

BRITAIN, THE SHAIKH, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAHRAIN

1920 - 1945

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.

by

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the history of Bahrain in the period 1920-45. It is based primarily on archival material in the India Office Records. The earlier chapters in the thesis deal with the Administration of Shaikh <sup>C</sup>Isa bin <sup>C</sup>Ali Alkhalifah, whose active rule of Bahrain encompassed 55 years, from 1869 to May 1923 when the British Government retired him, against his will, in the long-term interests of the ruling family of Bahrain and those of the country as a whole. Under his period in office, both the ruling family and their tribal associates had acquired immense power, privileges and autonomy. After the First World War, the serious faults which the Shaikh's administration had manifested over the years became a much publicized affair and a source of great embarrassment to the British Government. In Bahrain, the Shaikh's Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Arab subjects, who were the victims of discriminatory policies, rebelled in February 1922 and brought the country's administration to a halt.

The thesis assesses the role played by the Foreign Office, the Government of India which maintained direct links with the Shaikh and the British Political Authorities in the Gulf, before and during the adoption of a policy of reforms in Bahrain. Also included in the discussion are: the actual reforms carried out under Shaikh Hamad, the Heir Apparent and Shaikh Isa's deputy, the struggle conducted by the ruling family and their tribal supporters against the reforms, and the support given by the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Arabs to Shaikh Hamad's Administration over their introduction. The modernization process during the years 1923-26 was supervised by the British Agent in Bahrain and it produced an organized government structure formed of specialized, secular departments and offices. This was the first time such a modern administration had been created in the Arab Shaikhdoms. Other chapters examine the politics of education and educational reform, reform of the pearling industry and the causes for the decline of the pearl-trade of Bahrain. The advent of oil is also

studied and the new industry is seen to have saved the country from economic disaster in the aftermath of the recession of the early 1930s.

The thesis concludes that the Government of India vacillated over the initiation of the reforms in Bahrain and that even when it agreed to them it was goaded into action by the Foreign Office whose officials acted in response to Tehran's criticisms that the Government of India shared responsibility for Shaikh Isa's misrule. The reforms curbed the power of the ruling family and at the same time they enhanced British influence over the administration of Bahrain. More penetrating than the administrative reforms were the far-reaching socio-economic changes induced by the establishment of the oil industry in Bahrain. Greater communication and travel became possible after Bahrain's entry into the age of oil. Wider co-operation between Sunnis and Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs, such as Bahrain witnessed in the second half of the 1930s was due chiefly to the subjection of Bahraini schoolboys of both sects to a unified system of education and to their sharing of jobs as employees of the Oil Company, and also to the increased political awareness of the people and their leaders. It should be noted also that the influx of oil revenues gave greater wealth to the ruling family and thereby helped to strengthen their position and powers.

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## Preface

To write about the modern history of Bahrain, while basing one's account on official contemporary documents is, for a native researcher, a rather sensitive undertaking. The sensitivity lies in the fact that both the persons and the events involved are only five or six decades old. Once committed to his research there is no choice but to consider all the many issues as they unfold themselves in the archival material. It is no exaggeration to say that until some time after the First World War Bahrain was still a state which had many Medieval elements and these were anachronistic for the needs of the changing world of the 1920s. To concentrate upon certain aspects in the history of that period while omitting others is a task more suited to a journalist than a historical researcher. It is only by considering the totality of that history, including the sensitive and delicate issues, that a comprehensive account can be attempted. It is with this principle in mind that the present study has been approached.

My acquaintance with the history and politics of the Near and Middle East began during 1979-80, when I was an M.A. student of the Area Studies Programme organized by the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies. The series of lectures and seminars which I attended then, were extremely helpful and I am grateful to all the teachers who introduced me to the subject in particular Professor M.E. Yapp who has continued to take an interest in my research work.

