WINNING OVER THE TRIBES IN MANDATE TRANS-JORDAN: SECURITY, ECONOMICS, IDENTITY, AND CHANCE

BY
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Jordan was a place undergoing many profound changes during the 1920s. The most obvious change was the emergence of the Hashemites, an Arab clan with a long tradition of political importance due to their control of Islam's two holiest cities, Mecca and Medinah, and their British colonial sponsors, as the rulers of a region that had been previously ungoverned.[1] A more important change, perhaps, occurring during this time period was the collision between the two different types of Arab civilization that Ibn Khladun described in his *Muqaddimah*, or Introduction, which was written in 1377. Ibn Khaldun observed that a dichotomy existed within the Arab world between two different types of civilizations, desert civilization and sedentary civilization. Desert civilizations, which existed in sparsely populated areas, were generally pastoral or nomadic and were organized by tribe and family connections. Sedentary civilizations, on the other hand, were based in more heavily settled areas and were class rather than kinship based.[2] This was in many ways an urban vs. rural division, with sedentary civilization being more urban while desert civilization was more rural.[3]

[1] During World War I, the British sought to weaken the Ottoman Empire by sponsoring a revolt among the empire's Arab population, a series of events made famous by the movie *Lawrence of Arabia*. The Hashemites were Britain's partners in this revolt, and expected to gain territory in exchange for their campaign against the Ottomans. The Hashemites did not gain the territory that they believed had been promised to them, but did end up controlling Jordan, although the Britain still exercised considerable authority in the newly created nation due to its international status as a mandate. As a British Mandate, Britain was obligated to help Jordan transition from being a colonial territory to being an independent nation.

[2] Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 56. While this book is about Afghanistan, the section cited provides a useful summary of Ibn Khaldun's ideas about desert and urban civilizations and is applicable to the situation in Jordan during the 1920s.

[3] For ease of understanding, from this point forward, rural will refer to desert civilization and urban will refer to sedentary civilization. References are made to tribal or Bedouin in this paper, and these are terms that all indicate membership in rural civilization.

Prior to the arrival of the Hashemites, rural civilization dominated Jordan. In the absence of any other form of authority, especially during WWI, Trans-Jordan had come under the influence of native tribes whose power was so unchallenged that rural civilization dominated life in the country from the individual to state level.[4] The Hashemites, with their Arab nationalist ideology and reliance on foreign bureaucrats from more urban Syria to run their administration, were seen as attempting to create a more urban culture in Jordan, a transformation that Jordan's native rural population would have deemed threatening.[5] This threat to political autonomy, as well as cultural dominance, helps to explain the numerous tribal uprisings that threatened the very existence of the Hashemite regime in Jordan during its early years.

The Hashemites faced difficulties fighting the perception that they were an alien force because, although they had long been an important political force in the Middle East due to their control over the Muslim holy city of Mecca, they had little grounds for claiming authority in Jordan. Abdullah, in fact, initially came to Jordan with the intention of preserving his brother Feysal's regime in Syria.[6] The Hashemites' difficulty resulting from their lack of an historical claim to power in Jordan was compounded by the fact that the territory was divided into semi-autonomous districts that had answered to the now defunct Ottoman Empire.[7] This has led to the conception, advanced by many scholars, of Trans-Jordan as "an artificial colonial creation . . . created to satisfy the personal ambition of an Arab prince [Abdullah] who was left after World War I (WWI) without a territory to rule."[8] Needless to say, the rural population did not take kindly to the foreign force that they sensed was attempting to limit their political power and marginalize their way of life.

The late 1950s were another period during which the Hashemites faced a very serious threat to their rule in Jordan, as left leaning Palestinians, who advocated the removal of King Hussein, attempted a coup to remove him from power. To combat this threat, Hussein relied heavily on the Bedouin units within the Jordanian military which were extremely loyal to the Hashemite monarchy. Yet the Bedouins had initially vehemently

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[4] Yoav Alon, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 13.
[5] Mary C. Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 62.
[6] King Abdullah, *The Memoirs of King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan*, R. J. C. Broadhurst, trans. (New York: The Philosophical Library Inc., 1950), 194. King Feysal had established an independent kingdom in Syria following the Great Arab Revolt, but was driven out of Syria by the French, who wanted to keep Syria within their colonial sphere of influence.
[7] Ibid., 200.
[8] Yoav Alon, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 3.

opposed the Hashemite regime when it first took power. In seeking to understand how this happened, it is most useful to examine the development of Jordan between the 1920s and its independence from Britain in 1946, where the foundations of the Hashemite regime were laid.

The British assumed responsibility for Jordan in 1921, and were faced with building a state in a territory that had little experience with centralized government. In their nation-building efforts, the British worked with Abdullah's government to institute a number of programs that were based on experiences from other parts of their empire.[9] The strengthening of the Hashemite military and security apparatus and the development of Jordan's agricultural capabilities were an integral part of winning over the country's rural population. The success of these programs in gaining the support of the state's rural elements stems from the fact that they allowed the Hashemites to address the economic, social, and political needs of this group while allowing them to maintain essential elements of their identity. While important, it was not the programs and policies themselves that developed this loyalty but, instead, the circumstances in which they were enacted.

Before discussing the historiography that pertains specifically to the topic of this paper, it is important to first note an important general trend in the historical scholarship on Jordan. Authors have generally focused on the actions of elites and high level political officials when analyzing Jordan's actions during the Mandate period and beyond. Uriel Dann's *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism* is probably the most influential example of this type of palace-level analysis of Jordanian politics. This focus stems from the idea that the Hashemites are the Middle East's "underdog" monarchy and that the Kings of Jordan were able to survive in very dangerous environments due to their remarkable political acumen. It is not until relatively recently that historians have begun to focus on the Jordanian street and its influence on the staying power of the Hashemite monarchy. There have been a number of works published on this subject, with Tariq Tell and Eugene Rogan publishing an influential collection of essays titled *Village, Steppe, and State* that examines the political, social, and economic factors that influenced the lives of ordinary Jordanians during the Mandate Period. Although only published in 2007, another important work that examines how lower level, specifically tribal, politics have influenced Jordan's development is Yoav Alon's *The Making of Jordan*. Mary C. Wilson's *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan*, published in 1987, is an example of a bridge between works like *King*

[9] Michael R. Fischbach, "British Land Policy in Transjordan," in *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan*, Eugene L. Rogan and Tariq Tell, eds. (New York: British Academic Press, 1994), 105.

Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism and *The Making of Jordan*. It is important to keep in mind this general trend when discussing the three topics that most directly pertain to the subject matter covered in this paper: the British Mandate regime in Jordan, Jordan's tribal population, and the Jordanian military.

Much of the historical scholarship on Jordan during the 1930s and 40s focuses on the geopolitical implications of Jordan's period as a British Mandate, but this paper is more concerned with the domestic environment of this era. The publications by Rogan, Tell, Wilson, and Alon cover this topic extensively and are perhaps the best sources that deal with how Jordanian society developed during the British Mandate era. This period saw a subtle transformation take place in Jordanian society. Although Jordan was far from an urban and industrial state during the 1950s, its economic situation had changed in a variety of ways that pushed the rural population closer to the Hashemite regime. Land reform policies that settled Jordan's rural population and transitioned it from a nomadic to a more settled way of life had a profound impact on this group's relationship with the state by making it more dependent upon the central government. This understanding of the British Mandate period is useful in that it provides a greater understanding of the structure of the Jordanian state when it began to be threatened by radical Arab opposition forces in the 1950s.

