outsiders on the basis of a holy or prestigious genealogy finds an intriguing parallel in the Shirazi myth of Swahili origins. As Spear notes, it would be a mistake to take these claims at face value as, "Genealogies are not simply literal lists of ancestors, but models of society that both state and explain historical developments and social relationships."[189] The truth or fallacy of the genealogy being asserted is not the issue here, and dwelling on that would be like asking if Rudyard Kipling's Just So stories or the Indian morality fables involving talking animals translated into Arabic known as *Kalilah wa Dimnah* actually occurred. What matters is not so much whether the claim is true, but what the claim is used to justify and how. According to Spear, outside traders from up the coast came to the town of Kilwa and, using their wealth and "prestigious claims to Persian origins"[190] in order to gain political leadership and eventually intermarry with the local notables. Subsequent generations of Swahili merchants claimed "Shirazi" origins as a means of ensuring prestige. In a similar way, the Hashemites, while coming from the Hejaz, used claims of descent from the Prophet and the holiness that it conveyed in order to establish ties to Jordan and become monarchs.

Chapter 6: The Colonial Construction of Reality

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[189] Spear, "Shirazi Origins," 292.

[190] Ibid., 298.

Abolishment of Raiding and the Conflict between Desert and Farming 1930-1956

The explanations given by the British regarding intertribal raiding and the missionary zeal with which they attempted to stop the practice revealed an underlying preconceived prejudice against the Bedouin lifestyle. This prejudice offered colonial officials an excuse to abolish the Bedouin system and destroy tribal independence. Instead of viewing inter-tribal raiding as an essential component to the replenishment of livestock, particularly camels, the British regarded it as a character defect of a wild, uncivilized, savage people. Thus, tribes that had abandoned nomadic lifestyles and adopted agriculture were seen as advanced and enlightened, while those who did not were ostracized, demonized, and vilified. Because of their lack of land ownership, the Howeitat Bedouin were described by Godfrey Lias in his book *Glubb's Legion* as "True Ishmaelites, wild men who were steadily forced into enmity with other men, especially those who represented authority" who, when attacked, "were too proud not to hit back" [191] and complained that they would starve if not allowed to raid, a complaint that he dismissed as frivolous and irrelevant.

Since the British viewed raiding as something inherent in the Bedouin character, their attempts to stop it were linked to a colonial reeducation that was intended to result in changing attitudes. Even after this process had been initiated, in the eyes of the British old habits died hard, and some Bedouin continued to yearn for a return to the golden age of raiding because it was inherently part of their nature.

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[191] Lias, *Glubb's Legion*, 77.

Glubb wrote that, although the pacification of the Bedouin had led the British, "to regard raiding as a thing of the past…, many Bedouins still yearn for the old raiding days, and would seize on any sign of weakness to return to their former habits."[192] The extent to which the British devoted time and energy to the cessation of raiding clearly caused the issue to become especially important for them and eventually came to be regarded as a barometer of their success at state building in Jordan.

In order to deal with this issue, Glubb decided that the Bedouin would need to be persuaded voluntarily to abandon raiding even if done in response to being raided. The solution, in his view, was the self-policing that would enable an economic balance to be preserved while at the same time eliminating raiding. The problem was that such a system would only work if all tribes agreed, since "preventing a tribe from raiding would destroy the powerful economic balance of the desert unless that tribe could be protected from being raided."[193] Thus, the British particularly under Glubb initiated a campaign that they hoped would both eliminate raiding and result in a stable economic balance. In the process of this campaign, however, the Bedouins lost a considerable amount of autonomy and became more tied to the state project. In some ways, while raiding constituted an economic issue, it also represented a political one as well. While the British wanted to deter raiding as an activity that disrupted the public order, perhaps even more importantly they wished to alter the mindset that allowed the Bedouin to think of themselves as independent corporate actors.

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[192] Lunt, *Glubb Pasha*, 85.

[193] Ibid., 71.

Although the British did not wish to see the Bedouin raid, they objected even more to the fact that they could do so, and so sought to remove that possibility from ever occurring.

It is in this context that Glubb came to view the abolition of raiding and the independent mindset that made it possible as the central purpose behind his activities. It is the issue of raiding and its prevention that most strikingly illustrates Glubb's complex personality and competing impulses. The selection of Glubb to come to Transjordan in 1930 itself may be analogously compared to the contracting of an outside specialist to deal with a problem. The British had a Bedouin problem in Jordan, and they called in a Bedouin specialist who had experienced success in Iraq in the field of tribal pacification to deal with it. Glubb's transfer reflected "official recognition of the fact that their organization and training had not fitted them (i.e. British administrators) for the task of controlling elusive nomads."[194] Prior to the construction of a state apparatus, these Bedouins would need to be "controlled" to the extent that they ceased behavior that the British deemed destructive and began to cooperate.

One may deduce from the policies enacted by the British a willingness to differentiate between Bedouin tribal authority and independence and Bedouin culture. The Bedouin, in so far as they represent a cultural grouping, did not challenge the British project of state formation, whereas the nomadic Bedouin posed a direct

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[194] Ibid., 69-70.

challenge. Glubb, who considered himself an expert on Bedouin culture and seems to have genuinely appreciated and valued its richness more than most British administrators, nevertheless had no patience for Bedouin raiding and considered it his duty to bring the Bedouin to heel. This differentiation between the political and the cultural helps to explain Jarvis' comments regarding the Adwan revolt. Jarvis considered the Adwan rebellion as primarily being a complaint against unjust taxation on the part of the government and completely ignored the fact that the rebellion was motivated at least as much, if not more so, by the desire to prove their own tribal supremacy against the Bani Shakr. It seems strange then that Jarvis wrote these words: "Though it was only the Adwan of Es Salt and Amman which had taken up arms, the whole settled population of Trans-Jordan were behind them and backing them."[195] From this statement, he seems to have assumed that the Adwan Bedouin felt some sense of common purpose or group identity with inhabitants of Jordanian towns and cities greater than their tribal network of connections.

However, when one realizes that the Adwan here were considered not primarily as Bedouins, but rather as cultivators, the picture becomes much clearer. Jarvis described the Adwan as "the most numerous of all the settled tribes."[196] Although the Adwan, if asked, would almost certainly have described themselves as Bedouin rather than cultivators, in the eyes of the British they remained cultivators primarily and Bedouin secondarily. The fact that the British did not consider the

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[195] Peake, *Arab Command*, 107.

[196] Ibid., 106.

Bedouin's view of themselves in labeling them, while not surprising, reflected a certain colonial arrogance that would carry over and influence Jordanian government conceptualizations of tribal culture.

The Forever War: Cultivator and Nomad

Thus, in the mindset of the British, the period of time before the British arrival during which the Bedouins held power was synonymous with anarchy and had always been so much as the period of *Jahiliyah* before the advent of Islam is viewed by Muslims. As part of this picture, the British created a dichotomy between the wild, lawless Bedouin and the poor farmer who was at the mercy of marauding tribes. This division is remarkable to the degree that it is presented as something that has always existed since the beginning of time and continued unchanged up until the arrival of the British. Typical of such a description were the words of Godfrey Lias: "Almost from time immemorial the nomad desert shepherd and the farmers have been at enmity with one another."[197] This pitched battle between the cultivator and the wild nomad echoed across a wide variety of British accounts on the subject to such an extent that the pattern may not be viewed as accidental.

Almost invariably, the Bedouins were cast in the role of the wild, lawless, savage men who preyed upon the poor, defenseless village cultivators. The famous T.E. Lawrence wrote of the many dangers that confronted the nascent Jordanian state, foremost among them the plight of what he terms "self-respecting village Christians"

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[197] Lias, *Glubb's Legion*, 16.

who were surrounded by "tens of thousands of semi-nomad Arabs, holding the creed of the desert, living on the fear of their Christian neighbors."[198] It seems odd that Lawrence here singled out Christian villages for special treatment, as Muslim villagers would presumably receive the same treatment, and Lawrence of all people given his extensive experience on the ground in the region, should have known that. Nor is this construction of recent origin, as the Reverend John Zeller, head of the Church Missionary Society in Jerusalem, wrote as far back as 1866 of the "Bedawins" in the West Bank in disparaging terms. "Their ravages are not less fatal than those of locusts."[199] Zeller complained of the toll that the Bedouins took upon the harvests of villages till they were entirely consumed.

This same justification of protection against subjugation and the binary settled-nomadic division that colonial officials depict as old as time finds its parallel in other British colonial possessions, in particular in India. Accordingly in place of the so-called "Bedouin menace" myth, we find the "traumatized Hindu" myth in which the raid in 1026 of a certain Mahmud of Ghazi a famous ruler in the 11th century Ghazanid dynasty on the temple of Somanatha, a Hindu shrine, as the origins of "a trauma in the Hindu consciousness which has been at the root of Hindu-Muslim relations ever since."[200] An Indian Hindu nationalist thinker K.M. Munshi states the raid was "burnt into the collective subconscious of the (Hindu) race as an

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[198] Salibi, *Modern History*, 87.

[199] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, 75.

[200] Thapar, *Narratives*, 42.

unforgettable national disaster."[201] Even the concept of thinking of an event that occurred in the eleventh century as a "national disaster" reveals that modern observers with nationalist tendencies often project their perspective into the past long before the idea of the nation was ever conceived. Interestingly, as Melinda Tharpar notes, the depiction of the event as a disaster came not from Indian sources, but rather from debates in the British House of Commons in 1843. According to Thapar, Mahmud's raid "was made into the central point in Hindu-Muslim relations" by Munshi, yet "prior to this its significance appears to have been largely regional."[202] Characteristic of so much nationalist discourse, this historical event was taken out of context and imbued reflexively with its modern meaning.

What motivation would the British have in assigning such a disastrous effect to this event? What reason would they have for insisting that it left such a permanent scar on Hindu consciousness? Tharpar maintains that many speaking in the House of Commons wished to return the gates from the tomb of Mahmud that had been supposedly looted from the temple in Somanatha. The real motivation behind this campaign to return the gates appears to have been political as, "It was claimed that the intention was to return what was looted from India, an act which would symbolize the British control over Afghanistan despite their poor showing in the Anglo-Afghan wars." The symbolic return of the gates "was also presented as an attempt to reverse

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[201] Ibid.

[202] Ibid., 45.

Indian subjugation to Afghanistan in the pre-British period."[203] This issue excited such debate in the House of Commons that it became a kind of political football between the government and the opposition. As Tharpar notes, the debate represented a departure from reality in that "Members of the House of Commons were using their perceptions of Indian history as ammunition in their own political and party hostilities."[204] In other words, political considerations caused the British to construct an unchanging historical narrative, much as they later did in Jordan, neither of which highly valued reality.

Much like in Jordan, the situation on the ground and the feelings of local inhabitants took a back seat to British perceptions of the event fueled by concerns of politics. In order to address this perceived grievance, they endeavored to return a relic from the ancient past that few considered to be of much importance except for the British and a few die-hard Hindu Indian nationalists. Those who supported the return felt they were "removing the feeling of degradation from the minds of the Hindus" and that the return would "relieve that country, which had been overrun by the Mohammadean conqueror, from the painful feelings which had been rankling amongst the people from nearly a thousand years."[205] Much like the claims that the Bedouins had pestered the settled people since the dawn of civilization and that the city dwellers lived in constant terror of their nomadic neighbors, these images sought

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[203] Ibid., 42.