I wish to express here my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. R.M. Burrell of the Department of History at the School, who spared no effort in the way of improving the quality of this thesis. With careful scrutiny, sustained advice and guidance he led me through my work over the years, ready always to help. To him I owe a great deal which cannot be recorded here.

For the tedious task of typing the thesis, I wish to express my appreciation for the help received from Mrs. A. Percy, and from Miss I. Miller - a fellow post-graduate in the Department of History - who assisted with the final revisions and corrected some of my language errors, thereby minimizing the risks to my readers. What remains of those errors, is my own responsibility. I am also thankful to the staff of the following institutions for their dedicated services:

The India Office Library for allowing me access to all the files in their possession, and for permission to use the material for research purposes. I am particularly grateful to Mrs. P. Tuson, Archivist - Middle East Section, who was helpful to me in many ways, and to the staff of the Photocopying Section of the India Office Library for the services which they rendered over the years.

The staff of the Public Record Office, the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies and the Senate House Library in the University of London were all helpful to me. I wish to thank Miss Barbara Terris of the Inter-Library Loan System - S.O.A.S. - who arranged for me to consult a number of theses from other universities.

Finally, I should like to extend my sincere thanks to H.E. Mohammad Mahdi Mohsin Al Tajir for providing me with a generous grant and suitable accommodation while I was a student in London. My special thanks also go to his brother Mr. Hadi Al Tajir who treated me and my family with equal care and attention throughout our stay in the United Kingdom. To my wife and daughter Israa my earnest thanks for showing patience and forbearance in the face of countless pressures.

Notes on Transliteration and Alternative English Renderings of Arabic

Forms

Transliteration of Arabic words and the use of diacritical marks are kept to a minimum throughout the thesis. However, the system adopted here is the one with which Arabists and others concerned with the Middle East are familiar, some features of which appear below:

	<u>Consonants</u>	
Arabic Emphatic Sounds:	ص s	ض ḍ
	ط t	ظ ṭ
Arabic Guttural Sounds:	ح h	خ kh
	ع ʿ	ع c
	ق q	غ gh

Vocalic length is indicated by a dash over a vowel sound as in:

Manāmah capital of Bahrain

i.e. the second -a- is a long vowel

Many names of persons, places, etc., are written in variant forms by different writers, viz.

Isa, Easa for <sup>c</sup>Isa

Qazi, Qadhi for Qāḍi

Shiah, Shia for Shī<sup>c</sup>ah

In quotations, the original forms are left unaltered, and the most frequently used ones in the correspondence of the period, such as:

Isa and Ibn Saud, have been adopted for use in the present thesis.

Finally, note that Dōwāsir is the plural of Dōsari, a Najdi tribesman resident in Bahrain. Similarly, Bahārnah is the plural form of Bahrāni, a native Shī<sup>c</sup>ah Arab. J.G. Lorimer (Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, <sup>c</sup>Oman and Central Arabia) uses a slightly different spelling: Bahārinah which conforms to the written Arabic form rather than the spoken form employed in this study.

Abbreviations

G. of I.	The Government of India
F.S.G.I.	Foreign Secretary - Government of India
P.R.	Political Resident in the Persian Gulf
D.P.R.	Deputy Political Resident
P.A.	Political Agent at Bahrain
C.C.	Civil Commissioner - Baghdad
I.O.	India Office
F.O.	Foreign Office
C.O.	Colonial Office
S.S.I.	Secretary of State for India
U.S.S.I.	Under-Secretary of State for India
U.S.S.F.O.	Under-Secretary of State - Foreign Office
S.S.C.	Secretary of State - Colonial Office
A.R.P.A.	Administration Report of the Political Agency
I.O.R.	India Office Records
P+S (P & S)	Political and Secret
p.	page
para.	paragraph

## Chapter One

### Introduction: Survey of the Thesis and Discussion of Sources

This thesis examines the economic, political and social history of Bahrain in the period 1920-45. It is based upon a wide range of archival material in the India Office Records, supplemented where necessary by documents from the Foreign Office archives. (The precise series used and an appraisal of their relevance to this study will be provided below.) While some aspects of the history of Bahrain during that period have been treated by previous writers (whose contributions will be reviewed later), no previous work has attempted to provide a comprehensive historical study of economics, politics and society. Earlier studies also appear not to have used the full range of documents which are now available and relevant to such research.