The scholarship on Jordan's rural population has shown that it has been the Hashemites' most important ally throughout its history, stretching back to the tribal powered Great Arab Revolt. While *Village, Steppe, and State* and *The Making of Jordan* discuss how this segment of Jordan's population became integrated into the state, we see in a number of political histories of Jordan how this loyalty manifested itself. Uriel Dann's vivid account of how the Arab Legion's Bedouin soldiers helped to prevent a coup attempt against the Hashemites shows how vitally important the military, which was drawn primarily from its rural population, was to the regime.[10] In addition to the support that the Hashemites enjoyed from the general rural population through the military, they also ensured the continued support of rural elites, who benefitted from their involvement in the Royal Court, an institution that became more powerful during the 1950s as the Hashemites attempted to weaken the political power of the regime's opposition.

Jordan's military is generally seen as the country's most important institution outside of the monarchy, and as such has received a great deal of scholarly attention. Since the military has been intimately involved in

[10] The Arab Legion was Jordan's primary military force while the country was under British control. Led by British officers, the Arab Legion answered to colonial officials, rather than the Hashemite government.

domestic politics in Trans-Jordan throughout the state's history, the influences that this institution has had on the state's political make up has been discussed at length in works like P.J. Vatikiotis's *Politics and the Military in Jordan*. This book discusses how essential the Arab Legion was in legitimizing and consolidating the Hashemite regime between 1921 and 1957. Lawrence Tal's *Politics, the Military, and National Security in Jordan, 1955-1967* provides readers with insight into the way in which the Jordanian military was used by the Hashemites to ensure the survival of their regime in an extremely tumultuous time, and the effect that this had on the nation's political environment. The social impact of the military in Jordan has also received attention in Alon's *The Making of Jordan*, as it played an important role in forming the social composition of the new regime by providing the rural population with a means of being integrated into and advancing in the Hashemite regime.

Tribes in Revolt

During the early days of the Hashemite regime in Trans-Jordan, the state's tribal population rebelled against the central government, and one of the most notable rural rebellions was led by the Adwani tribe in 1923.[11] Sultan El-Ali El-Adwan was able to bring a large coalition to his side by depicting Abdullah as a leader who did not respect the concerns and authority of rural powers.[12] The rebellion was so threatening to Abdullah's regime that the Chief British Resident in Amman, H. St. John Philby, commented that had the Sultan of the Adwani tribe "moved direct on Amman he would have had only the Arab Legion to contend with and, local sympathy being somewhat with him, he might well have been successful."[13]

Abdullah had difficulty combating the rebellion in large part due to the fact that Britain was unwilling to allow him initially to raise a large military force. This situation "forced Abdullah to rely on the military power of the tribes," which was risky, since it would demonstrate the power that rural tribes had over the newly created Hashemite regime.[14] Philby counseled Abdullah that he was of the "opinion that the employment of tribal forces to crush a tribal rising will have disastrous and far reaching

[11] Harry St. John Bridger Philby to Sir Herbert Louis Samuel, September 15, 1923, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, J. Priestland, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Archive Editions, 1996), 54-55.
[12] Ibid., 56.
[13] Monthly report on Transjordan by H. Philby, September 1923, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, J. Priestland, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Archive Editions, 1996), 48.
[14] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 41. Although the Arab Legion had been in existence for two years at the time of the Adwani rebellion, it was not directly under Abdullah's control at this point. The commander of the Arab Legion was a British officer even after Jordan became independent, and was mainly intended as an instrument of British policy.

consequences, even if it succeeds in its immediate object."[15] While Abdullah made some progress in confronting this rebellion through tribal politics, both Abdullah and Philby felt that the best way to defeat the Adwani uprising would be to use British forces, including the Royal Air Force.[16] This strategy proved to be extremely successful, as the British forces were able to inflict such a decisive defeat on the Adwani that Philby was able to report, "[t]he hostile concentration has been completely dispersed and the situation may be regarded as normal."[17] The battle also importantly resulted in the death of a number of rural sheikhs who were instrumental in the rebellion, as well as demonstrating to tribal leaders that the British were willing to bring their superior military power to bear against forces that sought to rebel against the Hashemite regime.[18]

While the battle was important in preserving the Hashemite regime's hold on Jordan, it did not mean that the Jordanian regime had effectively dealt with the problems of securing the loyalty of Jordan's rural population. This loyalty was not something that Abdullah took lightly, and he spent a great deal of time attempting to develop close relationships with Jordan's rural population, more time in fact than the British initially thought prudent, despite their desire to see Abdullah gain greater rural support, as more allies within this segment of the population would have allowed the Hashemites to avoid more damaging domestic uprisings that showed the regime's inability to gain broad based political support.[19] The Hashemite's ability to decimate a powerful tribal revolt only secured the rural population's submission during the 1920s, and does little to explain why this group was so deeply invested in the survival of the regime by the late 1950s. A letter drafted by tribal leaders to Philby expresses this sentiment, where they commented, "[i]f the Amir wishes to take revenge on us and sends the aeroplanes to tribes to threaten and frighten them threats will not bring us in to him but only pride and love."[20]

In order for Abdullah to show the rural population that he possessed pride in and love for this group, he would have to address the fundamental issues that caused them to rise up against his regime. Politically, the new regime's use of Syrian immigrants to run the state's bureaucracy caused the rural population to perceive that Abdullah's government was going to

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[15] Philby to Samuel with enclosure letter from Sultan ibn Adwan, September 15, 1923, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 55.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Harry St. John Bridger Philby to Sir Herbert Louis Samuel, September 17, 1923, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 61.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 48.
[20] Harry St. John Bridger Philby to Sir Herbert Louis Samuel with enclosure letter from Sultan ibn Adwan to Mr. H. Philby, September 15, 1923, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 58.

marginalize them. This perceived marginalization made having to pay taxes to the Hashemite government a point of extreme frustration. The Hashemite regime's insistence on ending raiding as a means of preventing hostilities with the Saudis and establishing law and order also constituted an economic threat to the rural population, as raiding was an essential component of their economy. Raiding and mobility were also integral elements of the Bedouin identity, so the end of this practice constituted a very serious cultural threat.[21] These factors contributed to the rural population's frustration with Hashemite rule, and lay the ground work for understanding why the programs undertaken later on in the mandate period were so successful in winning over this group.

In its attempts to create a functional state in Jordan, one of the imperatives for the newly created Hashemite regime was to develop a functional administrative apparatus. This was an especially difficult challenge, since the Hashemites inherited a country with no real history of centralized government, and thus there were few experienced administrators upon whom Abdullah could call upon to staff his bureaucracy. The fact "that men of capacity [were] not forthcoming locally . . . [forced the government] to rely for filling the higher posts on Syrians and others who have had experience in Damascus and elsewhere."[22] These Syrians, nationalists whose political views and activities had not been welcome in their home country after the French had wrested control of Syria from Abdullah's brother Feysal, found refuge in Jordan and gained such a degree of political influence that Abdullah's first cabinet was composed "entirely of nationalists who had previously served [his brother] Feysal in Syria."[23] In addition to positions in Abdullah's cabinet, these Syrians secured positions across all levels of the Jordanian government, including powerful positions in the Arab Legion.[24]

As discussed earlier, these foreigners provided Abdullah with skilled personnel who could staff his bureaucracy. In addition to concerns about human capital, employing the Syrians helped Abdullah secure the support of the well organized and influential Istiqlals party, an important early Arab nationalist party, which had historically been supportive of the Hashemites.[25] This support was essential given the isolated position of the Hashemite regime, which was facing significant tribal opposition at the time

[21] Bedouin poetry was an important expression of their identity, and important poems like 1001 Nights featured many stories about the "rahla" or journey.
[22] Sir Herbert Louis Samuel to Secretary of State for the Colonies, October 5, 1923, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 72.
[23] Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan*, 62.
[24] Harry St. John Bridger Philby to Sir Herbert Louis Samuel, December 13, 1923, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 85.
[25] Harry St. John Bridger Philby, 85.

and was desperate for political allies, even though the British worried about employing Syrian Arab Nationalists who might oppose Western control of the government and persuade Abdullah to break from the British advisors.