[204] Ibid., 43.

[205] Ibid.

to portray the British as the savior of the helpless Indians from invasion by their more militant Muslim brethren. Ironically, when the gates were finally brought back in 1843 with much pomp and circumstance, they were found not to belong to the temple at all, but rather "on arrival they were found to be of Egyptian workmanship and not associated in any way with India." So, in sum, the British felt it essential to the repair of the injury done to the Hindu psyche to return the gates that had been taken in a raid eight hundred years earlier that the Indians themselves did not attach much importance only to find that the gates in question were not really Indian to begin with.

Out of this incident and incidents like it a greater division came to result in terms of the separation between Hindus and Muslims in India, "the binary projection of Hindu and Muslim."[206] Obviously, this distinction was not helpful and revealed very little about the people to whom it was applied, a fact that seems to have been lost on the British. Perhaps historians would do well to remember, as Tharpar suggests that "there are multiple groups with varying agendas, involved in the way in which the event and Somanatha are represented."[207] Thus, any attempts to generalize and state categorically that any event or situation has always been viewed in a certain way or a dynamic has always worked a certain way must be viewed with the utmost suspicion. As such, the eternal battle between nomad and farmer cannot be accepted as presented by the British at face value and represents a skewed view of the situation to suit their political realities, much as the Somanatha episode was.

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[206] Ibid., 47.

[207] Ibid.

Colonel Jarvis, in his biography of Peake Pasha, singled out the Bedouin threat as the single greatest challenge for the maintenance of civilization in Jordan. According to him, the Bedouin were responsible for the decline of human civilization in Jordan since its apogee in the Roman period.[208] Peake himself stated that Jordan was in grave danger in the absence of any government to check the influence of the Bedouin, and that, "had not the British stepped into Transjordan and the French into Syria, there is little doubt that both countries… would soon have reverted to tribal rule."[209] In the British mind, then, tribalism came to be associated with the lack of civilization and anarchy that would fill the void if the British did not step in and create a more suitable alternative. Peake stated from the beginning that he set out to eradicate tribal power as it then existed through a policy "that had been based on the checking of the raiding Bedouin and enabling the cultivator to prosper and form the foundation of the state."[210] The policy of reducing tribal independence and authority derived not solely from ideologically motivated biases due to the clash between modern sensibilities and a divergent tribal system, but practical consideration as well. While Jarvis claimed somewhat disingenuously that the British did not favor one section of the population *a priori* above another, he admitted that the cultivator

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[208] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 56.

[209] Ibid., 61.

[210] Ibid., 107.

factored higher in British planning because he was the one who paid the taxes upon which the state depended.[211]

The Saudi Ikhwan Issue 1920s-1930s

Outside factors played a key role in forcing the issue of raiding to the forefront and making it something that the British had to respond to forcefully. Over the course of the 1920s and 1930s, as Ibn Saud consolidated his new power in the Arabian Peninsula, he actively encouraged bands of Bedouin tribes who adopted the Wahhabi doctrines known as the Ikhwan to raid the Jordanian Bedouins.[212] According to both Lias and Glubb biographer James Lunt, the Ikhwan were fanatical, ruthless, and bloodthirsty, often disregarding the rules of tribal warfare. More important than the number of lives they took was their crippling effect on the economic well being of the Jordanian tribes, which suffered extensive livestock losses from these raids. Particularly hard hit were the Howeitat, who lost a staggering 5,000 camels during an Ikhwan raid in 1930 [213] and by 1931 possessed an average of 2 camels per tent compared with 30 that they had possessed the previous year, well below the 10 to 15 per tent that was considered necessary for survival[214]. The sheikh of the tribe saw his camel stock reduced from 200 camels to 12.[215] The aggregate livestock of the

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[211] Ibid., 69.

[212] Lias, *Glubb's Legion*, 70.

[213] Lunt, *Glubb Pasha*, 68.

[214] Bocco and Tell, "Pax Britannica," 120.

[215] Ibid., 70.

Jordanian Bedouin declined during the period between 1932 and 1936 by 70 per cent.[216]

Obviously, this situation presented a problem for Glubb, who proved somewhat sympathetic to the suffering Bedouins' plight. In a 1932 report, he noted that the Bedouin were growing increasingly disillusioned with the British who seemed to be powerless to stop the raiding *Ikhwan*. He writes of their complaints saying, "Why… if the government has so many forces to spare and are so determined to prevent raiding did they not prevent Ibn Musa'ad and Al Nashmi (Ikhwan leaders) raiding us?"[217] These complaints were justified, and they reflected a degree of hypocrisy in British policy that, while formally against raiding, they seemed extremely reluctant and cautious to take a firm stand against their newly acquired tribal citizens being subjected to brutal attack. If the British really wanted to take a stand against raiding, shouldn't they protect their own as well as preventing it? He noted that the Bedouins felt that while the British government fined and imprisoned Jordanian tribes who responded to these raids and returned the loot that they had captured, Ibn Saud's governor in Jauf was "openly urging the Nejd tribes to raid Transjordan," while His Majesty's Government was "willing to descend to any depths of servility to placate Ibn Saud."[218] In the interests of political expediency, Britain felt content to hand over Bedouin territory and goods to Ibn Saud while failing to

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[216] Ibid., 121.

[217] Lunt, *Glubb Pasha*, 69.

[218] Ibid., 72.

protect the Bedouin from raiding. More often than not, the British punished those tribes who conducted raids in reprisal while allowing the Ikhwan raiders to escape, which resulted in a "crass and unnecessary miscarriage of justice,"[219] in the words of Godfrey Lias. Traditionally, such a situation could be regulated by a reciprocal raid on the side of those who had been attacked, thus preserving the political and economic balance between tribes. But, by disrupting the system on one side and leaving it intact on the other, the British severely weakened the Jordanian tribes and disrupted the system without providing any alternative means of security in its place.

The White Man's Burden in Jordan

The British saw this fashioning of a force of Bedouin warriors into an effective army as a remarkable transformation that would improve their lives. It is in this context that P.T. Vatikiots writes, "The army civilized the tribesman towards a measure of modernity by diverting his sense of tribal connectivity and esprit de corps into a sense of loyalty and a feeling of allegiance for a paramount chief- the monarch."[220] By securing the loyalty of the Bedouin and incorporating them into the state apparatus through the military, "Jordan's Bedouin's were transformed from 'wild' but 'noble primitives' into modern soldiers, preserving the Bedouin traditions while at the same time turning them into modern soldiers."[221] Glubb's contemporary

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[219] Lias, *Glubb's Legion*, 80.

[220] Fischbach, "British Land Policy in Transjordan," 5.

[221] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 161.

Sir Alec Kirkbride felt that Glubb affected a change in behavior among the Bedouin that would ultimately lead to their being tied into the project of the Jordanian government to a greater extent than almost anyone else, thus ensuring continued peace and stability. He wrote how Glubb, "overcame… the old habit of the tent dweller to regard all governments as enemies who would go to any lengths to prevent free men of the desert from practicing their national sports of camel raiding and highway robbery."[222] The British employed both the carrot of employment and a livelihood in the army or civil service and the stick of military force to put down any rebellions effectively neutralizing Bedouin political independence. P.T. Vatikos accurately summed this up: "It is essential to realize that political control over tribal society can be achieved by the dual use of force and conciliation."[223] By suppressing militarily those Bedouins who violated the state's sovereignty and offering positions in the military and within the government to others, the British successfully gained mastery over the political independence of the Bedouin and harnessed them to the engine of the state.

Nor was Glubb himself oblivious to the benefits that could be gained by offering sufficient incentives for the Bedouins in order to attract their loyalties. Glubb's stance was one of "humane imperialism" that sought to offer tribes incentives for tribal cooperation characterized by "a humane and sympathetic approach to tribal complaints, provision of employment, subsidies to tribal sheiks,

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[222] Lunt, *Glubb Pasha*, 70.

[223] Jureidini and McLaurin, *Social Effects*, 4.

and application of tribal law whenever possible."[224] To a large extent, this meant providing bribes to the various tribal sheikhs in the form of commodity goods such as sugar, flour, coffee, rice, and tobacco in order to gain their support.[225] Such an approach proved highly effective and resulted in his gaining the personal loyalty of various tribal chiefs. Glubb himself seemed to revel in this role, writing that "it has been my pride and joy that this new peace and security had been established without the firing of a single shot or the arrest of a single man."[226] While this statement was almost certainly an exaggeration and to a certain extent an outright lie (there were certainly instances of the British using brute force to put down rebellions here and there and trouble makers were arrested), nevertheless it reflected Glubb as he wished to see himself, namely as a voluntarily accepted leader as opposed to a dictatorial one, who brought peace, security, and stability to Jordan and an improved way of life to its tribal inhabitants. As a result, Glubb was trying overtly to win the hearts and minds of the Bedouin in particular and convince them through education that he had something better to offer them.[227] This view overlooked to an almost criminal degree, however, the extent to which Glubb's policies served to destroy and accelerated the demise of the nomadic Bedouin lifestyle.

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[224] Bocco and Tell, "Pax Britannica", 120.

[225] Shyrock, *Genealogical Imagination*, 89.

[226] Lunt, *Glubb Pasha*, 81.

[227] Ibid.

In this context it is interesting to see the ambivalence with which Glubb wrestled with the problem of halting tribal raiding in particular and the larger colonial project in general. While Glubb had invested a considerable amount of time and effort into the so-called ordering of Jordanian society from what had been in the British perspective a chaotic mess, such an organization did not always result in a better, fairer, or more equal society. Glubb himself noted this, when he said in regards to the British land reform program that "there was less inequality in wealth and social position in the old insecure chaotic time" than under the present ordered conditions, and that "the establishment of law and order resulted in the rich becoming richer and the poor growing poorer."[228] Although this statement had been made with regard to peasants, it was equally applicable to the Bedouin population. While Glubb took pride in his rapport with the tribes and his ability to provide them with a better life through halting raiding and enlisting them in his army, the question remains whether these changes really improved their lives at all, or simply made them more orderly, confirmative, regimented, and regular, but not particularly better, and in some respects quite worse. It is a stinging indictment of the modernist narrative of progress that more ordered and stable does not necessarily mean an improved quality of life, and that steps taken in the name of progress and development ultimately end up harming at least as much as they help.