The years between the First and Second World Wars are important to the history of Bahrain as they represent the transition from 'the traditional' to 'the modern' age. During these years Bahrain was subjected to many fateful and unsettling changes. An old economic mainstay - the pearling industry - lost its traditional importance while a new industry, one which was to have enormous consequences for the country's economy and society - petroleum extraction and refining - began its operations. In a separate but not unrelated development a new system of education was introduced and here Bahrain was well ahead of her Arab neighbours in the Gulf. On the international scene Bahrain became of greater strategic importance to its protector - Great Britain - as the result of the decline in British influence in Persia following the rise to power there of a vigorous new dynasty, and as the protection of Imperial air communications and the continued defence of oil supplies became matters of great concern. The overall result was, a consolidation of British influence in Bahrain.

The opening chapters in the thesis provide an account of Bahrain in

the early 1920s when it was ruled by Shaikh <sup>C</sup>Isa bin <sup>C</sup>Ali Al Khalifah who was born in 1848, and who acceded to the rulership in 1869. His three living sons were: Shaikh Hamad, born in 1874, Shaikh Mohammad born in 1877, and Shaikh Abdullah born in 1880. The Al Khalifah who follow the Mālikī sect of Islam, had ruled the islands since 1783.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1920s the country was informally divided into areas of influence each controlled by a leading Shaikh. Moharraq, the second largest island in the Bahrain archipelago was the Ruler's place of residence except during the summer months when he and his followers moved to the main island. The Ruler's powers over the country's internal affairs were absolute. Apart from the Shara<sup>C</sup> Court, Bahrain's Administration consisted of a few local Councils such as: Majlis al-<sup>C</sup>Urf: a Council to inquire into commercial disputes, the Sālifāt al-Ghaws: the Court for pearl-diving affairs and the Shaikh's own Majlis where he met and conferred with his allies, Chiefs of the tribes and the leading men of Bahrain. Every town had an Amīr appointed by the Ruler and authorized to carry out certain duties on his behalf. This official was assisted by a number of Fidāwīs, i.e. armed retainers whose repeated excesses earned them the animosity of the people. Until mid-1923 the Shaikh relied on Customs dues for his income, and to a much lesser extent on income from his private date-gardens. The pearl trade and general commerce of Bahrain were largely controlled by merchants from the Sunni community, among whom were a number of Sunni Persians. Bahrain's trade with India was managed principally by Indian merchants and traders many of whom had been established on the islands for many years. Similarly, the import-export trade with the Persian littoral was largely carried out by Persians both Sunni and Shi<sup>C</sup>ite.

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1 The above dates are obtained from J.G. Laithwaite: Confidential Memorandum on Bahrain 1908-28. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1041, B. 396, 8.10.1928.

For centuries, the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Arabs had been involved in traditional trades and crafts such as: date-cultivation, fishing, weaving, sail and mat-making, boat-building, pottery and some other cottage industries of lesser economic significance. Their conditions before 1923 were described by the Resident as:

"The mass of the people of Bahrain who are ... .. Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs, were the sufferers and their condition resembled that of helots, who could call no lands nor the produce of any lands their own."<sub>1</sub>