While Abdullah had little choice but to use foreign officials to staff his bureaucracy, this decision further exacerbated his difficulties with Jordan's rural advisors. Already suspicious of a centralized government that could threaten their political power, rural leaders' concerns about Syrian influence in Jordan also had a cultural dimension.[26] The urbanized, intellectual Syrian officials that Abdullah employed were almost as foreign to Jordan's rural population as the British. Although over half of Trans- Jordan's population could be described as settled in 1922, there was not a clear demarcation between the nomadic and settled peoples, as "[m]any nomads engaged in part-time agricultural activities . . . [and] peasants were also seasonal pastoralists."[27] This meant that there was little in the way of an organic intellectual and urban population, similar to what existed in other Arab countries, in Jordan during this time period. The lack of any real intellectual class in Jordan is evidenced further by the fact that the population was largely illiterate and a meaningful school system was not established in the country until 1935.[28] The influx of this previously non- existent population group into Jordan could be perceived as providing a signal that Jordanian society was moving towards adopting a more urban identity. The dual pressures of political and cultural marginalization gave the rural powers of Jordan a reason to be fearful of the Hashemite regime and provided an important impetus behind their resistance.

In addition to the political and cultural pressures that the new Hashemite regime placed on the tribal population of Jordan, their presence also enforced a new economic reality on the tribes. The Hashemites were in desperate need of material resources to provide for the governance of their newly established territory, specifically for the purposes of establishing a military to ensure its security from both internal and external threats. Although the British provided support to the Hashemite government, including officers to command the Arab Legion, this support was not sufficient to create an independent and viable Jordanian military that could exert its influence in strategically vital areas.[29] This reality forced Abdullah to attempt to use the limited military forces he possessed to compel the tribal

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[26] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 46.
[27] Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain, and the Making of Jordan*, 56.
[28] A. Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An-Economic Survey* (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Palestine Economic Research Institute, 1943), 27.
[29] John Bagot Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957),
26. Sir Herbert Louis Samuel to Secretary of State for the Colonies, February 13, 1925, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 513.

population to pay taxes to the Hashemite regime, and this proved to be an extremely difficult undertaking.[30]

The tribal population resisted these taxation measures for a number of reasons, and perhaps foremost among them was their frustration that the tax revenue the government was collecting was being used to pay the salaries of Syrian bureaucrats.[31] This response is completely understandable given the fears tribal leaders had that these Syrian officials presented a direct challenge to their political and cultural control over Jordan. The more nomadic population also felt threatened by the government's taxation regime because they had previously been able to extract protection money from the settled areas.[32] The government's attempt to extend military and administrative control would limit the ability of rural groups to have access to this important source of revenue. To limit their economic losses, tribal sheikhs prevented people from joining the state's reserve force, whose existence would provide settled populations with a greater deal of protection from the tribes and thus further limit their ability to extract resources from the local population.[33]

While the Hashemite regime alone might not have been able to exert enough influence to force the rural population to pay taxes, the British certainly did. With British help, the government was able not only to force the Bedouin population to pay taxes but also to "put the final seal on the *khuwa* (protection money) they had formerly extracted from the cultivators."[34] The British, however, were not only interested in forcing the rural population to pay taxes and limiting their ability to extract protection money from the local population but also to put an end to raiding. [35] The British felt that this practice posed a significant threat to Abdullah's fragile regime. Raiding was an important component of the tribal economy in Jordan, and the British attempts to stamp it out constituted a significant threat to Jordan's rural population's ability to maintain its economic standing. The combined efforts of Hashemite and British forces to extract funds from Jordan's rural population while also limiting their sources of revenue further provided ample reason for the tribes to fear that this new regime posed a real and direct threat to their existence and way of life and helps to explain tribal uprisings against the Hashemites.

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[30] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 31.
[31] Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan*, 64.
[32] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 17.
[33] Ibid., 46.
[34] Riccardo Bocco and Tariq M. M. Tell, "*Pax Brittanica* in the Steppe: British Policy and the Transjordanian Bedouin, 1923-1939," in *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan*, Eugene L. Rogan and Tariq Tell, eds. (New York: British Academic Press, 1994), 109.
[35] John Bagot Glubb, *War in the Desert: An R.A.F Frontier Campaign* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1960), 26.

The creation of a state in Jordan did not occur in isolation, and this process of state formation was occurring throughout the Middle East in the years following World War One. This had a profound impact on the Middle East, as traditional tribal structures of governance and loyalty came into conflict with the new realities of a nation-state system. We have already seen the effect that this had on Jordan domestically, but it also had a profound impact on the fledgling state's relations with other states in the region, especially Saudi Arabia.

The Saudis had long been a powerful force in the Arabian Peninsula, and historically they had ruled a territory that "extended from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, and from the Great Desert to Damascus," and in the 1920s, "Ibn Saud has repeatedly expressed an ambition to restore the conquest of his ancestors."[36] The ambitious Saudis presented a very real threat to the Hashemites, and this fact was demonstrated quite vividly when Saudi Arabia took over the Hijaz in 1925.[37] In addition to posing a threat to larger Hashemite interests in the Middle East, the Saudis also had shown that they could threaten Abdullah's holdings in Jordan when they invaded the country in 1924. While this invasion was driven off by a combination of Jordanian forces and British armored cars and aircraft, this was not an occurrence that Abdullah could take lightly.[38]

In addition to the outright aggression of invasion, the Saudis also undermined Abudllah's position in Jordan in other, more subtle, ways. Ibn Saud had threatened fellow Hashemite Feysal's sovereignty in Iraq by gaining influence over the tribes, and this was in fact where his greatest strength lay. The British High Commissioner for Iraq expressed this sentiment, when he said that in Iraq, "[w]hat is feared is not so much an actual attack on Ruwallah and subsequently on the Amarat Anisah [two Iraqi tribes] as their being completely won over to Ibn Saud by a mixture of cajolery and threats which would give no overt cause for war."[39] Ibn Saud had achieved similar success in Jordan, where tribes loyal to the Saudis based in Jauf managed to carry off a successful raid against Kaf, both of which were cities that Abdullah wanted to control.[40]

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[36] Telegram from High Commissioner for Iraq to Secretary of State for the Colonies, January 16, 1925 with minutes by J. Carson and J. Lassory, January 21, 1925, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 499.

[37] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 75. The Hashemites had traditionally ruled the Hijaz, and Abdullah's father Hussein ruled this area during the 1920's until he was driven out by Saudi forces.

[38] King Abdullah, *The Memoirs of King Abdullah*, 215.

[39] Telegram from High Commissioner for Iraq to Secretary of State for the Colonies, January 26, 1925, with minutes by Mr. J. Carson, January 30, 1925, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, ed. J. Priestland (Cambridge: Cambridge Archive Editions, 1996), 503.