Nonetheless, Glubb considered it his duty to replace the system of reciprocal raiding and put in its place a system of self-policing. Such a shift, however, required a

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[228] Fischbach, "Land Policy," 106.

pedagogical campaign so that the Bedouins could be enlightened and persuaded that raiding was no longer in their economic interest. A common scene that reflected this was the Bedouin returning from a raiding reprisal against the Ikhwan. Upon one such instance, "instead of being hauled off to prison, they were given a lecture,…something new and unexpected," Lias notes, "… with their relationship with authority."[229] The lecture consisted of reassurances from Glubb that he understood their pain and sufferings and sympathized with their being raided by the Ikhwan and that he "had not come to impoverish them further but to help them." After the lecture was completed, he handed them back the loot and advised them "not to take the law into their own hands" and instead to allow the desert patrol to respond for them. He then suggested that young men should join the Patrol, thus "ensuring that the tribe's interests would be cared for, because raiding and counter-raiding hurt nobody but the Bedouin themselves--as they must know by now to their cost." [230] Glubb framed his ideas in terms of Bedouin self interest, explaining that "they would be paid to stop their own tribe raiding and would be protected if they themselves were in danger of being raided by others." [231]

The central point in Glubb's lecture seems to have been that the Bedouin needed to be "educated" how their way of solving the problem was wrong and ultimately would only result in more pain and suffering, whereas his way would result

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[229] Lias, *Glubb's Legion*, 76.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Ibid., 89.

in peace and tranquility. The tone that Glubb adopted here seems more appropriate for use in a classroom by a teacher talking to those students who misbehave, telling them that they know better, and that they end up only hurting themselves. Here the colonial authority acted as an educator in order to correct the faults of those who were placed under its care through the help of the colonial administrator. Lord Cromer, the British official, stated this policy in an essay entitled "The Government of the Subject Races," when he wrote, "We need not always inquire too closely what these people… themselves think is best in their own interests," rather, "it is essential that each special issue should be decided mainly with reference to what, by the light of Western knowledge and experience… we think it best for the subject race." Similarly Dowson, the architect of the land reform program, wrote in a report that the "Transjordanian government is carried on the backs of a very small number of competent officials" and that "the Arab officials cannot stand alone, but under close supervision of an energetic and encouraging Englishman wonders can be done."[232] This patronizing, didactic attitude summarized well the kind of benevolent imperialism that the British felt morally compelled to bring to Jordan to educate the ignorant people there about how to run their society without regard to local conditions or realities.

The degree to which dynamics had changed was reflected by the fact that it defied imagination that the prior Turkish government would ever have lectured raiding Bedouin on their raiding behavior and tried to persuade them that the

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[232] Fischbach, "Land Policy," 84.

government would better serve their interests. Here was yet another instance of how the British challenged Bedouin behavior because it competed in the same function as that provided by the state. Whereas up until now the Bedouin were basically in control of their own law enforcement, the age of government would deprive them of that right and allocate it to the newly created state. What Glubb objected to then was not the raiding in and of itself, but rather the right to raid the Bedouin claimed that conflicted with state authority.

The perpetration of cultural imperialism and destruction masquerading in the name of progress was a phenomenon that applied not just to the Bedouin of Jordan during this period, but also had a long and storied history in the context of the Middle East. In an article entitled "Enlightenment and the Absence of Identity", the Egyptian columnist Faruq Juweida warned against this danger, a destructive form of cultural exchange that he termed *al-ghazu al-thaqafi* or cultural invasion. Juweida made a distinction between those forms of cultural borrowing that he termed positive and those he considered destructive. The former category contained the philosophy of Rousseau, the novel, the play and the film, that had been adopted by the Arab world and had led to such positive native developments as the development of human rights and Arab cinema as well as the emergence of such masters of the arts as the playwright Tawfiq al-Hakim, Heikal Pasha, and Najeeb Mahfuz,. These luminaries, he wrote, "carry the features of the country in which they lived"[233] in their work.

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[233] Faruq Juweida, "Enlightenment and the Absence of Identity", *Al-Nadwah*, http://www.arabicnadwah.com/modernism/tanweer-guweida.htm. (Translation mine)

However, Juweida warned that cultural interaction and a desire to change for the sake of progress could quickly lead to destruction. “The abuse of the real value of Arab culture,” he wrote, “under the claim of enlightenment is the biggest sin in the right of enlightenment itself.” Such an abusive relationship “can approach the worst type of relationship between two cultures” and it represented what he terms “cultural invasion” as it “carries in its essence political ambitions and returns us to the ages when politics tried to hide its face behind ambitions and reform was the aim and goal but it was hidden behind culture and intellect.”[234] In much the same way, here, although Glubb’s stated purpose was to develop and further the interests of the Bedouin in the name of progress, it was hard not to see lurking in the distance “hiding its face” as Juweida put it, the desire ultimately to subdue the Bedouin tribes and deprive them of their political potency. Juweida’s comments bring to mind the important fact that this process was not an isolated one confined to Jordan, but rather part of a larger cultural infiltration that had been perpetrated by colonialist influences, in more or less militant forms and levels of subtlety that have operated across the Arab world. It is ironic and perhaps sad that the same type of cultural imperialism perpetrated by the Western colonial powers on the Arab world has in turn been used by Arab governments like the Hashemites against their Bedouin subjects, continuing in the British tradition. Much as the British subjected the Jordanians using colonialism, the Hashemites used the same colonialist practices against the Bedouins.

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[234] Ibid.

Nor would it be correct to assume that simply because the colonial armies that arrived by force of arms have gone is the threat of cultural imperialism completely removed. Juweida made this point explicitly when he stated that the Arabs of today must be on their guard: "It is required of us to guard our roots, and our history, and the elements of our culture," continuing to engage in a dialogue while refusing to alter the essence of the culture. He noted a change in the methods of such future cultural assaults saying that "the invasion will not come with armies, but rather it will come in the air, and the water, and the medicines, and the sandwiches, and the jeans, and the songs of Madonna, and the films of Stallone, and Michael Jackson, and the horrendous misshapen sky scrapers."[235] This stage of cultural destruction parallels what had occurred for the Jordanian Bedouin in the form of the "Disneyized" culture, which has been described above. Without the first military stage of the domination, the second cultural one would not have been possible. Therefore, the subjugation by force of arms was both a necessary perquisite for and a logical precedent of the cultural appropriation and destruction. At the same time that the Jordanian state took the Disneyized Bedouin culture and incorporated it into the national identity, they also symbolically destroyed it through their own local versions of Madonna, Stallone, and Michael Jackson. The germination of this process can be linked directly back to Glubb and his "humane imperialism" all executed, so it was claimed, in the name of progress.

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[235] Ibid.

It would be a mistake to think that Glubb acted alone in his educational efforts or without the consent and encouragement of the Hashemite administration. He had the full backing and support of the state, as was evinced when Amir Shakir, President of the Bedouin Control Board and close confidant to Abdullah, arrived for a surprise visit with Kirkbride, the British resident. Glubb had just impounded several tents and camels from unauthorized Huwaitat raiders and was waiting till they got back to lecture them. As Blunt notes, Glubb was nervous, since he was "acting far beyond his powers in seizing the camels"; he did not actually have authority from the Jordanian government for these actions, nor had he ever asked for it. However, all of his worrying was for naught, as Glubb revealed that "not only did he (Shakr) show no resentment… but (he) expressed warm approval of my actions and promised me his support."[236] Upon the return of the raiders, Glubb gave back their camels, but threatened that "next time the government would retain them."[237] This support on the part of the Jordanian government represented an endorsement of Glubb's policies of Bedouin pacification and signified a trend towards greater state power coming at the Bedouin's expense. By impounding camels, Glubb was striking at the very livelihood of the Bedouin, as this was the most certain way to ensure that they would act as he desired.

Chapter 7: Why It Failed 1920-1946

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[236] Lunt, *Glubb Pasha*, 76.

[237] Ibid.

In order to understand why developing an indigenous nationalism in Jordan proved problematic, it is necessary to look at the country's early history and examine why the conditions necessary for the construction of the modern-nation state were lacking. In Abdullah's early years, the creation of a Jordanian nation as an independent entity in an area where no such entity had ever existed before was an impossibility. The components to construct such a nation with its own independent persona simply were not present at the time. This is evident from a quote of Majid al-Adwan, shaykh of the Adwan Bedouin. After being told by Abdullah that the British intended to transfer his title from Amir to King, Majid recommended against it, explaining that "a King should have his own army and control it. You don't. A king should have his own mint and stamp his own coins. You don't."[238] Abdullah as a ruler and Jordan as a nation were not ready for independent existence, and so they leaned upon the Bedouin and tribal ties as a crutch. Even years later after Jordan might have been ready to define itself fully as a nation, its leaders chose not to and preferred to retain its national ambiguity in favor of larger Arab nationalist aspirations. The annexation of the West Bank into Jordan was a natural progression of this kind of thinking.

The Palestinian/Jordanian Divide

A good barometer of the extent to which the state-centered nationalism dominated the dialogue of identity politics in the Middle East can be seen in the main

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[238] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, 309.

divisions described as existing inherently within Jordan. The statement has been repeated to the point that it has become axiomatic that Jordan is "One State with Two Peoples"[239] referring to the Jordanian/Palestinian divide among the population. As a result of the mass exodus of Palestinians into Jordan following the 1948 and 1967 wars, "Jordan's population is two-thirds Palestinian, but 94% of its territory is Transjordanian."[240] This division has become the single most important one within Jordanian society, often to the exclusion of all others. According to Gubser, Jordan's "national and cultural differentiations… are most vividly represented by the Palestinian Jordanians as distinguished from, for lack of a better term, the East Jordanians."[241]

At the heart of the problem regarding the Palestinian-Jordanian distinction was the almost wholly artificially created nature of Jordan itself. If Jordan was not different in any significant way from the surrounding Arab lands, such as Palestine, drawing a division between Palestinians on the one hand and Transjordanians on the other had no real meaning. Even the name Transjordan reflected the lack of an established separate identity, as it implied a geographical location to be found physically on the map, rather than a separate entity in and of itself. Given the relative newness and artificial nature of Middle Eastern nationalism in general, and the

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[239] Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 304.

[240] Ibid.

[241] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 19-20.

creation of a Jordanian state in particular, the salience of the Jordanian and Palestinian division testified to the military power behind nationalism as an ideology as well as to its totalitarian and aggressive nature as a concept.

Creatio Ex Nihilo: The Birth of Jordan

If World War I and the subsequent division of the Middle East into various nation states may be said to be a modern and artificial creation, reflecting more the desires of colonial powers in far away places than the desires of those people who actually inhabited them, the formation of Transjordan elevated this sentiment to the level of an art form. In respect to its being *creatio ex nihilo*, Transjordan was second to none. An apt, amusing analogy as to how the country managed to come into being was offered by Major C.S. Jarvis, when he wrote that "the country in those days might have been likened to a quite sizeable and useful piece of material left over from a roll of cloth by the tailor's cutter when fashioning four new and fashionable suits." Jarvis noted with a bit of dry humor that this was a shoddy peace of craftsmanship, "Such a thing of course would not occur in an efficient tailoring establishment, but when there are four tailor's cutters from rival firms snipping out hurriedly cut lengths… some confusion and waste is bound to occur and misfits are inevitable."[242] In effect, the creation of Jordan was not a planned development or something that initially served the interest of anyone in particular, but rather the result of chaotic inefficiency on the part of the other colonial powers.

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[242] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 78.

Such a description, while somewhat farcical, does a better job than most at describing the haphazard and at times seemingly random division of the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire following World War I as a result of the San Remo Conference of 1920 and the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. Resembling some kind of strange grab bag of party favors to the victorious European powers, Britain received Iraq and Palestine, France acquired Lebanon and Syria, while Transjordan received scant attention and its status "was left unclear" as it was "considered to be of limited importance to all parties." [243] In other words, the area that would eventually become Transjordan was left in a kind of colonial limbo because no one really wanted it all that much or considered it important. When viewed from a rational and logical point of view, Transjordan really ought not to exist at all. One cannot help but agree with the assessment that "only Libya challenges Transjordan in its absence of a quasi-national tradition" [244] or that, of all the various nation-states that came into being in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, "Transjordan is perhaps the most artificial of them all." [245] 'Jordan' as a unified entity represents a completely modern creation, for before the arrival of Abdullah and the British, "Transjordan was no more than a northward extension of the Hijaz until the point was reached beyond Amman where the land became more distinctively Syrian." [246] Given the lack of a

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[243] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 21.