The ethnic and religious composition of the population of Bahrain is quite complex and the terms used by various authors to describe the different groups are not always crystal clear. In today's usage the term Bahrainis refers to both Sunni and Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Arabs, but in the period studied in this thesis it is used almost exclusively for the Baharnah Arabs. The tribal elements among the Sunni community of Bahrain invariably refer to themselves in their petitions, as the 'tribes'. In this context the word 'tribes' should not be understood to mean nomads, for by 1920 these people had already been transformed into a settled population and their life-style was far from being nomadic. They were now landowners, pearl dealers, merchants and Nakhudas, i.e. boat-captains. They represented a distinctive class, and comprised various tribal groups loyal to Shaikh Isa's rule. They shared the historical tradition of the Al Khalifah, the Rulers, and they were all Sunni. Throughout this study they are referred to as the 'tribal element' in preference to the 'tribes' for the reasons stated above which are supported by the Resident's statement in 1924:

"As a matter of fact there are no real 'tribes' worthy of the name in Bahrain - the Dowasir were the nearest approach to a real tribe ..."<sub>2</sub>

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1 Colonel F.B. Prideaux, P.R., to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/73, No. 521-S, 6.9.1924.

2 Colonel A.P. Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/73, No. 57-T, 22.3.1924.

In addition to the tribal element, the Sunni community of Bahrain includes a large number of Huwalah Arabs who profess Arab descent but whose grand-parents were in fact once resident on the Persian littoral. Among their ranks, today, are some influential merchants and a few Government officials, some in sensitive posts. In the British documents of the period they are referred to as: "Sunni Persians", and hence the rather ambiguous description of them in some recent writings as: "Sunni Persians of allegedly Arab origin".<sup>1</sup>

By virtue of the two Treaties signed with the Shaikh in 1880 and 1892, Britain controlled Bahrain's foreign relations.<sup>2</sup> Prior to 1919, Britain exerted little influence over the Shaikh's handling of his domestic affairs, leaving him in virtual control. In 1904, however, the Resident had set a precedent and had interfered when a couple of foreigners were mishandled by Fidawis acting on orders from Shaikh Ali bin Ahmad, Shaikh Isa's nephew. Again during 1909 and later the Resident stepped in with regard to the question of jurisdiction over Hasawis, Qatifis, and Najdis (See Chapter Two). In both cases, the issues affected foreigners, not the Shaikh's subjects.

Control of the Agency at Bahrain in the period 1914-1920 was the responsibility of Sir P.Z. Cox who was the Political Resident, and who after 1920 became Civil Commissioner - Baghdad, until he retired in 1923. Throughout the First World War, Cox was heavily involved with the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force and the Residency in Bushire was in effect run by a Deputy-Resident from January 1915. At this time, British Imperial interests in Iraq, and relations with Ibn Saud, which

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1 F. Stoakes: Social and Political Change in the Third World: Some Peculiarities of Oil-Producing Principalities of the Persian Gulf, p. 198, in D. Hopwood, edited: The Arabian Peninsula - Society and Politics (London 1972).

2 For the full text of the above Treaties see C.U. Aitchison: A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads, Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries (Delhi, 1933), Vol. XI, pp. 237-38.

were conducted by Cox himself came to exercise some influence over British policy towards Bahrain. The recommendations of the Masterton-Smith Committee of 1921<sup>1</sup> in respect of the Arab littoral of the Gulf including Bahrain, left questions of policy to the Colonial Office in consultation with the Foreign Office in London. The Government of India's role was to be confined to "administrative and purely local matters" such as the recruitment and appointment of personnel. In practice, however, with regard to Bahrain, the Resident continued to receive his orders from the Government of India, which was allowed responsibility for political matters concerning the Arab littoral, so long as that involvement was not likely to generate international repercussions. The Foreign Office and the Colonial Office stepped in only in major questions of policy such as that from 1922 onwards with regard to the Persian claim to Bahrain<sup>2</sup>, and the relieving in 1923 of Shaikh Isa from the obligations of active rulership. In 1933 the Colonial Office waived responsibility for the affairs of the Gulf which were then again taken up by the India Office.<sup>3</sup>