[40] Telegram from Sir Herbert Louis Samuel to Secretary of State for the Colonies, February 13, 1925, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 511. Memorandum by Sir J. Shuckburgh, February 13, 1925, in Ibid., 507.

These border disputes were in large part the result of the conflict between nation-state and tribal systems of governance. Tribal grazing patterns and spheres of influence bore little resemblance to the new borders imposed by the nation state system. Tribes might spend one part of the year in land which was notionally controlled by Jordan, and then spend the rest of the year in land controlled by the Saudis, and they had developed these grazing patterns over generations. With the advent of modern states and more strictly enforced border controls, however, this nomadic lifestyle presented economic and military problems for these fledgling states. This reality presented a number of challenges to the new regimes, but perhaps the most important was which state should be able to tax which tribes. In one example of a dispute over whether the Ateibeh tribe should pay taxes to the Hashemites or the Saudis, "Ibn Saud had to agree not only not to levy taxes on those parts of the Ateibah tribe within his own territory, but to allow them to pay taxes to King Hussein, although not residing within the geographical limits of his kingdom."[41] While this is an example of the taxation issue being resolved peacefully, taxation was an issue of extreme importance. In light of Saudi Arabia's military ascendancy over Jordan during this time period, it was possible that the Saudis could choose to utilize their military power to secure greater economic resources.[42] This military threat was especially worrisome because the British, upon whom Abdullah relied heavily, had expressed their commitment to maintaining "their declared neutrality in the conflict between the Hedjaz and Nejd," thereby making it uncertain whether they would always come to the Hashemites' aid in the event that Abdullah appeared to be suffering the same fate that had befallen his father in the Hejaz.[43]

These international factors made it imperative that Abdullah exercise some degree of control over the tribes that lay within his boundaries, and, with the help of British financing, Abdullah began to extend his authority deeper into the frontiers of Jordan.[44] This extension of authority posed another threat to the rural population. Economically, a greater Hashemite presence in the deserts of Jordan would mean the rural population would be forced to submit to a heavier taxation burden. Also, attempts to confine nomads to the borders of Jordan would make it more difficult for the tribes to maintain their herding practices, which depended on mobility to find the best grazing land in a region where grass and water were in scarce supply.

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[41] Telegram from High Commissioner for Iraq to Secretary of State for the Colonies, January 16, 1925, with minutes by J. Carson and J. Lassory, January 21, 1925, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 502.
[42] Ibid., 499.
[43] Memorandum by Sir J. Shuckburgh, February 13, 1925, in Ibid., 509.
[44] Telegram from Sir Herbert Louis Samuel to Secretary of State for the Colonies, March 7, 1925, in Ibid., 521.

In addition to these economic concerns, however, this new regime also threatened to destroy an essential element of the Bedouin identity, mobility.

These economic, political, and social threats that the Hashemite regime posed to the tribal structure makes the tribal uprisings which occurred in Jordan during the 1920s understandable. Used to autonomy and confident in their ability to survive and thrive on their own, tribal powers had every reason to resist this change to the status quo. This resistance might have occurred indefinitely had a series of circumstances not created an environment in which the tribes of Jordan were forced into a position where they needed Hashemite assistance to survive.

The Breakdown of Jordan's Tribes

The rural system that King Abdullah encountered during the early days of his rule in 1920s Jordan was strong and had possessed that strength for a long period of time. The economy that existed in the region, while not providing for a lavish existence, allowed for the population to live fairly comfortably. In addition to their economic system, the rural population also wielded substantial political power, and had developed an effective system of governance that settled property and other disputes. This system allowed the tribes to exist in a state of relative independence and provided them with a coherent and unchallenged identity as powerful and independent force.

By the middle 1930s, however, the rural system in Jordan had lost its vitality. This transformation was the result of a number of different factors, and the advent of British and Hasehmite influence in the region played a significant role in altering the economic, political, and military environment in which the tribes existed. This external influence, however, was not the only factor that brought about this change, as the growth in Saudi influence and the rural population's severe economic hardship which occurred during the 1930s were not caused by British or Hashemite policies alone. The economic, military, and political landscape in the region were changing during this time period, and it was these changes, as much as the presence of external forces, that caused the weakening of the rural system and ultimately provided the Hashemites with the opportunity to gain the loyalty of the rural population.

During the 1920s, it became apparent that Saudi Arabia enjoyed a comfortable superiority over their neighbors in Jordan, evidenced by the fact that British officials felt that the main reason for the lack of more aggressive action from the Saudis lay in their fear that any overt displays of hostility

would invoke the ire of the British.[45] The British were acutely aware of this fact, and used the Royal Air Force to enforce a prohibited zone into which Ibn Saud's forces were barred from entering.[46] While incursions by Saudi tribes into Jordan were motivated by Ibn Saud's political ambitions in Jordan, these groups were not entirely motivated by a desire to bring more territory under Ibn Saud's control and used their strength as a means to enrich themselves. These raids, which were in their nature not an extremely effective means of gaining territory, occasionally resulted in one tribe taking another tribe's women and animals as plunder.

The British had not initially intended to use either their own troops or those of the Arab Legion to police the desert, and initially "restricted themselves to the defence of the settled areas, only occasionally venturing into the desert.[47] During the early years of the mandate regime in Jordan, Britain's "concern with the stability of Arabia led her to sacrifice the interest of Trans-Jordan in order to conciliate Ibn Saud," and undoubtedly played an important role in the decision to limit Britain's military activities.[48] As the British came to see the tribal conflict as a threat to their interests in Jordan and the region at large, the Arab Legion began to spread its influence outward.[49] This resulted in the Arab Legion not only making contact with Jordan's rural population but also with the Saudis. British forces were extremely effective in combating Saudi attacks into Jordan, as warriors riding camels were no match for armored cars and aircraft.

While British forces provided much needed security for the tribal population, it also highlighted their inability to achieve these same ends on their own. John Bagot Glubb, an important British officer in Jordan who served in the country for the better part of three decades, provides evidence that members of the rural population came to this realization in an exchange he had with a group of Bedouin women. These women thanked him for the protection he provided them against Saudi raids that had menaced their tribe.[50] This recognition of Britain's superior military strength is evident when one considers that Glubb was able to develop such a degree of status that he became an arbiter of tribal disputes in rural regions of the country.[51] This recognition of the need for support showed that the rural population of

[45] Telegram from High Commissioner for Iraq to Secretary of State for the Colonies, January 16, 1925, with minutes by J. Carson and J. Lassory, January 21, 1925, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 500.
[46] Memorandum by Sir J. Shuckburgh, February 13, 1925, in Ibid., 507.
[47] Bocco and Tell, "*Pax Brittanica* in the Steppe," 108.
[48] Ibid., 108-09.
[49] Bocco and Tell, 108.
[50] Glubb, *War in the Desert*, 154.
[51] Bocco and Tell, "*Pax Brittanica* in the Steppe," 119.