[244] Jureidini and McLaurin, *Social Effects*, 27.

[245] Vatikios, *Politics and the Military*, 7.

[246] Salibi, *Modern History*, 82.

historical precedent for the concept of Jordan, much less a state, the degree to which Jordanian nationalism or national distinctiveness remains a salient and important metric remains suspect. How could one consider such a distinction meaningful if it is of such recent duration and for a long time was not considered very important even after it came into being?

British Interest in Jordan

The creation of the Emirate of Transjordan as it was then called under the leadership of the Hashemite monarchy was to an extent a happy accident. It was the result of the convergence of British colonial interests with an aspiring Arab Amir who professed grand Arab nationalist ambitions but was open to compromise. Strategically, the area was important to the British not on its own merits, but as a means of connecting their two colonial possessions in the region, Palestine and Iraq. Thus, the physical location of Jordan made it worthy of British attention as it "constituted a land bridge toward Iraq and the Persian Gulf "[247] and "a lapse in anarchy would tempt the French to invade."[248] Given this situation, the British wished to create an independent entity that would serve "as a buffer zone between British and French mandated territories."[249] The role that the British wished to see Transjordan adopt as a buffer area for their other possessions was not a new one.

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[247] Uriel Dann, *Studies in the History of Transjordan, 1920-1949: The Making of a State* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 2.

[248] Ibid.

[249] Salibi, *Modern History*, 94.

While an independent and clearly bounded Jordan may be a modern creation, the lands that would constitute this entity have long held importance as a way to get to somewhere else. As a result, "its geographical location had always exposed the area from ancient times to a succession of conquerors who occupied it or portions of it primarily in order to protect and secure trade and other routes."[250] Various waves of invaders including the "Hebrews, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Nabateans, Arabs from the South, Greek, Romans, Byzantines, Muslim Arabs, Crusaders, Ottoman Turks, and Britons did this successively."[251] The crusader fortresses that constitute a good portion of the national landmarks within the country underlined the fact that Jordan was traditionally regarded as an insurance policy for Palestine, a view that the British used to create and support the modern state of Jordan.

While the British wished to create an area of stability and order, the creation of a separate country ruled over by a king were not originally part of the picture. After the withdrawal of British troops from the entirety of Syria and Transjordan, the latter was left "with neither a controlling government nor any army nor police with which to maintain order."[252] Such a situation was untenable to the British, who immediately determined that something must be done to achieve some measure of order out of what they considered a chaotic situation amounting to anarchy. Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary, decided firmly against extending direct rule into

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[250] Vatikiotis, *Politics and the Military*, 33.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 78.

the area, writing in a telegram that "HMG have no desire to extend their responsibilities in Arab districts and must insist on strict adherence to the very limited assistance which we can offer to a native administration in Trans-Jordania…There must be no question of setting up any British Administration in that area."[253] Presumably with their hands full in Palestine, the British had no desire to govern an area that had no effective government and offered little in the way of direct benefits to their colonial interests. In other words, they wanted someone to take control of the situation, but were not particularly eager to do the job themselves. In the words of Sir Alec Kirkbride, a British army officer, "His Majesty's Government was too busy setting up a civil administration in Palestine proper, west of the River Jordan, to be bothered about some remote and underdeveloped areas which lay to the east of the river."[254]

Jordan: The Accidental Country

This situation presented a dilemma for the British, who wanted to establish and maintain some form of government in Jordan to protect their colonial interests and guard against French encroachment while expending as few resources as possible. The interim solution that they devised, according to Lord Curzon, was to "send a few suitable political officers to such places as Salt and Kerak provided that no military escorts are necessary to ensure their safety" and that such a commitment

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[253] Dann, *Studies in the History*, 19.

[254] Alec Kirkbride, *A Crackle of Thorns: Experiences in the Middle East* (London: J. Murray, 1956), 19.

must be limited "to a maximum of four or five officers."[255] As a result, a few British officers were sent from Palestine to Jordan "with the task of setting up local administrations and of running the country as best they might."[256] Kirkbride notes that assistance was extremely limited and that the officers "were told that it would be a waste of time asking for assistance in the form of money or troops."[257] He compared the task assigned to himself and fellow officers to "making bricks without straw."[258] Kirkbride noted that "there was no intention at that stage of forming the territory east of the river Jordan into an independent state."[259] From this frank statement, it becomes clear that the creation of a Jordanian state where no such entity had ever existed was not inevitable and should not be considered as such. At the time, Jordan presented a problem that the British were forced to deal with, and the creation of a Jordanian state took time to develop. Even after the arrival of Abdullah in Jordan in 1921 and his installation as head of government, the status of Jordan remained in flux as the British hedged their bets and refused to make firm commitments.

Abdullah, Monarch Without a Country

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[255] Dann, *Studies in the History*, 18.

[256] Kirkbride, *Crackle of Thorns*, 20.

[257] Ibid.

[258] Ibid.

[259] Ibid., 19.

The arrival of Abdullah into the area was neither expected, nor planned on the part of the British government, but ended up offering a better solution to their dilemma then they could have imagined. Colonel Jarvis wrote in his biography of Peake Pasha, "It had not occurred to the British government previously that one of the Hashemite family, a son of King Hussein, should act as a ruler in Transjordan."[260] Even as recently as a few days before his arrival on 2 March 1921, the Colonial Office stated that it did not expect "a northward move being made by the Emir Abdullah"[261] from Ma'an in the south, a part of the Hejaz where he was then staying. After Abdullah's arrival in Amman, Winston Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, when informed of the event by telegram, extended an offer to Abdullah to assume control of administering Transjordan for a six- month trial period, during which he would receive a personal stipend of five thousand pounds a month.[262] The agreement came into being on the basis of strict practicality and aimed to "keep Transjordan quiet at a minimum expense to Britain in administrative, financial, and military terms."[263] By placing Abdullah in charge of Transjordan and providing him with sufficient military support to quash any incipient dissent, the British would be able to reap the benefits of colonialism without being burdened with its obligations. As Colonel Jarvis noted, "Air control backed by a few armoured cars would be infinitely

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[260] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 81.

[261] Dann, *Studies in the History*, 26.

[262] Ibid., 3.

[263] Ibid., 37.

cheaper and more effective than the old-fashioned army of occupation."[264] As long as Abdullah was able to ensure the safety and security of British interests, the British were willing to provide him with much needed muscle.

However, even after his installation as administrator in Transjordan, Abdullah's position and the status of his dominion were both far from secure. While Abdullah might in practice have "became ruler of Transjordan from the moment he arrived in Amman," the British remained "slow to make up their minds about what they really wanted and continued to delay and play for time."[265] Neither Abdullah nor the British seemed to conceive of Transjordan as entirely its own distinct entity that would eventually become its own country. Despite the fact that he espoused Arab nationalist rhetoric and may have seen himself in his more idealistic moments as the one who would unite the Arabs in one state, it is doubtful whether even Abdullah himself took this very seriously. In a British intelligence report written on July 11, 1921, Abdullah stated, "I came over to Trans-Jordania determined to make a bid for Syria; in Jerusalem I agreed to Mr. Winston Churchill's policy, because I did not wish to do anything to cause trouble to Great Britain."[266] Abdullah realized that this agreement after his announcement that he would lead the charge against Syria "would mean the loss of Syria and the alienation of the Arabs."[267] He seems, however, to

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[264] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 83.

[265] Salibi, *Brief History*, 109.

[266] Ibid., 95.

[267] Ibid., 47.

have been amenable to compromise, and in any case, he must have realized that he had little choice either way as the British were fully prepared to replace him if he refused.

Even after the British more or less settled upon Abdullah to be the one to run Transjordan, they remained remarkably noncommittal and sometimes openly hostile toward him. One British Colonial official posed the question of Abdullah's position in Jordanian leadership bluntly to his superior, Churchill, in writing, "Do we or do we not wish to see Abdallah settle himself firmly in the Transjordanian saddle?" Churchill answered him by scrawling the answer "yes" on the paper followed by his initials.[268] Such a response in such an informal manner, "cocktail napkin diplomacy" if you will, reveals the arrogance of people in power making decisions that affect the lives of thousands of others who remained ignorant of the whole ordeal. This incident recalls the famous percentages agreement that Stalin signed with Churchill effectively dividing up influence in Europe on a piece of paper in 1944. Abdullah's position in British eyes still remained "informal" and "nothing like governorship or sovereignty was mentioned."[269] Colonel Henry, the British Representative who was dispatched in 1924, had a profound dislike for Abdullah, and often treated him as "a decorative head of state- a prince who reigned but did not rule."[270] Reports reaching

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[268] Isaiah Freedman, *British Pan-Arab Policy, 1915-1922* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 340.

[269] Dann, *Studies in the History*, 47.

[270] Ibid., 7.

the colonial office that described Abdullah as "idle and very lazy" oddly enough "recommended the emir to the British government as 'the ideal man' to rule Transjordan- a man who would at least do 'tolerably well' if Britain could find 'the right man' to control him."[271] He was described as a "presentable titular ruler"[272] so long as he followed the advice of Britain and toed the British line.

The year 1924 marked the peak of British hostility toward Abdullah and culminated with serious British considerations as to replacing him with someone else. British Resident Colonel Percy Cox appointed in 1924 to replace St. John Philby led the charge, denouncing Abdullah as "a blight to the country" and recommending that he not be allowed to return from the Hijaz after visiting his father there.[273] He presented a series of six conditions that he demanded Abdullah accept "immediately and without reservation" so that Britain would not be forced "to reconsider the whole position of Transjordan,"[274] a thinly veiled threat about the possible removal of Abdullah as head of government or the incorporation of Transjordan back into Palestine, which was an option then under consideration. Clearly, the British felt Abdullah had to be brought back into line and reminded just who was in charge and impressed upon him the idea that he served at the pleasure of the British. According to professor Uriel Dann, the message was unmistakable: "Cox presented Abdallah

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[271] Salibi, *A Brief History*, 96.

[272] Ibid.

[273] Dann, *Studies in the History*, 87.

[274] Ibid., 89.

with an ultimatum designed to bind him hand and foot to the tutelage of Cox."[275] Cox presented a description of the scene in glowing detail with a maudlin and contrite Abdullah brought to tears who expressed "shock to him that such want of confidence be shown by his majesty's government" and assuring Cox that he had assumed leadership of Transjordan, "fully intending whole-heartedly to work with the Mandatory," and offering to leave the country if Britain had "lost confidence in him." He quickly acceded to Cox's demands and signed the document, "saying that since His Majesty's Government demanded it he would of course comply." Cox, fully pleased with the outcome, wrote that "the net result is that he has unconditionally surrendered."[276] This incident outlined in stark relief the degree to which Abdullah was totally and completely dependent on British good will and showed yet again that he was politically flexible and willing to compromise.