The enforcement of the Bahrain Order-in-Council in 1919 (See Chapter Two for definition) enhanced the powers invested in the Political Agent and thus created a measure of tension between the Shaikh and the Agent. For sometime, the local Administration ceased to function adequately and as time went by the Shaikh's intransigence was reflected in his somewhat hostile attitude towards the Agency. Such was the seriousness of the situation that in March 1920 Major Dickson would have

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1 The Committee was named after its Chairman James Masterton-Smith. It was set up at the command of the Prime Minister in order to advise on the creation of a new department under the Colonial Office to deal with mandated and other territories in the Middle East. The Committee submitted its report on 31st January, 1921. I.O.R. L/P+S/11/193.

2 L. Oliphant to U.S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. E 2649/1644/91, 18.3.1922.

3 Persian Gulf: Political Control 1930-39. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1273.

preferred a show of force:

" ... the occasional presence of a warship in Bahrain harbour would do much to keep our prestige alive among a set of people who are only too apt to forget that the British Empire exists and does take interest in Bahrain affairs. Personally also I know my own work will be greatly facilitated if Shaikh Isa were to occasionally wake up and see a warship lying out in his harbour."<sup>1</sup>

The Agency demonstrated greater firmness in dealing with the affairs of Bahrain during the tenure of Major C.K. Daly who succeeded Dickson in early 1921. Daly took a couple of bold measures which were greatly to affect the Administration of Bahrain and eventually to induce a change in the Government of India's attitude towards the Shaikh. Nevertheless, his call for reform of the Administration was received by that Government with some caution, and it met active opposition on the part of the tribal elements in Bahrain who regarded the proposed changes as pro-Shi<sup>c</sup>ah and detrimental to their privileged position. It was at this stage that Ibn Saud seemed likely to be drawn into Bahrain affairs.<sup>2</sup> During the first half of 1923, a series of outrages were committed against Persians as a result of which the Foreign Office again intervened and in May of that year Shaikh Isa was retired involuntarily. The Administration was then reformed under the new regime of Shaikh Hamad and during this time the Agent's authority was much more pronounced and was exercised more actively. The official commentary bears this out:

1 Major H.R.P. Dickson to D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/71, No. 69-C, 13.3.1920.

2 Ibn Saud's formal relations with Britain were first shaped by the Treaty of Dārīn of 1915, which earned him and his successors after him, the recognition of the British Government and entitled him to British aid. After the conclusion of the Treaty, Ibn Saud appointed Abdul Aziz bin Hasan al-Qusaibi as his Agent in Bahrain, about whom Daly wrote: " ... he had the monopoly of the carrying trade between here (i.e. Bahrain) and <sup>c</sup>Ojair and owns a number of boats. The brothers Qusaibi, one of whom lives in Hasa, one here, and one in Bombay, have come into prominence only since the subsidy has been paid to Bin Saud ... There is little doubt that Khan Bahadur Abdul Aziz al-Qusaibi aspires to become recognized as Bin Saud's Consul here." Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 88-C, 23.5.1922.

"... conditions in Bahrain have stabilized themselves under the rule of Shaikh Hamad. But the rule has been substantially rule by the Political Agent."<sup>1</sup>

The modernization of the administration in Bahrain in the early 1920s culminated in changes of a secular nature and in greater British involvement in the domestic affairs of the country, developments which were viewed by other Shaikhs of the Gulf with considerable apprehension. Concerned over these repercussions of the Bahrain reforms, the Government of India sought to reassess the British position in Bahrain in 1927, and a more cautious approach was then adopted. In his assessment, the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India admitted that:

"Our present interference goes doubtless beyond what flows inevitably from our Treaties. But no Treaty could adequately cover it unless it were a Treaty extinguishing the Shaikh's sovereignty to a degree less than that possessed by an Indian Chief."<sup>2</sup>

The reforms of the 1920s certainly culminated in greater stability and harmony. During the 1930s, however, the country suffered from recession and from the effects of the collapse of the pearl-trade. The advent of oil saved the economy from what otherwise could have been complete breakdown. Royalties from oil provided the necessary funds for keeping the country going and for expanding public services. With the Civil List consuming roughly 40-50% of the State's Annual Income and this includes the Ruler's one-third share from oil royalties, the Ruling Family possessed more cash in the oil-era than the merchants of Bahrain, some of whom had been ruined by the failure of the pearling industry. This thesis will argue that the changes which the oil-industry brought about were more profound and lasting than those induced by the Administrative reforms of the 1920s.