Jordan's perceptions of themselves as a powerful and self-sufficient military force had been dealt a severe blow in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

In addition to military difficulties that threatened the vitality of Jordan's rural system, their economic position during this time period was also extremely tenuous, so much so in fact that Glubb observed that segments of the rural population were facing starvation, and he doubted that some tribes could survive for long on their own.[52] This problem was not limited to the poorer segments of the population, however, as even sheikhs were eating "barley bread, a food reserved for slaves (*'abid*) in good years."[53] Statistics support this anecdotal evidence, as the livestock holdings of "the Transjordan Bedouin fell by 70 percent between 1932, already a famine year, and 1936," and the infant mortality rate in Jordan jumped from 203 to 242 deaths per 1000 births between 1933 and 1934.[54]

This desperate situation was caused by a number of diverse and independent factors that combined to create a highly destructive economic perfect storm that wrought havoc on Jordan's rural population. Raiding was motivated largely by economic considerations, and the Saudi raids into Jordan were no different, despite having a political undertone. The inability of Jordanian tribes to defend themselves against the more powerful Saudis meant that they were powerless to prevent the destruction of their economic resources. One British official "estimated the net losses of the Jordanian Bedouin [from Saudi raids] at 3662 camels, 5270 sheep, 50 killed and £P 1020 in lost possessions."[55] The military impotence of this group also meant that they did not have the ability to recoup their losses through raids against other tribes in the face of increasingly successful British attempts to pacify the desert.[56] While this policy blunted the force of Saudi attacks against the rural population, it also had the effect of putting an end to a practice that, somewhat curiously, tended to level the distribution of wealth between different tribes.[57] In addition to the negative impact that the renewed raiding practices had on the Jordan's rural tribes, the difficulty of their situation was also compounded by the fact that the region was gripped by a terrible drought during the early 1930s.

The combination of drought, military losses at the hands of the Saudis, and the restrictions placed on traditional tribal economic practices, created a circumstance where the traditional economic structure that supported Trans-Jordan's Bedouin population collapsed. This harsh reality

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[52] Glubb, *War in the Desert*, 26. Bocco and Tell, "*Pax Brittanica* in the Steppe," 120.
[53] Ibid., 121.
[54] Ibid., and Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 22.
[55] Rogan and Tell, *Village, Steppe, and State*, 120.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 25.

meant that the tribal portions of the Jordanian population were in desperate need of some form of economic assistance, and the Hashemites and British were subsequently able to provide that much needed help.

During the 1920s, the increasing power of the Hashemite central government led to an increasing portion of Jordan's population living a settled lifestyle. The increasing number of sedentary individuals in Jordan led to an increase in the area under the urban population's economic and geographical control.[58] This trend was a very real threat to Jordan's nomadic population. The Hashemites, although not able to pacify the Jordanian nomads on their own, had the benefit of being supported by the British. British assistance had helped to allow the Hashemites to keep the Saudis at bay, the same Saudi forces which had been decimating Jordan's rural population during the same time period. This British support of the Hashemites meant that the rural population had little chance of success in its struggle against the central government and, therefore, little hope of stopping the settled portion of Jordan's population from encroaching on their land.

In addition to decreasing the land to which Jordan's rural population could lay claim, a stronger central government in the state also meant that the division between the rural and settled populations became more pronounced, a trend which existed for centuries before the British assumed control of the administration of the country.[59] This historical trend repeated itself during the 1920s, as the British, the Hashemite regimes most powerful ally, sought to stamp out tribal raiding in Jordan.[60] Although not all of the contact between settled and nomadic groups in Jordan was violent, Britain's perception of nomads as a threat to peace and stability in the region made even well-intentioned approaches by the Bedouin into settled areas dangerous to the Bedouin, as their mere presence in a settled area could provoke an attack by the Arab Legion.[61]

The combination of an increased amount of land coming under the control of Jordan's settled population and the fact that nomadic tribes were increasingly forced to give these areas a wide berth for fear of inviting destruction at the hands of a superior military force limited the land available to the rural population in Jordan. Previously, the nomads would have merely avoided these areas and moved to a new location that was outside of the reach of the central government. With the advent of the nation state system in this region and more stringently enforced borders, this became less of an option. Even had central government not been a major

[58] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 16.
[59] Ibid., 15-16.
[60] Glubb, *War in the Desert*, 26.
[61] Ibid., 25.

issue, this type of migration would not have been possible because of the military power of the Saudi tribes.

During the late 1920s, Jordan's rural population was caught between a hammer and an anvil. The combined pressures of the Hashemites and the Saudis forced this group into a smaller and smaller area with little hope of reversing this process, which could have rendered the nomadic tribesmen of Jordan irrelevant. This was not merely a political threat, however, but a cultural threat as well, since their entire way of life was endangered by a powerful central government which saw traditional nomadic practices like raiding as threatening to its authority and sovereignty. In this desperate situation that the rural population faced, the programs that the Hashemite government undertook in the 1930s provided a means for the nomadic tribes not only to survive, but also to be an important political and cultural force in Jordan.

The Hashemties to the Rescue

While the Hashemite regime and its policies played an important role in marginalizing the tribal portions of Jordan's population throughout the 1920s, the relationship between these two groups changed drastically during the 1930s. In a period where the nomadic groups in Jordan were truly suffering, the Hashemites, along with the British, pursued a number of policies that helped bring the Bedouin back from the brink. These programs not only addressed the acute economic and security needs of this group, but did so in a way which allowed the Bedouin to become integrated into Jordan without having to sacrifice their identity as a politically significant group of rural warriors.

Perhaps the most important way in which the Hashemite regime aided Jordan's nomadic population during this time period was to give them a means for providing for themselves economically after the nomadic economy had effectively been destroyed. Since "the Bedouins of Trans- Jordan were almost entirely illiterate" and schools, which only catered to a very small portion of the overall Bedouin population, were not established in the desert until 1935, these newly settled peoples were not capable of working in any industry except agriculture.[62] This caused both British and Jordanian authorities to focus their energies on building up this sector of the Jordanian economy, an initiative which proved to be extremely successful.[63]

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[62] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 27.

[63] Michael R. Fischbach, "British Land Policy in Transjordan," in *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan*, Eugene L. Rogan and Tariq Tell, eds. (New York: British Academic Press, 1994), 107. Michael Fischbach finishes his essay on British Land policy in Trans-Jordan by concluding that the land settlement act was generally popular among farmers in Trans-Jordan, and that

While the loss of grazing territory could have been hugely traumatic to Jordan's rural population, the British Mandate regime instituted a number of programs that helped to ease their transition towards a settled, agricultural economy. The first program that the British undertook to achieve this aim was to expand land-ownership. This was an extremely important program, and not only for its economic implications, and as such had to be executed carefully. Establishing individual land-ownership in a tribal society was difficult since property was generally controlled by a sheikh rather than individual members of the tribe. The British believed that this communal system of land ownership was problematic, as it did not provide any "incentive for a shareholder to make any permanent improvement on his holding."[64] Despite these reservations about the economic efficiency of communal land-holding, the Jordanian government passed a Land Settlement Law in 1933 that divided land into two different categories: Masha'a, community owned land, and Mafruz, individually owned land. This system, while not ideal from an economic perspective, helped to lessen the social and cultural impact that settlement had on the previously nomadic population, as well as ensuring that local sheikhs did not feel as if they were being completely marginalized.

In addition to the provision for communal land ownership, the officials in charge of overseeing the partition generally only recorded the results of partition agreements that the villagers made among themselves, so as not to appear as if they were imposing their will on groups of people used to autonomy.[65] Although a potentially explosive and divisive program, land settlement was generally accepted without violence or rebellion due to the rural population's desperate economic situation. Only one tribal group threatened to use force to avoid land settlement in 1938, which is tremendously surprising given the previous frequency of tribal uprisings against the government of Trans-Jordan during the 1920s.[66]

The land settlement program not only expanded land ownership without too greatly upsetting Jordan's existing social and political order, it also proved economically successful. Over 1.6 million dunums, or 400,000 acres, of land came under official ownership between 1933 and 1938, a full one fifth or all cultivatable land in Jordan.[67] Although the majority of the

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"[t]he positive political implications of the land programme were of far more use in helping the Hashemite regime accrue valuable political credit and, ultimately, guarantee its survival during turbulent times than the personal dynamism of Jordan's monarchs or other traditionally-cited explanations of the regime's longevity."