The Division or Lack Thereof Between Palestine and Transjordan

It is important to remember that Transjordan was included under the Palestine mandate since the beginning of the mandate in 1920: "Although Transjordania would be administered by His Highness [the Amir Abdallah] yet the Palestine Administration would exercise strict control over all appointments and financial matters."[277] The British representative Amman remained responsible to the British

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[275] Ibid., 7.

[276] Ibid., 89.

[277] Ibid., 37.

High Commissioner in Palestine. This situation would change at least nominally after Abdullah went to London in 1922 and gained recognition as emir of Transjordan. The British high commissioner in Jerusalem would subsequently act as "the representative of the mandatory power rather than as head of the Palestine administration."[278] This marked for the first time a British commitment to the separation of Transjordan from Palestine and its establishment as a distinct entity. As a result, in the words of Sir Alec Kirkbride, "the remarkable discovery was made that the clauses of the mandate relating to the establishment of a National Home for Jews had never been intended to apply to the mandated territory east of the river."[279] From this statement, one could imply that the situation had been in doubt before and that one could possibly conceive of the Balfour declaration as having included Transjordan at one time. This illustrates clearly that the distinction between Palestine and Jordan was not a natural or inevitable one but was made to serve British imperial interests.

Chapter 8: The New Jordanian National Identity

Fuzzy Borders around Palestinian and Jordanian Identity 1983-present

Given this state of affairs, to assert that the single biggest difference within Jordanian society is the division between "Jordanians" and "Palestinians" seems to be a stretch, at least when regarded from this angle. Indeed,as Jureidini and McLaurin

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[278] Salibi, *Modern History*, 110.

[279] Kirkbride, *Crackle of Thorns*, 27.

wrote, the strict division of Jordanian society into a dualistic pair of "Jordanian" and "Palestinian" is "misleading" as it "ignores region, sedentarization, status, and education."[280] Even the definition of how one constitutes a "Jordanian" as distinct from a "Palestinian" is problematic. In his book *The Jordanians and the People of Jordan,* Kamel el Abu Jaber outlines the problem succinctly and accurately when he asks, "Who are Jordanians? The Palestinians? Where are they? Can't we find a new expression like Pale-Jordanians? Jorpilians? Jorstinians?"[281] The fact that such terms seem farcical to the modern observer attests to the power of the nationalist paradigm and the enduring nature of its seemingly arbitrary division. The questions are not idle and dive at the heart of just what separates the idea of "Jordan" as a nation from that of "Palestine". Abu Jaber helps provide the answer to this when he writes musingly regarding his hypothetical hybrid term, "I wonder if we should, if we could, for the proud Palestinians though so ethnically, religiously, geographically similar, enjoy or suffer distinct traditions and experiences."[282] It is the experiences that the Palestinians had in their confrontations with the Zionist ideal and the influx of a large number of Jews into the land that provides part of the answer as to what separates "Jordan" from "Palestine" and imparts such a strong sense of identity and nationalism inside the Palestinians while their Jordanian brethren lag behind in this respect. Unlike the Palestinians, who rebelled and reacted against a colonially supported

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[280] Jureidini and McLaurin, *Social Change*, 29.

[281] Layn*e, Home and Homeland*, 20.

[282] Ibid.

vision of Zionism, the Jordanian people never really experienced such an "other" against which they could react in the same way.

In 1988, Fawaz Toqan, at the time Minister of Social Development, addressed the problem of the ambiguity of Palestinian and Jordanian identities, stating definitively that "there is nothing that is pure Palestinian nor pure Jordanian… I am a pure Palestinian born in Jerusalem and living here, and my wife is Jordanian. I have five children: So what are they?"[283] According to Jordanian family law, the children adopt the nationality of the father, so these children would be considered Palestinians in the eyes of the Jordanian government and would have had real problems using public services and attending public schools. Such a situation underscores how nationality falls short, in that it cannot serve as a catch-all system that orders society into nice neat little bundles, despite its own claims to the contrary. Even the legal distinctions used to determine if someone is a citizen have plenty of ambiguities. Nationality is messy and must be treated as a field of numerous possibilities, rather than an iron clad-rubric, a fuzzy continuum rather than a straight-edged ruler.

Still, in an effort to render nationality as a defined bounded area in the case of separating Palestinians from Jordanians, the notion of "true Jordanians" came into play. Based upon this logic, "true Jordanians" referred to those people living in "Transjordan" in 1921 and the East Bank of the Jordan River when it became the independent "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in 1949. According to Kaplan, "true

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[283] Ibid.

Jordanians" were described as being "tribally organized and tribally oriented."[284] However, upon further scrutiny this definition cannot hold as the degree of tribal attachments within Jordan itself is not now, nor was ever uniform across the population. Additionally, defining exactly what "tribes" and "tribal society" or "Bedouin" mean is not a simple process, since the degree to which a certain group or section of the population is or is not tribal remains a matter of debate and interpretation.

The migration of Palestinians into Jordan occurred at different times, some before 1948, some immediately following 1948, and others following 1967, with important differences in the type of people who migrated, their social status, and their degree of integration into Jordanian society. For example, the Majali family that represents the leading family in Kerak, while originally from Hebron, are "for practical and social purposes" thought of as "Jordanians" while other migrants from Hebron to Kerak "for practical purposes" are considered "Jordanians" because they "cast their economic and political lot with that country."[285] These various nebulous definitions of just who and who is not considered "authentic Jordanian" or "Jordanian for practical purposes" reveals the flimsy nature of the division in the first place.

Even the Jordanian government itself must admit that the classification of a person as Jordanian or non-Jordanian in relation to his or her nationality is a flexible

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[284] Ibid., 18.

[285] Ibid.

category. The process of *Tajnis*, translated as naturalization or nationalization, "affirms the law's view that nationality is not an inherent essence; rather it is a judicial category that can be won or lost, imposed or withdrawn."[286] It is interesting to note that the root of the word *tajnis* is *j-n-s* which means to make something like something else, also serves as the basis of the word for citizenship, *jinsiyah*. Thus, people who hold the same nationality or acquire it are somehow assumed to be the same in some fundamental way. Perhaps the concept of being or becoming the same is not only a statement of fact, but a statement of wishful thinking, or even a statement of action, a demand that people must be made the same or think of themselves as such if they want to possess a Jordanian *Jinsiyyah*. As this demand applies to claims of Palestinian distinctiveness, it may be especially desirable that they be made more "the same" and less "different".

An individual may apply for nationalization after completing a number of requirements including, "a two year residency in the country prior to the application, a good character, intention to reside in the country, and knowledge of the Arabic language."[287] All of these qualifications aim to ensure that the new citizen is similar enough to native Jordanians that in he adopts the Jordanian identity as his own. This process shows that the idea of nationality is a flexible one, rather than being etched in stone, so that a person may become a "Jordanian" even if he was not born and is not from there or even if he does not consider himself one himself. The legal definition of

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[286] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 38.

[287] Ibid.

who is and is not a Jordanian is an important one, and while it is not the same as one's identity, it impacts a person's life in profound and important ways.

Perhaps one of the most confusing aspects of just what being "Jordanian" means came with the annexation of the West Bank into Jordan in 1950 and the prior application of Jordanian citizenship to all of those living in it. It is somewhat surprising that the extension of Jordanian citizenship to Palestinians living in the West Bank occurred in 1949, one year before it was formally annexed. In that year, King Abdullah signed an addendum to the original 1928 Law of Nationality, which stated that "all those who are habitual residents, at the time of the application of this law, of Transjordan or the Western Territory administered by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and who hold Palestinian nationality, are considered as having already acquired Jordanian nationality, and to enjoy all the rights and privileges that Jordanians have."[288] This statement is intriguing and perplexing for a number of reasons. First, how exactly did the Palestinians "hold Palestinian nationality" if at this time the "nation" of Palestine as a legal entity did not exist? Who exactly was giving this nationality and who got to decide who a Palestinian was? Second, why does the statement read "as having already acquired Jordanian nationality" if this addendum was the first mention that they have it? How can one already have acquired something that one had not previously possessed? Third, why was this addendum issued a year before the annexation of the West Bank into Jordan as opposed to concurrent with or after the annexation? Wouldn't it make more sense to

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[288] Ibid., 39.

nationalize people who were already inside the territory of the state rather than those who simply lived in an area that the state administered? While Jordan remains the only state to grant citizenship for Palestinians, such an action complicates the question of what it means to be Jordanian and how Palestinians may be considered separate or different if at all. This situation also makes it more difficult to define Jordanian citizenship as a clear legal category with a Jordanian identity and a Jordanian national culture.

Trying to Rectify the Failure: The New Nationalism

The abandonment of Jordanian claims to the West Bank in 1988 represented the ultimate failure of this vision and a realization that ultimately Jordan would have to come to terms with itself as its own nation. In his speech on July 30 explaining his decision, King Hussein said, "Jordan is not Palestine." Echoing this sentiment, the chief of the royal court, Marwan al-Kasim, wrote in an editorial, "From now on Jordan is Jordan and Palestine is Palestine. We no longer want to talk on behalf of the Palestinians."[289] This decision came largely as a reaction to the idea of "transfer" that gained popularity in Israel in the 1980s, which stated that the Palestinians should be moved en masse across the river into Jordan, because as Ariel Sharon said, "Jordan is Palestine." Having delayed the task of forming a national identity as long as possible while trying to aspire to regional supra-national leadership, the Hashemite regime

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[289] Yousef Ibrahim, "Jordan's West Bank Move Upsetting Daily Life," *New York Times*, October 18, 1988, World sec.

during the eighties embarked upon a process of self definition that would come to be a turning point for the development of Jordanian nationalism.

As part of this attempt to define Jordanian national identity more strictly than had been done before, the eighties witnessed a debate regarding the role that tribalism played in Jordanian society. This argument aroused a great deal of passion in Jordanian newspapers between supporters and detractors of tribalism. Some Jordanian columnists decried tribalism as "primitivism," complaining that it gave the impression that "we do not live in this century'" Others countered by asking "can Jordanian society afford not to be a tribalist society?"[290] If Jordan was not to accept tribalism as a part of its identity, what other basis could be used? Jordan's Prime Minister at the time Zayd al-Rifa'I (1973-1976, 1985-1989) attempted to draw a line between tribes and tribalism, stating that while "we accord the tribes love and respect, we abhor and denounce tribalist practices."[291] Whereas the tribes themselves would be useful in constructing a cultural basis that could be used to build a Jordanian identity, the practices of the tribes and their independence continued to be viewed as a challenge to governmental regulation and thus undesirable. However, with the independence of the Bedouin declining, their cultural heritage also diminished in influence, so that any attempt to separate the two and accept one while rejecting the other proved difficult if not impossible. Thus, claims of respect for tribal traditions

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[290] Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 68.

[291] Ibid., 69.

rang hollow when they came from the same government that was in part responsible for their deterioration in the first place.