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1 Memorandum, B. 396, op. cit.

2 Sir D. Bray, F.S.G.I.: Note on Reforms in Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/127, no number, 6.11.1927.

The 1930s also witnessed educational developments, greater communication and travel, and the forging of new links with the rest of the world after Bahrain had become an oil-exporting country. These together with other developments helped create greater political awareness among certain limited sections of the population.

The revival of the Persian claim to the sovereignty of Bahrain, in the 1920s, was a source of great discomfort for Shaikh Hamad and for Britain. Anglo-Persian relations were strained during the time of Reza Shah. There was a significant British presence in Southern Persia which, after the restoration of the authority of the central Government in Tehran, became a target for Persian nationalist sentiment. Between 1922 and 1928 Britain withdrew from the postal and quarantine services and withdrew her few remaining troops from Iranian soil. In January 1928 Britain and Iran were involved in negotiations whose object was to try and settle all outstanding issues including: the withdrawal of the naval bases from Henjam and Basidu, and the ownership of Bahrain.<sup>1</sup> From the start the Persian government rejected a British proposal to discuss Bahrain independently of any other issue and in exchange for abandoning their claim to Bahrain they asked for territorial compensation.

In June 1928, the Persian Gulf Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence met to examine the British position in the Gulf vis-à-vis the changed circumstances in Iran. The Committee saw no real harm in Persia assuming her proper share of responsibilities in the Gulf provided she did not allow some other Power to take the place of Britain.

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1 For a brief account of the Persian policy during the time of Reza Shah, see R.M. Burrell: Britain, Iran and the Persian Gulf: Some Aspects of the Situation in the 1920s and 1930s, p. 187 in D. Hopwood, edited: The Arabian Peninsula, op. cit. For the background to the British association with Henjam and Basidu, see pp. 165-69, of the above article.

None the less, Persian nationalism and Persia's membership in the League of Nations were viewed by the Committee as developments which were disadvantageous to Britain. The Committee's Report of October 1928 considered the upholding of British supremacy in the Gulf as more crucial, then, to the security of India and to British Imperial interests than ever before. The Persian oil-fields, Iraq's entry into the age of oil, and the arrival of air-power, were regarded as equally important interests. The Committee recommended the retention of sufficient presence in the area, and the establishment of military and civil air routes along the shores of the Gulf.

By 1930 the negotiations between Iran and Britain had reached a deadlock, and a year later a suggestion to declare Bahrain as a Protectorate was opposed by the Government of India lest it should upset the status quo in the Gulf. Bahrain's political status had been officially defined in 1928 as follows:

"The principality is an independent Arab State under the protection of His Majesty's Government, but not a British Protectorate."<sup>1</sup>

The air route agreement with Iran was signed in December 1928 and the service commenced in April 1929 but the route was transferred to the Arabian littoral after the expiry of that agreement on 31st May 1932. The negotiations between the two governments which had lasted from 1928 to 1932 failed to produce a general treaty settlement. In 1934 the British Government purchased adequate land at Bahrain for a combined naval and air base, and in April 1935 the British navy withdrew from both Henjam and Basidu to Jufair in Bahrain.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Memorandum, B. 396, op. cit.

2 For a detailed and comprehensive discussion of the Anglo-Persian relations at this time see: N.F. Kittner: Issues in Anglo-Persian Diplomatic Relations 1921-33, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1980-81, Chapters IV, V.