[64] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 39.

[65] Ibid., 38.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Dunums are a traditional Ottoman unit of land area, where 1 dunum is approximately equal to .25 acres. Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 39.

land that came under ownership was under communal authority, new Jordanian landowners attempted to make improvements to their field by taking actions like clearing stones from the fields and utilizing fertilizer.[68]

Beyond attempting to expand land ownership, in the hopes that this would lead to better utilization of Jordan's arable land, the government also attempted to develop irrigation infrastructure for the same purposes. Analysis of the agricultural conditions in Jordan during this time period concluded that "irrigation opportunities provide a sphere of development which can quickly and most profitably contribute to increased production."[69] Jordan was not necessarily an ideal place for agriculture, due to the desert- like conditions that afflicted most of the country, and improved irrigation was necessary to expand cultivation with Jordan's scarce water resources. The cost that irrigation projects presented were not prohibitive either, as there were already irrigation systems in place that just needed to be improved technologically and administratively to provide a large increase in the area of cultivatable land that the population could utilize.[70] The ultimate aim and attractiveness of these irrigation projects during this time period was their ability to allow the fledgling nation to "support a greater population in considerably better condition than at present."[71]

While these programs hardly turned Jordan into an economic powerhouse, crop yield statistics show that they did provide a boost to the state's economy. Between 1927 and 1939 barley production increased seven-fold and wheat production four-fold.[72] In addition to crop yields, the attractiveness of these land offers is also evident by the fact that two foreign tribes, the Tuwayrish from Syria and the Ghazawiyya from Palestine, actually took up residence in Trans-Jordan in 1939 and 1944 respectively.[73]

Although these agricultural policies were successful in providing Jordan's rural population with an ability to support themselves, they were successful in securing this groups loyalty to the king because the transition from a nomadic to a more settled agricultural lifestyle was relatively subtle. While the agriculture program was meant to bring the rural population into a more sedentary lifestyle, it was not intended to bring an end to all kinds of nomadism in Jordan. Even with arable land, "[n]omads camped near their cultivated land during the sowing season and left it for their winter grazing areas only to return for the harvest in the following spring."[74] Livestock breeding was undoubtedly helped by efforts taken during this time period to

[68] Ibid.
[69] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 35.
[70] Ibid., 32-35.
[71] Konikoff, 35.
[72] Ibid., 46.
[73] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 130-31.
[74] Ibid., 131.

improve irrigation in Jordan. This limited allowance for nomadism meant that the rural population was still able to maintain a sense of mobility, which was an important component of their identity.

In addition to allowing the Jordan's rural population to continue to engage in nomadism, their agricultural pursuits also allowed them to maintain their identity. The settled and nomadic segments of Jordan's population had for a long period of time existed in a state of mutual antagonism, with "the settled man regarding the nomad as his natural enemy and the nomad viewing the settled man as his legitimate prey."[75] In addition to this economic antagonism, the Bedouin largely viewed settled and urban people as soft.[76] Had rural Jordanians moved into more urban areas, they would have been forced to integrate into a social setting in which they would have lost not only their physical separation from this group, but more importantly their psychological distance. This would have been made more problematic by the fact that the rural population would not have been able to be in positions of power in urban environments, since the very few member of Trans-Jordan's Bedouin population was literate, and exclusive schools were not established in the desert until 1935.[77] Working in subservient positions to people they considered in many ways inferior would have been extremely problematic for the Bedouin, a group that R.J.C. Broadhurst describes as having a sense of "great self-reliance and pride [which] will allow [them] to feel deference for no superior."[78]

The fact that rural Jordanians accepted their new agricultural lifestyle is evidence by their fairly ready acceptance of manual labor, an essential part of being a farmer and something that the Bedouin had previously seen as beneath them. Glubb reported that "'many' of the Huwaytat were personally engaged in tilling their land," and that a member of the Sirhan tribe referred to himself as *fallah* in a petition, a term for agriculturalists which the tribesmen had used previously as a pejorative.[79] This willingness to engage in manual labor, combined with the fact that only one tribe even threatened to rebel to avoid land settlement, gives the impression that the Jordanian tribes did not view their new settled existence as too dramatic a departure

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[75] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 16.

[76] Ahmad Janadbeh, interview with author, 3 February 2010. Mr. Janadbeh was my colloquial Arabic teacher during my semester abroad in Jordan. He was from the more rural parts of Jordan, and he was the only one of his ten brothers who was not a member of Jordan's military. On our first day of class, he explained to us that he was "badu," and thus different from the "tantat" who lived in Amman. The word, "tantat" is the plural form of "tant," which we learned on our first day of class was a derogatory term for homosexuals.

[77] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 27.

[78] Abdullah, *Memoirs of King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan*, 15.

[79] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 131.

from their previous lifestyle.[80] More importantly, it also gives an indication that the Bedouin tribes had become willing to accept Hashemite rule.

The unrest which plagued Jordan during the early years of the mandate regime, while certainly problematic in the eyes of British colonial administrators, was probably quite normal in the context of Jordan's history of tribal infighting. Nomads relied heavily on raiding for economic purposes, but raiding was more than a means to an end. Glubb described Bedouin society as one which was always at war, observing that "their endless hostilities were rarely, if ever, interrupted by peace," and notes that the "majority of Bedouin poems . . . treated of war rather than of love."[81] This societal character had an influence on the individual, and war was a means for a person "to achieve personal glory," and for a Bedouin "[r]aiding is his chief delight."[82] The transition to more settled communities "naturally imposed a measure of discipline which would have been felt as irksome by the wild nomad of the great desert spaces," a discipline which would have made the militant, raiding lifestyle the Bedouin had previously taken pride in impossible.[83]

This movement towards a more settled existence coincided with the rural population's loss of military power to the Saudis and the British. The newly agrarian Bedouin appreciated the security that the Hashemites and their British supporters provided them, since this more static lifestyle made the Bedouin more vulnerable to the sorts of raids that the Saudi tribes had carried out more or less with impunity before the British increased their presence in the deserts of Jordan. Whereas the rural population previously had been mobile and armed, thus presenting a difficult and dangerous target for any tribal raiding party, their new agricultural lifestyle was extremely susceptible to any attacks that could disrupt the already tenuous position of farmers in desert-like conditions. This security, however helpful, though might have further exacerbated rural Jordanian's feeling that they were no longer a powerful military force.