Eventually King Hussein himself had to appeal for calm, tried to defend tribalism, and threatened the newspapers with closure. In protest to this interference, the minister of information resigned saying that "we are a nation that has not decided on its identity."[292] This comment lies at the heart of the debate on tribalism and why Jordan felt compelled to abandon its Palestinian claims and clearly distinguish itself from Palestine. Both of these events represented the first real attempts to define Jordanian national identity in a serious way as distinguished from other surrounding Arab states. Ironically, Jordan's tribes and tribal heritage came to form the basis of its national identity, even as the system of tribalism had been effectively strangled by the state. Both supporters and opponents of tribalism in the debate had one thing in common: they viewed tribalism, tribal independence, and tribal identification as belonging exclusively to the past.[293] According to Peter Gubser, a prominent American anthropologist, Bedouin social patterns "are idealized among the settled people, and often claimed as the origin, or pure form, of what is practiced among settled people."[294] It is no small irony that while the Bedouin lifestyle and practices have gradually faded away, the settled populace appropriates their legacy as some unobtainable ideal.

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[292] Ibid., 71.

[293] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 101.

[294] Ibid.

Interestingly enough, although the tribalism debate began in earnest in Jordan in the 1980s, its seeds can be traced to the British colonial period. Major M.C. Jarvis noted that the British colonial administrator in Jordan was predisposed toward favoring either the settled cultivator or the nomadic Bedouin. For Jarvis, such a determination rested on the personality of the official. "If he is one of those men with modern ideas of progress," writes Jarvis, "a desire to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before, if wasted and unexploited lands exasperate him,"[295] then the administrator is more likely to favor the cultivator over the Bedouin. Like the later Jordanian opponents of tribalism who saw it as "standing in the way of progress,"[296] Jarvis painted those British who opposed the nomads as rational progressive men who wished to see Jordan develop along Western lines. By contrast, the British official who had "a streak of poetry and romance in him" would naturally be inclined to support the Bedouin that he saw as "a delightful and romantic survival of the past with all its old world associations and charm and any attempt to alter things will either force the Bedouin to become a cultivator, which God forbid, or cause him to die out."[297] By and large the latter was exactly what happened to the Bedouin of Jordan, as they settled down to become cultivators and ceased being nomadic. While individuals adapted to this transition and did not die out, the Bedouin culture and way of life has died out, at least in practice if not in mind and spirit. These same

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[295] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 59.

[296] Layne, *Home and Homeland*, 97.

[297] Jarvis, *Arab Command*, 59.

considerations that Jarvis lists came to the fore in the eighties and played a vital role on the debate to which tribal elements would be considered as the basis for a Jordanian national culture.

The Homogenization of Culture and Bedouin Distinctiveness

While the state may claim supreme authority for itself and view this authority as self-evident, in reality it must be able to create and enforce its claims constantly. While travelling in contemporary Jordan, one is struck by the presence everywhere on the roadways of signs proclaiming "*Kulluna al-Urdun*" or "we are all Jordan" underneath a map of the country of Jordan formed out of three interlocking hands, colored red, white, and green, the colors of the flag. The message contained within the symbol is twofold: first, that all of the country's citizens must overcome their differences and work together in service of the nation, and second, that the identity of being a member of the nation should matter to those who live in it. The symbol, while on one level making a factual claim, namely that the citizens living within the borders of the state are all Jordanians, also makes the argument that being Jordanian should matter to the citizens of Jordan. Thus, for the Bedouins who live in modern Jordan, as for the rest of the population, "the larger discursive realm in which they construct their identities is dominated by the Hashemite state and its nationalist ideology."[298] While it would be dangerous to assume that all Jordanians consider state allegiance

[298] Shyrock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, 63.

paramount among their various self-identifications, it would also be wrong to assume that they could simply ignore it, since this option is no longer practically possible.

Also inherent within the "We are all Jordan" campaign is the cultural homogenization it entails. In place of the "fusion of ethnies (ethnic groups) through a territorial national identity" that the state would like to see, one often finds "the persistence of deep cleavages and ethnic antagonisms that threaten the very existence of the nation state."[299] Andrew Shylock describes the entire tribal system as being based upon a "community of disagreement"[300] because the key issues that defined the different tribes were based upon "points of confrontation between them" including "remembrance of tribal wars, conflicting claims over shaykdom, genealogical controversies, quarrels over land."[301] He asserts that it is in these disagreements that the identities of the various tribes became the most distinct from one another. In many ways, these crucial differences defined who the tribes were: "In a community defined by polemic, dissensus must be preserved (important contradictions must be kept salient) if tribal names are to be kept salient."[302] While differences in the lifestyles of the Bedouin tribes do exist, the most salient ones and the ones that the Bedouins themselves consider most important stem from these types of historical

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[299] Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 39.

[300] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, 59.

[301] Ibid.

[302] Ibid.

disagreements over matters of status, authority, and importance that define tribal differences. That differences such as these would come to define the nature of tribes should come as little surprise, since similar differences define the identity of nation-states against one another. Because of its position of authority, the state seeks to erase tribal differences precisely because they compete with its frame of reference.

Thus, the Jordanian state constitutes a direct challenge to the tribal system in ways both ideological and practical. Practically, the state sought to eliminate those aspects of tribal life that it found problematic while preserving those that it saw as beneficial. This development began with the British policies: "The criminalization of the Bedouin lifestyle and the judicially sanctioned penalties imposed on Bedouins who resist state sedentarization policies led to the prevention of Bedouin raiding, and international crossing, and to the confiscation of the cattle and herds of resistors."[303] Ideologically, as a result of efforts to rein in tribal independence, the state literally destroyed Bedouin history because it "committed to elimination of events on which tribal history is based- feuds, raiding, warfare, tactical migration."[304] Because of this, the Bedouins, according to Shylock, divide their history into "the age of shaykhs" and "the age of government"[305] The intrusion of government in tribal affairs and the process of modernization has decimated the nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle to such a degree that Bedouin history has to all extents and purposes literally come to an

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[303] Massad, Colonial Effects, 59.

[304] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, 65.

[305] Ibid., 35.

end. As one tribal shaykh put it, "There are no shaykhs in the land today. Now we have government."[306] While it cannot be said that the Bedouin identity has no impact on contemporary Jordan, the active period in which Bedouins constituted an independent system of power has come to an end.

In contrast to the British and the Hashemites, who preferred to homogenize the differences inherent in Jordanian society so that exceptions could be ironed out, the Bedouin tribes survived and even thrived upon their differences from one another. Even the attempt to ascertain the essence of true "tribal" culture creates problems for the Western scholar, as "the tribes in any case have no unified story to tell, only the indefinitely fragmented body of historic tradition."[307] Trying to boil down the Bedouin into a single, cohesive narrative flies in the face of the divisions that served as the basis of tribal culture and against which Bedouins defined themselves. When presented with a so called "slanted" version of the truth from the perspective of one or the other Bedouin faction, the Western anthropologist immediately becomes skeptical and recognizes that these various versions represent only "a partial view that has already been abstracted from reality that may well be more complex."[308] Just as the British desired to bring all of the various Bedouin tribes into a single, unified order, the tribal historian must attempt to order all of the various tribal histories into a single supposedly objective reality. This attempt, however, in the end cannot be

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[306] Ibid., 55.

[307] Ibid., 30.

[308] Ibid,.

successful if it is to be authentic because a single narrative of tribal culture can not exist.

Whereas the nationalist discourse represented an attempt to unify people along the lines of an imagined political community, the tribalist one represented something that was just the opposite. While attempting to draw the borders of tribal areas within the Balga region, Andrew Shryock discovered that each tribe took issue with the resulting map that he presented to them. What they seemed to disagree with was not so much the current borders on the map, but rather the disagreements that stemmed from diverging versions of historical events of the past with each party trying to alter it so that the map would look as it should be. According to Shryock, "the urge is to throw the map back in time, to fit an unseen history onto it, and always at some other tribe's expense." [309] As a result, "the map is not allowed to stand still." [310] Whereas from a British point of view, the lines of the map as they currently exist would be the primary object of concern, from a Bedouin perspective these current boundaries are to a large extent irrelevant. What matters is not so much the relative areas of control, but the stories behind how they got to be that way, and these stories inevitably involved some form of tribal conflict.

Perhaps the defining factor that motivates the ideological division of the Bedouin is the concept of '*asabiyya,* defined variously as "group feeling" that can

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[309] Ibid. 61.

[310] Ibid.

only be judged in relation to other tribes, a feeling that, according to Ibn Khuldun, "produces the ability to defend oneself, to offer opposition, to protect oneself, to protect one's claims."[311] Ibn Khuldun views *'asabiyyah* as a positive quality imbued with strength and power. In his *Muqaddimah*, he employs the example of the children of Israel who were forced to wander in the desert: "As a result of the quality of docility and longing to be subservient to the Egyptians, which the Israelites had acquired" this "led eventually to the complete loss of their group feeling (*'asabiyyah*)"[312]. Ibn Khaldun decries this flaw as the "stigma of meekness" and suggests that the Israelites were being punished for their lack of *'asabiyyah.* Ibn Khaldun addresses the subservience of tribes to royal authority in terms of their loss of *asabiyyah*, saying that "imposts and taxes are a sign of oppression that proud souls do not tolerate." As a result anytime a tribe submits to these things, "they have submitted to meakness"[313] and thus lost their *asabiyyah.* Like the royal authority discussed by Ibn Khuldun, the modern nation also seeks to force tax payment and submission to authority among the Bedouin tribes, things regarded as a sign of subservience.

However, instead of being a positive assertion of tribal independence, today many in Jordan see *'asabiyyah* as a negative and backwards relic of the barbaric past.

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[311] Ibn Khuldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, ed. N. J. Dawood, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 111.

[312] Ibid., 109.

[313] Ibid., 110.

Shryock states that this tribal factionalism is rapidly being forgotten by the younger generations of Bedouin and is "denounced as simpleminded and corrosive."[314] The Bedouins themselves often seem embarrassed by it. This embarrassment and self-awareness about traditional practices that have fallen out of favor from the modernist viewpoint extends towards a wide variety of aspects of life. Practices such as *musha*, the holding in common of a plot of land by a village or group of people, is often discussed by Arab historians "with a certain embarrassment as relics of a primitive communism which somehow survived in Greater Syria until the recent past."[315] These feelings of embarrassment regarding traditional practices among those who used them until recently testifies to the power that the higher prestige modernist paradigm imported from outside can have on changing local self-perceptions.

Conclusion: Where Have All the Bedouin Gone? 1920-Present

Despite the passage of time, the prevailing ideas and concepts regarding the treatment of pastoral nomads seems to have changed very little from the mandate period, either in Jordan or anywhere else. The groundwork initially laid out by European powers established the foundation for how Arab states treated their Bedouin populations. Riccardo Bocco noted this in his essay examining Bedouin policies across the Arab World from the 1950s to the 1970s: "The sedentarization project for pastoral nomads undertaken in the Middle East between the 1950s and

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[314] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, 30.

[315] Mundy, *Land and Individual Title*, 64

1970s did not mark a departure from the policies carried out during the mandate period."[316] Both in their ideological worldview and in their rhetoric, Arab states and the international organizations that worked with them fell in line behind colonial policies and failed to question the underlying logic behind them regarding the treatment of Bedouin. In many ways, the descriptions used for the Bedouin during this later period could have been used verbatim by Cox or Glubb or any other British colonial administrator.