The controversy over Bahrain inevitably affected its relations with Iran. During the 1920s Tehran repeatedly accused the British Authorities in Bahrain of failing to provide adequate protection for the Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs there. Throughout the 1930s both Tehran and Bahrain were involved in 'tit for tat' measures and counter measures against each other's subjects then resident in their respective countries. The relations of Persians and Bahrainis, rather than the Anglo-Persian controversy itself, are treated briefly in the course of the thesis, and a section in Chapter Eight is devoted to those relations as they developed in the 1930s and were stabilized after 1937.

In Bahrain the War years 1939-45 were a period of hardships, of food shortages and of rationing, but they also saw the construction and expansion of State-financed services. It was during this period that the educational apparatus of Bahrain came under direct British supervision. Failure to acknowledge British participation in the Administration of Bahrain in this period would be an injustice to history and to the men who left their mark on it.

While this thesis was planned on chronological lines, it was recognized that some themes were better treated together and to help the reader there now follows a review of the contents of the separate chapters. Chapters II-IV deal with the crucial issue of the Administration of Bahrain, institutional and administrative reforms and the Government of India's changing attitude over questions of policy. More specifically, Chapter Two provides the background to the Administration in the years 1920-23, it considers the friction between the Shaikh and the Agent over the operation of the Bahrain Order-in-Council, Shaikh Abdullah's involvement in political affairs, the creation of the Manamah Municipality in mid-1919, and the difficulties which it encountered. In addition it considers Shaikh Isa's negative response to suggestions for reform, and tribal opposition to the proposed changes.

It also discusses, Foreign Office intervention in favour of a policy of reform, Najdi-Persian disturbances in early 1923, Shaikh Isa's enforced retirement and Ibn Saud's assurances from the Resident confirming the British Government's willingness to uphold Sunni control of the Administration.

Chapter Three discusses specific improvements carried out under the Administration of Shaikh Hamad, viz. the drawing up of the Civil List, the reform of the Customs, and the institution of Shaikh Hamad's Court. Thereafter, the discussion centres upon the politics of reform and this includes the resistance shown by the tribal elements, and the acts of violence committed against the Baharnah who supported the introduction of the reforms, in addition to Shaikh Isa's memorial to the Government of India in which he demanded his restoration to the Rulership. The tribal Congress of October 1923, the Dowasir exodus from Bahrain, the trial of the Khalids and the creation of the Levies bring this Chapter to a close.

The background to the years 1924-29 is set forth in Chapter Four. This covers the disbandment of the Levies in 1926, a survey of towns and villages, and the creation of new Government Departments such as Land Registration and Waqfs. The Government of India's concern over the implications of the reforms for other Shaikhs of the Gulf, a re-examination of the British position in Bahrain, and the achievements of the reforms as seen by the Political Authorities in the Gulf, are topics treated in some detail. After Daly's departure from Bahrain at the end of 1926, Shaikh Hamad's involvement in political affairs increased, and this is reflected in his relations with the Resident which culminated in the return of the Dowasir to Bahrain and in his decision to commute the sentences of the political offenders.

In Chapter Five the affairs of the Pearling Industry of Bahrain are analysed systematically, pearling reforms and the fortunes of the

industry are treated in considerable detail. The development of education in Bahrain and the political background to that service form the contents of Chapter Six; agriculture, oil and Bahrain's trade and finances are treated in Chapter Seven. In the tables provided in this Chapter, the order of numbers is given in the system of crores and lakhs e.g. 1,03,650 not 103,650, i.e. One lakh three thousand and six hundred and fifty rupees. The political background to the years 1930-45 is investigated in Chapter Eight, and this includes the Baharnah grievances of 1934 which centred upon inadequacies in the Court system, a lack of schools, and the absence of representation on certain Councils. The cool reaction of the Authorities to those complaints is also included in the discussion. With the development of the oil industry in the 1930s and the expansion in education and general communication, greater co-operation between the two religious sects of Bahrain gradually came about and this manifested itself in their joint demands of 1938. The restrictions on food supplies and the introduction of rationing during the Second World War are also treated here. A concluding Chapter then endeavours to draw together the main themes of the thesis and to offer an overview of the many changes which affected Bahrain during the period.