In this context, the employment of Bedouin in the Arab Legion could be seen as a means for them to regain both their individual and collective identity as a martial force to be reckoned with. By providing the rural population with employment in the military forces of Jordan, the Hashemites and the British in many ways eased the transition to a different lifestyle by providing them with an opportunity to express the militaristic side of their identity and thus ensure that they did not have to suffer further amalgamation into the settled culture that they had previously rebelled

[80] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 38.
[81] Glubb, *War in the Desert*, 30 and 37.
[82] Ibid., 31, and Abdullah, *Memoirs of King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan*, 15.
[83] Glubb, *War in the Desert*, 31.

against. The newly constructed warrior identity of the Bedouin was undoubtedly given a tremendous boost by the performance of the Arab Legion during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, where Glubb Pasha commented that "the Arab Legion proved itself the master of the battlefield," as they provided the Arab coalition with one of their few victories in an otherwise disastrous campaign.[84]

In addition to providing the rural population with a means to retain their sense of themselves as warriors on both the personal and collective level, employment in Jordan's fledgling armed forces also provided the country's nomadic population with economic opportunities. The British saw Jordan as an important asset largely for its military value, and this is evident when looking at how Jordan allocated its budget when it was under British control as a mandate. While the British made substantial efforts to increase agricultural production in Trans-Jordan during this time period, the amount of money spent on agriculture and other public works projects is dwarfed by the country's military budget. The military component of the state's budget was also more stable than other areas, especially given Germany's alliance with Iraq in World War Two. The military was deemed so important in 1941-42, in fact, that government expenditure, which was made possible largely by British funds, on the military and police forces outstripped spending in all other areas of government, with spending on public works projects the victim of a precipitous decline that cut its funding by almost seventy-five percent.[85] While this budget was certainly not spent solely on personnel, the military did increase substantially in size during the mandate years. The increase in the size of the Arab Legion is a particularly excellent example of this phenomenon. In the early days of the state, the Arab Legion only had a strength of "1,200 men all told."[86] When the British Mandate regime was terminated in 1946, the Arab Legion boasted between eight and ten thousand men.[87] By 1956, the Arab Legion had grown even more, to approximately 25,000 personnel. [88]

The military policies of Abdullah's government were extremely important in ensuring that the Hashemites had the support of the rural populations. By the end of the 1920s, this segment of Jordan's population was in a state of extreme privation. Their military power had been degraded to the point where it was almost non-existent, which was threatening not only to their economic, but also cultural survival. The Jordanian military

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[84] Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs*, 132.
[85] Konikoff, *An Economic Survey of Trans-Jordan*, 119.
[86] Monthly report on Transjordan by H. Philby, September 1923, in *Records of Jordan 1919-1965, Volume 2*, 52.
[87] P.J. Vatikiotis, *Politics and the Military in Jordan: A Study of the Arab Legion 1921-1957* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967), 7.
[88] Ibid.

helped to solve these problems in a number of important ways. First, the security provided by the central government allowed the rural population to practice agriculture without fear that their harvest would be destroyed in an afternoon through a raid against which they were incapable of defending. The military also provided each group with an extremely stable alternative source of income that could take the pressure off of Jordan's agricultural sector. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, employment in the state's fledgling military provided rural Jordanians with an opportunity to regain their military identity, and the well documented successes of the Arab Legion made the Bedouin once again feel as if they were part of a strong military force. In many ways, Jordan's military forces can be seen as a "school of the nation," breaking down barriers between tribes and giving them a stake in the Trans-Jordanian state.[89]

While Jordan's military provided the Bedouin with the means to regain their warrior identity, it also provided them with a means of obtaining a greater degree of political power. The rural population had largely been left out of the Hashemite's bureaucracy in the early days of the regime. Imported Syrian officials with previous experience were better equipped to handle administrative functions than the largely illiterate tribesmen who had little experience living with a centralized government, much less running it. This was a point of contention between the Hashemites and the nomadic population early in the existence of Jordan, as the "Jordan for the Jordanians" movement among native elements showed.[90] The Adwani rebellion was in many ways the most important manifestation of this tension. While the defeat that the Adwan suffered at the hand of the Hashemite government and their British supporters was devastating to the rural population's ability to defy the central government, in many ways, it presented this group with an important opportunity to gain more political influence in Jordan. The British perceived Arab Nationalists connected with the Istiqlal party to be behind this rebellion, despite the fact that the actual armed threat came from tribal forces. The British used the revolt's demonstration of Jordan's reliance on colonial support as an opportunity to force Abdullah to remove officials with Arab Nationalist leanings from his government.[91] Since the rural population of Jordan had little affiliation with these groups, the expulsion of Arab Nationalist leaders from Abdullah's

[89] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 1. This idea of the military forging Trans-Jordan is a commonly held idea among scholars, and Alon is merely one of the many scholars that have expressed this idea when discussing both historical and modern Jordan. Lawrence Tal's *Politics, The Military, and National Security in Jordan, 1955-1967* and P.J. Vatikiotis' *Politics and the Military in Jordan: A Study of the Arab Legion, 1921-1957* are both excellent examples of works that explore the symbiotic relationship between the Hashemites and their military forces in different time periods.

[90] Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the making of Jordan*, 65.

[91] Ibid., 78-79.

administration in 1923 presented them with an opportunity to gain positions of greater authority.[92] The military proved to be an important avenue through which the Bedouin population rose to obtain these prominent bureaucratic positions.

The Arab Legion increased dramatically not only in size between 1921 and 1956, but also in responsibility. During this time period, members of the Arab Legion were working in parts of the Jordanian government that are not generally considered within the purview of the military, such as "the economic, financial, educational and social fields of state and national endeavor, especially in the Palestinian territories that became incorporated into Jordan after the 1948 war."[93] This growth of the military, both in terms of personnel and responsibility, meant that the military was a source not only of economic subsistence but also a way of gaining access to other avenues of political and economic power. These opportunities went in large part to the portions of the Bedouin population that were not members of traditionally powerful families due to the fact that Glubb Pasha made a concerted to recruit officers who were outside of both the urban and rural circles of power and the army's noncommissioned officers were from similarly humble circumstances.[94] Providing formerly powerless people with greater authority and responsibility in the Hashemite Regime was important in developing among the tribal population a sense that they had "a clear stake in the survival of the Jordanian state."[95] Beyond merely developing a dependence upon the state, however, these positions gave this segment of the population a sense of ownership of Jordan, in that they could play an important role in deciding where the state was heading rather than merely being along for the ride.

A Caveat

> *To those who still feel a guilty suspicion that British action in Asia was, in former times, oppressive or unscrupulous, this account may give a different view point. For here, it seems to me, British intervention was purely beneficial. It saved a poor, simple and hardy community from the terror of constant massacre, and established a peace which has never since been broken. The result could only have been achieved by the defeat of the militant Ikhwan, and such a defeat could not have been achieved without British help.*[96]

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[92] Ibid., 48.
[93] Vatikiotis, *Politics and the Military in Jordan*, 7.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 1.
[96] Glubb, *War in the Desert*, Preface.

Glubb's preface to *War in The Desert* contains this passage, which presents Britain's Mandate Regime in Jordan in an almost humanitarian light. This paper has demonstrated how the Jordanian Bedouin population in many ways benefitted in the long run politically, economically, and militarily from the British sponsored Hashemite regime in the country. While many of the British soldiers and diplomats undoubtedly viewed their work in Jordan in a benevolent light, they were not in this country on a humanitarian mission. Britain's interests in Jordan were geopolitical in nature, and the fact "[t]hat Transjordan existed at all as a separate state [from Palestine] was in response to Britain's strategic and political needs."[97] Examining the policies that empowered the Bedouin demonstrates this fact.

While the agricultural development policies that were undertaken in Jordan provided the Bedouin with much needed resources at a time when they were in a precarious economic position, these policies helped Britain to achieve its self-serving political goals. The British and Abdullah were both very concerned about the threat that foreign Arabs with nationalist leanings posed to the fledgling Hashemite regime in Jordan. Since the distinction between those in Jordan with Arab Nationalist sympathies and those without was largely determined by whether they lived in settled or more rural settings, transitioning the Bedouin to a more settled, yet still rural, agricultural lifestyle was an ideal way to ensure that the "taint" of Arab Nationalism did not spread to the "pure" segments of Jordan's population.