While it may be tempting to view the Arab states as acting on their own in the discriminatory policies that they adopted against the Bedouin during this period, this was in fact not the case. They had help in this effort: "From the 1950s onwards international organizations entered the scene as new actors setting the ideological framework for the new settlement programs."[317] Organizations included the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which all came to play an increasingly important part in partnership with local governments. UNESCO then proceeded to aid Arab governments regarding their "Nomad problem,"[318] as it was then referred to, by undertaking "comparative studies covering nomadic tribes in the Middle East and North Africa" and by dispatching teams of

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[316] Ricardo Bocco, "The Settlement of Pastoral Nomads," 301.

[317] Ibid.

[318] Ibid.

"various experts: sociologists, anthropologists, agronomists, and geologists."[319] Not surprisingly, as a result of a study conducted from 1958 to 1962 recommended settlement programs aimed at raising nomadic standards of living. It seems ironic that UNESCO, an organization whose very purpose lay in trying to protect cultural heritage, contributed to the process of sedentarization that aided in the destruction of Bedouin culture across the Middle East.

Throughout this period, the goal of international organizations and Arab governments remained constant and the imperatives behind it did not change. A consensus emerged in which "sedentarization synonymous with development and progress is the declared objective" and "the state is the entity most capable of carrying out any project."[320] Throughout this period, there was never any debate regarding the imperative to settle the Bedouin as quickly as possible, but only a question of how best to accomplish the task. For this reason, the majority of international reports "have a marked ideological character"[321] where recommendations of experts mattered more than empirical data. This bears a striking resemblance to the ideological character of the reports regarding Bedouin raiding in the British colonial days where ideology and politics influenced thinking more than objective reality. The assumption that sedentarization would be a "cure-all"[322] for the

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[319] Ibid., 305.

[320] Ibid., 306.

[321] Ibid., 303.

[322] Ibid., 311.

ills of poverty among nomadic Bedouin was never questioned because it approached from an ideological and not a scientific perspective and never proved with evidence. In many cases, these studies were merely shams designed to give the illusion of scientific study, while at the same time serving only to confirm what experts already believed, as "masking their pre-established conceptions with sociological jargon, experts transformed them into scientific postulates"[323] that were then used to support sedentarization programs.

It would be disingenuous, however, to suppose that these organizations did not believe that these measures would work in improving the quality of life among the Bedouin. Between 1949 and 1954, the League of Arab States, in cooperation with the UN, organized a series of conferences regarding "Social Welfare among the Arab States in the Middle East in order to help address "'the nomad 'problem.'"[324] After adopting sedentarization as the official policy in Damascus in 1952, the methods to be used in this program were outlined in Baghdad in 1952 with a document that said "we should proceed towards sedentarization by giving a piece of land to each individual… to ensure a rise in the owners standard of living and to allow him to support himself and his dependents."[325] Organizations such as the WHO saw sedentarization as a necessary prerequisite for the elimination of diseases like tuberculosis and malaria that they felt could not be controlled while the nomadic lifestyle continued. In

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[323] Ibid., 308.

[324] Ibid., 304

[325] Ibid.

addition, it was assumed that the Bedouins would benefit economically by becoming more integrated into the national economy.

Many of the assumptions that were formed during the British rule continued to operate during the period of international organizations and settlement programs. For instance, the state was still viewed as the sole possessor of legitimate political authority. Accordingly, Muhammad Awad comments that "the most important factor" in sedentarization "is the existence of a strong central government determined to maintain order and peace and encourage the country's progress."[326] A kind of cyclical logic appears here, so that in order to exercise its authority the state must settle nomads, and in order to maintain security nomads must be settled by the state. Also, the sociological categories that scholars applied to various groups of Bedouin ranging from nomads to semi-nomads, to semi-sedentarized to sedentarized bore a striking resemblance to the British conceptions of settled and non-settled tribes in that these categories were "never confronted with the social categories used by the Bedouin themselves."[327] Additionally, these scholars accepted the construction created by the British of the "dichotomy between nomads and sedentary groups."[328] For these lines of thought, colonial constructions and ideologies proved remarkably durable, surviving long after the soldiers and administrators who fashioned them had gone.

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[326] Ibid., 307.

[327] Ibid., 309.

[328] Ibid., 310.

Perhaps the most striking example that represented a continuation of colonial thought was the spirit of parochial paternalism toward the Bedouin. As one expert wrote of the Bedouin in 1959,

> These nomads living outside the mainstream of modern civilization are unable to perceive their real interests nor can they find unaided the means to improve their social level. It therefore appears essential for their own good that they leave their responsibility to their own government[329]

One can almost picture Glubb giving the same lecture to the disobedient Bedouin tribes on their way back from a raid. Again, the same spirit of benign colonialism came to the fore in an International Labor Organization report written in 1962, which stated, "It is necessary to make a serious effort to re-educate them (the nomads) in order to explain the real nature of these projects to them as well as the benefits and privileges there is in a less nomadic lifestyle. " Additionally, the report recommended that "this objective can best be achieved with the help of a sociologist."[330] One need only substitute "British colonial official" for "sociologist" to see the direct line of descent in terms of ideology between the British policy and that of international organizations such as the UN, the ILO, and the WHO. Both parties felt they knew better than the local Bedouin what was best for them and sent out people in order to re-educate them into following practices that were supposedly in their self-interest.

Despite promises to the contrary, on the whole the sedentarization projects first pursued by the British and subsequently by international organizations has been

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[329] Ibid., 312.

[330] Ibid., 306.

rather disappointing. While the desert may have, "A very small easily upset agriculture"[331], neither the British nor the organizations ever stopped to consider how increased land use and sedentariztaion could affect the environment. As a result, "The growing ecological fragility of the steppe, due to the deterioration of its soil, linked to the rhythm and conditions of land exploitation"[332] has created an unsustainable pattern of land use. While attempting to increase agricultural production, sedentarization and land reform have in fact negatively impacted both agriculture and the Bedouin pastoral economy that had operated before these changes. In addition to "A dramatic reduction in soil fertility and agricultural productivity" and generally small individual land holdings, the livestock sector has suffered as well with fodder becoming increasingly difficult to come by as well as a decline in flock size.[333] All of that has led to a shortage in national meat production with the result that only 25% of meat production in Jordan comes from domestic sources.[334] Even the Jordanian government has recognized the problem, saying, "The current grazing system is out of step with the needs of the ecology of the region and of the livestock that uses this land."[335] By disrupting the Bedouin pastoral system these changes in land use had

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[331] Austin Shoup, "The Bedouins of Jordan: History and Sedentarization" (master's thesis, University of Utah, 1980), 110.

[332] Bocco, "Pastoral Nomads," 325.

[333] Shoup, "Bedouins of Jordan," 111.

[334] Ibid.

[335] Ibid.

turned something that had once been a thriving livestock sector that produced a surplus into a dysfunctional system that no longer works.

In retrospect, the failure of increased land cultivation to yield tangible improvements should not be a surprise. In a country where over eighty five per cent of the land comprises desert unsuitable for anything but farming,[336] Jordan simply could not support the type of intensive agriculture that the British and later international organizations desired. However, neither the British nor their successors ever stopped to consider this as their ideological and political motivations overrode all practical considerations. One would think that before embarking on a plan of this magnitude someone would have the good sense to actually examine if it would work, but this examination never occurred. Perhaps the only person who did notice the potentially disruptive effects that disrupting the pastoral economy would have was none other than John Glubb himself. In a report to the British government, Glubb wrote, "The breeding of livestock is as necessary and useful a profession in Transjordan as in Australia and Argentine, and half-baked statements about the value of compelling nomads to live in houses are economically unsound." He notes that the climate of Jordan lends itself to nomadic pastoralism saying, "Nomadism is essential to profitable breeding of flocks under present conditions, in countries with such a sparse and uncertain grazing and rainfall." If only the international organizations had listened to Glubb in this, as they had followed his example in so much else, perhaps the livestock sector in Jordan today would not be so dysfunctional. However, Glubb

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[336] Ibid. 115.

bears a responsibility for this failure in spite of his statement here, as his policies of Bedouin pacification led directly to later sedentarization efforts, taking on a life of their own in ways that he could perhaps not have imagined.

The Bedouin of today are clearly not the Bedouin of yesterday in Jordan or in any other country of the Middle East. According to Donald Cole, many educated Saudi urbanites that he encountered told him that the Bedouin were "all but gone,"[337] and they had all adopted wage labor in some form by working for the government, or as taxi drivers, or for oil companies. In short, popular opinion seemed to be that they had been completely subsumed, and that "the urban and the national, or modernity, would replace nomad camp and tribe, or tradition."[338] While it would be tempting to say that this process was complete, this does not seem to be the case. Bedouin nomadism, as a lifestyle, has entered into its last gasps, with only vestiges remaining, but Bedouin tribal mentality, as a social structure, remains and continues to influence modern life.

Perhaps this is what Cole means when he makes the distinction between nomadism as a lifestyle and Bedouin as an identity. He writes that "Bedouin' previously denoted a way of life that was specialized and revolved around steppe-based herding." Today, however, "Bedouin' refers less to a 'way of life' than to an

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[337] Cole, "Where Have All the Bedouin Gone?" 236.

[338] Ibid.

'identity'"[339]. Even in places where Bedouins continue on in the tradition of raising livestock, the social system that accompanied these activities has been irreparably altered. In Syria, despite the fact that "a vigorous livestock sector was reestablished by the mid to late 1960s"[340] and some of the Bedouins who had previously abandoned their lands came back, the situation did not revert to the way that it was before the nomadic pastoral economy had been decimated by the advent of the modern age and the influences of colonialism. Cole noted, "This was no longer the old kin-ordered pastoral production of the past, with family-households constituting the basic production and consumption units." In its place one finds a situation where "hired shepherds provided most labor inputs; migration became an individual affair no longer controlled by tribes or other kin groups; purchased... fodder increasingly replaced natural grace; and water from government wells was trucked to the flocks."[341] Thus, even when the Bedouin engaged in what had once been a traditional occupation, the ways in which that occupation was accomplished were completely different and could not be seen as a simple continuation of the past.

In a very real way, the decline of pastoral nomadism as a way of life represented a passing of an age for the Bedouin that will never be attained again. Individual Bedouin reflect on this point when they lament that the future does not, in a certain sense, belong to them. One teen-ager from Egypt's Western Desert said,

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[339] Ibid., 237.

[340] Ibid., 244.

[341] Ibid.

"We the Arabs (i.e. Bedouin) are more honorable and cleaner than the Fellahin (i.e. peasants) but the future is better for the Fellahin."[342] Lacking in modern amenities and bereft of even the most basic government services in a society and economy where such things are of central importance, the situation remains bleak. In a sense, the Bedouin themselves realize that the Bedouin nomadic lifestyle is for all intents and purposes dead or dying. Despite this, access to schools for Bedouin is still not sufficient, and Bedouin's have a higher mortality rate and a lower life expectancy than the national average. As a result, many of the Beoduin are malnourished, with a study by CARE in 1977 revealing that, "seventy percent of Bedouin children were stunted, seventeen percent were abnormally wasted, and fifty percent had low levels of fat storage."[343] In addition, economically the Bedouin tend to be near or at the lower end of the spectrum so that, "The Bedouin are the most depressed section of the economy."[344] While promised an increased livelihood and an improved standard of living once they settled down, the opposite has in fact proven more often to be the case. As a result, not only have the Bedouin lost much of their culture, they have also been neglected and left to fend for themselves.