The most important ways in which the taint of Arab Nationalism spread was through education, and ensuring that the Bedouin remained in rural areas was an extremely effective way of limiting their access to education. Before the mandate period, education in Jordan only existed on an extremely limited scale. What educational infrastructure that did exist in Jordan was centered in larger towns, leaving the rural population without any significant access to education, which likely contributed greatly to the fact that Jordan's rural population contained few Arab Nationalists.[98] Those schools that did exist in rural areas of Jordan were only four year elementary programs, compared with seven years programs in the more settled areas.[99] Furthermore, the only schools that provided secondary education were located in the urban areas of Es Salt, Kerak, Irbid, and Amman, and the only secondary schools that provided a full four year program with a matriculation exam was located in Amman.[100] Had the rural population migrated to cities, it is likely that a greater portion of its population, or at least the sons of wealthy sheikhs, would have gained an education and been

[97] Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan*, 2.
[98] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 27.
[99] Ibid., 28.
[100] Ibid.

exposed to ideas that could threaten a pro-British Hashemite regime. This threat to the Hashemite regime, and thus British interests in Jordan, was made more problematic by the fact that many of the schools were taught by foreigners, since it was difficult to find qualified teachers in Jordan.[101] This problem of the demographics of teachers was not such a problem in the elementary schools that the Bedouin were attending in the rural parts of the country, since the level of qualification required was lower and thus made it slightly easier to find teacher's within Jordan's population. In addition to the differences between the demographics of teachers in elementary versus secondary schools, there was also a higher proportion of foreign teachers at private schools, schools which relied on concentrations of wealthier individuals and thus precluded their penetration into the more rural parts of Jordan.[102]

In addition to the benefit of keeping the Bedouin isolated from problematic Arab Nationalists, most of whom had learned their ideology before migrating to Jordan, that transitioning them to an agrarian lifestyle, this also provided Abdullah's government with an important revenue stream. Running a state is an expensive enterprise, and from the beginning of their administration in Jordan, the British were concerned with developing a system of land ownership that would eventually lead to an efficient and effective system of taxation.[103] A final land tax law for Jordan was passed in 1933 after much difficulty, and following the passage of this law the central government saw its revenues increase substantially, from an average of £232,250 between the fiscal years of 1924/25 and 1933/34 to £358,160 in 1937/38.[104] During this same time period, the funding that Abdullah's government received in the form of a Grant-in-Aid from the British Treasury decreased from £67,823 to £19,000.[105] While Jordan was an important British holding, the British, quite reasonably, wanted to keep their expenditures on the governance of the country at as low a level as possible, and establishing an economic base which the country's central government could tax was an important component of this plan.

The British also saw their mandate in Jordan as having important strategic purposes, since "[t]he territory lay between the Red Sea and the

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[101] Konikoff, 29.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Michael R. Fischbach, "British Land Policy in Transjordan," in *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan*, eds. by Eugene L. Rogan and Tariq Tell (New York: British Academic Press, 1994), 82-85.
[104] Ibid., 91. The British did not have complete control over the legislative process in Trans- Jordan, and thus had to convince the local government to pass laws. The land tax law of 1933 was a difficult piece of legislation to push through, since it threatened to increase the tax burden on several influential Trans-Jordanian landowners. Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 139.
[105] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 139.

oilfields in Iraq . . . [and] also sat astride the overland routes to the Persian Gulf."[106] Having an effective military in Jordan that could protect these important transportation routes, as well as provide strategic depth in the defense of the Suez Canal, was vital if Jordan were to fulfill the strategic purposes that the British desired.[107] That the British were extremely concerned with developing a military in Jordan is evidenced by the fact that the Arab Legion was founded barely a month after Abdullah first arrived in Amman in 1921, and remained under the control of British officers until Glubb, its commander, was expelled from Jordan in 1956 by King Hussein.[108]

While the Jordanian military proved helpful in providing the Bedouin of Jordan with employment and a means to express their warrior identity in a more productive way, at least through the eyes of Britain and the Hashemites, it would be naïve to believe that this was the primary motivation behind its creation. A strong military force furthered Britain's interests in Jordan, and the fact that it helped the Bedouin was a positive externality of its creation rather than the prime motivator. Seeing the relationship between the Bedouins and all of the programs and policies that the Hashemite regime pursued during this time period in the light of positive externalities is the most useful way of understanding them.

Conclusion

In his introduction to the *Making of Jordan*, Yoav Alon quite correctly states that "Jordan was one of Britain's most successful colonial projects in the Middle East and elsewhere."[109]. Jordan gained its independence from Britain peacefully, and the modern state is an important Arab ally of the West that has been able to remain relatively calm during the recent wave of revolutions that have swept across the Middle East.

Much of the foundation for this stability was laid during the mandate period, and Britain and the Hashemite government undoubtedly did a lot of things right in ensuring that this happened, especially in gaining the support of the fledgling state's initially restive rural population by pursuing programs that, intentionally or not, allowed this group to maintain important parts of their identity during their integration into the state. Abdullah devoted a great deal of time and effort to legitimizing his regime with the

[106] Vatikiotis, *Politics and the Military in Jordan*, 38.
[107] The British during this time period considered the Suez Canal as an indispensable part of its colonial holdings, since it allowed for Britain to have easy access to India. This is a commonly held view, and Elizabeth Monroe's *Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914-1971* is a noteworthy example of this viewpoint.
[108] Vatikiotis, *Politics and the Military in Jordan*, xi.
[109] Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 3.

rural population, and the land ownership program's allowance for a slow transition to fully private land holdings was important. The British also were important in this process, in that their rule in Jordan was of a fairly "laissez-faire nature," and that important officials, like Sir John Bagot Glubb, served in the country for a long period of time and became very familiar with its people, politics, and culture.[110]

Despite pursuing these well thought out and executed policies, a number of factors that were almost completely out of control of either the British or the Hashemites were vitally important in gaining the support of the country's rural population. The Saudi tribes' military superiority over the Jordanian nomads had little to do with British or Hashemite influence, and the drought that played an important role in bringing the Bedouin to the verge of starvation was similarly out of their control. In addition to these factors, Jordan was not urbanized in any meaningful way during the mandate period, as the average population density of people living in the country's habitable area in 1940 was only "18 persons per sq. klm."[111] This lack of urbanization meant that the conditions were not suitable for any form of Arab Nationalism to develop in Jordan, an ideology which would have made the country's population far less willing than it already was to accept British influence.[112] However well thought out and executed the policies and programs of the Hashemites and their British sponsors might have been, it is not fair to say that they would have worked nearly as well if Jordan during the mandate period had been more urbanized or if the Bedouin had been economically prosperous and militarily powerful.

The political, social, and economic situation in Jordan, which the British and Abdullah inherited in 1921, was in many ways well suited for the nation building process that they undertook. The rural population's inability to maintain their political, military, and economic independence was essential in this process, and, over the course of two decades, Abdullah and his British advisors were able to position themselves in such a way that they became the rural population's allies rather than adversaries. While it might be tempting to use the case of Jordan as a model for future state building endeavors, the number of external factors which made nation building in Jordan successful make this problematic. More than a template, the case of Jordan demonstrates that peoples, cultures and states are influenced by a constellation of different factors, factors which are hard for individuals and even states to control and predict.

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[110] Ibid., 2.

[111] Konikoff, *Trans-Jordan: An Economic Survey*, 15.

[112] The idea that urbanization and industrialization are important prerequisites for the rise of nationalism is a commonly held belief among scholars. The foremost example of this interpretation is Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*.