This does not mean, however, that the term "Bedouin" no longer carries any meaning, even if tribal ties are not as strong as they once were. Cole notes that a growing "ethnic" sense of being Bedouin is occurring: "One can see a growing sense

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[342] Ibid., 247.

[343] Shoup, "Jordanian Bedouin", 112.

[344] Ibid. 109.

of 'Bedouin-ness' of a shared identity that includes a sense of common history and sub-culture that cuts across tribal memories that perhaps divided people more in the past." He continues, "One might argue that an emerging ethnicity is replacing the tribal identities of the past." [345] As an example, he cities the Kuwaiti radio program of the 1960s known as "Bedouin hour" that included a variety of poems and songs that came from Bedouin of various communities across the Arab world. This program created a certain sense of commonality in between various groups, so that "Bedouin from different tribes increasingly identified with this program as something commonly shared among all the Bedouin *as Bedouin* (emphasis original)."[346] If the assertion of such a Bedouin "ethnicity" is accurate, then it would mark a substantial departure from the past when, as Shyrock wrote, tribal differences and divergences in the form of '*Asabiyya* constituted the heart of the tribal social structure.

So where have all the Bedouin gone? The demise of Bedouin culture has been frequently predicted since before the age of the British mandate over Jordan. As early as 1892, outside observers have been forecasting doom and gloom and the imminent end to the Bedouins. As one British traveler wrote, "The Adwan are on a downhill path…their future seems to be that they will either become tillers of their own lands or else sink into the ignoble position of tourist guides." [347] Similarly Philby notes, "The history of the tribes of Transjordan is rapidly being forgotten; much has already

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[345] Cole, "Where Have All the Bedouin Gone?" 252.

[346] Ibid., 256.

[347] Layne, Home and Homeland, 13.

gone beyond recall, and such that now remains will depart from among the people with the death of a few old men."[348] While it is extremely tempting to bemoan the decline in tribalism and tribal identity and predict the disappearance of the Bedouin as a separate group in Jordan, such predictions have often been made and proven wrong before. The question remains in the face of mounting evidence that suggests that the Bedouin are losing their distinctiveness: when, if ever, may one say that the process will be complete?

An interesting parallel can be seen in the demise of the Indian Ocean trading networks under European colonial intrusions that recent scholarship has called into question. At one time, the European intrusion into the Indian Ocean was discussed by scholars in terms of a cataclysmic catastrophe as "the end of a life-cycle of human civilization." Statements such as "the integrative network of Indian Oceans relations is destroyed" became commonplace as the region was "overwhelmed, physically, and economically, by European merchants and soldiers."[349] Both the Indian Ocean network of trade and the Bedouin network of dynamic social relations were pronounced dead and their obituaries written after clashing against and becoming subordinate to European colonial powers. In an article discussing trade in Surat during the early modern period, Ashin Das Gupta writes that the British and the Dutch "were very much a part of the traditional structure of Gujarat's maritime trade" and their "participation in Surat's trade had strengthened the local structure, but had

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[348] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, 37.

[349] Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, 20.

not altered it in a significant manner."[350] Termed an "age of partnership" or "age of contained conflict"[351] by contemporary scholars like Das Gupta, Bose, and others, this period appears to have been not nearly as destructive as once assumed.

To a certain extent a similar parallel may be drawn for the Jordanian Bedouin. While their demise has been frequently predicted, some aspects of Bedouin culture have continued up until this day. Yet clearly many of the nomadic practices that at one time seemed to define the Bedouin have by in large fallen out of favor. Perhaps the dynamic can best be explained by no longer looking at the Bedouin as a group with a certain set of essential characteristics in black and white terms, as the British once did, and starting to adopt a more nuanced perspective with shades of gray. The Bedouin today are not the Bedouin they once were, but to deny their continued existence in some form, even if weakened, would be both inaccurate and a gross injustice. The Bedouin identity may best be viewed in terms of a continuum between the two idealized poles of modernity and tradition. In this vein, one Syrian anthropologist notes that Bedouin social life is "not one of simple and total transformation, but rather of an ongoing dialectic of continuity and change, an interplay between traditions and modernity." At the same time that changes occur economically and politically as a response to "rapidly changing modern conditions," the Bedouin "continue to respect and adhere to a range of traditions that help them

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[350] Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat* (Columbia, MO: South Asia Books, 1994).

[351] Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, 19.

define and perpetuate their ethnic integrity."[352] Similar to the alleged demise of Indian Ocean trade, the vanishing of the Bedouin has shown itself to be a much more complex process than originally assumed where broad, categorical statements hold little value. The difference lies in the fact that at least in the early period of European participation in the Indian Ocean system the system continued to work as it had whereas with regard to the Bedouin their system had economically ceased to function effectively even as tribalism continued to have social salience. Rather than idealizing Bedouin culture as some sort of "noble savage" way of life or demonizing it according to the modernist narrative as an obstacle in the way of progress, objectively and dispassionately considering where it is changing and where it is not remains a useful and productive exercise and this has been the goal of the present work.

Developing and identifying a common "Bedouin" national culture has obvious benefits for contemporary Arab nationalisms and government propaganda. In a UNESCO report entitled "Cultural Policy in Jordan," Hani al-Ahmed writes about many subjects in Jordanian culture, including several steps that were being taken in order to preserve so called "traditional" culture. Prominent among these were the various museums devoted to the purpose, including the Museum of Traditional Costumes and Jewelry. According to al-Ahmed, "this Museum has the objective of preserving our popular heritage from destruction, and of making the people of Jordan aware that their country and their community have a long and splendid history."[353] In

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[352] Cole, "Where Have All the Bedouin Gone?" 237.

[353] Hani al Ahmed, *Cultural Policy in Jordan* (Paris: UNESCO Press, 1981), 78.

addition a number of "specialists in popular traditions" were engaged in "defining the styles and characteristics of popular art, and by the different industries responsible for giving expression to popular culture in its material aspects."[354] Note here that it is the material objects that are considered to be the essence of the culture, and not social relations. Social relations and political structures of tribal Bedouin pose a threat to the state project and so must be ignored or rejected. Material objects and "popular culture," on the other hand, do not and may be collected and used to build a nationalist narrative as defined by the state.

In the same tract, al-Ahmed calls for a number of initiatives that he feels will be beneficial to the preservation of traditional culture. The first is a survey in order to examine "the whole of Jordan, to record its traditions, and to make the results available to researchers for further study."[355] Ironically, such a proposal recalls a similar survey taken by the British over all of the land of Jordan as a precursor to implementing their land reform program, a program that resulted in the privatization of individual plots and struck a blow against Bedouin grazing practices. Now the target will be cultural rather than economic, in order to collect and catalogue all of the "popular" traditions of Jordan. It may be said that such a recording would ensure their preservation, but at the cost of generalizing all of them under a single label of "tribal" or "Bedouin," much as the single Bedouin "ethnicity" has coalesced around what had once been a multiplicity of tribal loyalties. Also, while it might be necessary

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[354] Ibid., 79.

[355] Ibid.

to record and catalogue these traditions in order to preserve them, doing so also changes them in some way and removes them from the realm of everyday life into the realm of being museum pieces. This sacrifice may be a worthwhile one, but one needs to recognize that it does lose something, so to speak, in translation.

The disconnect between practice and conceptualization in terms of what Bedouin means today is well represented by the fact that many old memories continue to be perpetuated. Despite the fact that the concept of extracting *Khuwa*, or protection payments, from settled lands as a means of laying claim to these areas is no longer in use, the memories of which lands belong to whom remains. As Shyrock writes, "After a century's lapse Adwani men can still relate in detail which villages owed them *khuwa*, which sheikhs collected it, and how the sums were divided among the principle Adwani clans and their client tribes."[356] This kind of collective historical memory that comes to form the basis of a distinctive culture extends to other areas of life as well, despite the fact that the tribes people may "know quite well that they do not always control or even own the lands they claim, nonetheless, tribal space is described today in an idiom that despite the relentless buying and selling of tribal land seldom acknowledges change."[357] Shyrock describes this stubborn adherence to historical memory vividly in his account of his trip through the Balqa plain on land that had once been Adrwani territory. Shyrock notes that as he drove past the Balqaa refugee camp, home to one hundred thousand Palestinians, that his

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[356] Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination*, 79.

[357] Ibid., 57.

driver did not seem to acknowledge its existence, as if it was not there. Shyrock writes, "But for Rashid, the camp did not belong on Adwani landscape; it was not part of the world he wanted me to see, nor were the scores of Palestinian homesteads built outside the camp on land Rashid's kin have sold, and continue to sell to refugee families."[358] This description testifies to the power of memories that enable one to ignore even objective reality before one's very eyes.

Despite the fact that the Jordanian government had sold or taken this land in 1967, depending on one's point of view, the Adwan continue to see it as theirs. In this instance, Rashid chose to ignore concrete structures that might exist but did not fit with the historical reality of his mind. It is this historical memory that remains the same as it ever was, perhaps strengthened, even when most other aspects of Bedouin life have passed away. These memories may be said to form the basis of Cole's Bedouin "ethnicity" in that they provide a common set of experiences that its members draw from that makes them distinctively Bedouin. As shown by the experience of the Jews who survived while clinging to memories of Zion and their life in the Holy Land, ethnic groups can manage to live for centuries, perhaps even millennia feeding on historical memories in order to keep them united. Whether this will continue to be the case with the Bedouins is difficult to tell.

The social aspect of Bedouin identity for self-identification remained strong until contemporary times. Cole notes that "economically, politically, and legally"

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[358] Ibid., 58.

"detribalization" can be said to have taken place among the Bedouin. Despite this, he notes this: "Socially, however, one can argue for the continued existence of tribal identities."[359] Upon meeting, two Bedouin who do not know each other "usually ask about the other's lineage, clan, or tribe." By contrast, among urbanites identity generally becomes established through identification by place, namely what part of the city one is from.[360] The continued social importance of tribes is reflected in the increasing number of tribal surnames in telephone books. All these indicators point to the salience of tribal social identification by recourse to a common Bedouin history or collective memory.

Throughout this paper, developments of the modern age that stemmed from the British mandate period and contributed to the demise of the Bedouin tribal culture have been presented. These policies have by and large been continued and expanded on by subsequent Hashemite governments. Economically, the British land reform program, increased cultivation and settlement programs, and the crusade against raiding severely curtailed and gradually eliminated nomadic pastoralism as a way of life. Politically, men like John Glubb diminished the authority of tribal elders and sheikhs and made it subservient to the will of the central government through a dual policy of repression and conciliation. Legally, the Bedouin have been incorporated into the larger system, and concessions to tribal law have been abandoned. Culturally, the British and subsequently in the eighties the Hashemites appropriated elements of

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[359] Cole, "Where Have All the Bedouin Gone?" 252.

[360] Ibid.

the Bedouin system for their own purposes in order to further the agenda of the state. Socially, however, the traditional system was left alone by the state, and even encouraged in so far as the "shaykh of shaykhs" motif and traditional tribal support for the monarchy could be employed. It is precisely this relative lack of interference that enables the social aspect of the Bedouin system to continue in its importance even after all other aspects of their life have withered. It is essential if one wishes to realize why this continues to be the case, to look back at the British period and the changes that they initiated within Jordanian society that transformed the Bedouin nomadic way of life.

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