As was noted earlier this thesis relies heavily on archives of the India Office Library and Records. These contain, inter alia, the voluminous correspondence exchanged between officials in London, Delhi, Bushire and Bahrain. More specifically, they include the correspondence between the Foreign Secretary - the Government of India, the Resident and the Agent in Bahrain. The latter officials represented the British Political Authorities in the Gulf. These primary sources cover virtually all of the affairs of Bahrain in the period under consideration. The series: Political and Secret contains much of the correspondence between various Authorities, and also includes a large number of useful Memoranda on a variety of topics related to Bahrain. Of direct relevance to this study are the files: I.O.R. L/P+S/18, L/P+S/10/1039, 1041, 1042, 1044, 1045.

Of particular interest are the Annual Administration Reports of the Political Agency, Bahrain. These provide a detailed and comprehensive summary of the Administration's activities during a given year, information on contacts made with Ibn Saud, the Shaikh of Qatar and the Chiefs of the Trucial Coast.<sup>1</sup> The Resident's correspondence with the British Consuls in Shiraz, Bandar Abbas and Lingah occasionally touch on subjects of relevance to Bahrain such as: smuggling of provisions from the Arab to the Persian littoral, press-cuttings from Shirazi papers which discuss the affairs of Bahrain, the state of the Baharnah community in Lingah, etc. The Legal Records of the Bahrain Agency Courts (R 15/3/-) are another source of information but these have less direct bearing on the issues discussed in this study. The Agency files contain the Ruler's Correspondence with the Agent, the Adviser's Annual Reports on the Administration, Annual Reports of the Agency, Customs Files plus Director of Customs Annual Reports, Budgetary Affairs, and also a host of documents which provide information on Influential Individuals, the Baharnah of Qatif, extracts from the Arab and Persian Press, Intelligence Reports and German propaganda pamphlets of the early 1920s published by the Kaveh Press, Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

In citations of archival material, the following order has been followed throughout the thesis:

"Major Daly to Col. F.B. Prideaux. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 20-S, 5.8.1925."

This indicates that the communication was between the Political Agent and the Resident, and that it is a letter or a memorandum kept in India Office

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1 The Agency Reports also contain the following regular headings: Ruler of Bahrain and the AlKhalifah Family, Local Affairs, The Bahrain Police Force, Artesian Wells, Agriculture, Customs Revenues, Municipalities, Public Works, Education, Trade, Post Office, Medical, The Bahrain Petroleum Company, and the activities of the American Missionaries in Bahrain.

2 P. Tuson's: The Records of the British Residency and Agencies in the Persian Gulf (London, 1978) is an invaluable guide to India Office Records.

File number 15/2/127. 20-S is the original number of the document cited, followed by the date on which it was written. Telegrams exchanged between either of these Authorities and the Government of India are cited as 'telegram' in order to show the urgency of the message.

Note that 'Consul' and 'Baliose' are occasionally employed by the local people in petitions, etc., to refer to the Political Agent; 'Consul General' and even Ra'īs al-Khalīj "Head man of the Gulf", are references to His Majesty's Political Resident in the Gulf.

As regards the Foreign Office material, the series F.O. 371, volumes 8947, 18920 together with F.O. letters preserved in the I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, L/P+S/10/1041, L/P+S/10/1045, I.O.R. 15/2/150 were consulted. Any study which does not diversify its sources of information is liable to be judged as one-sided. Fortunately, the Political Agency Files furnish us with petitions, letters, memorials, cables, and even press cuttings which shed light on the differing views of the Rulers and their subjects on a variety of issues. Normally, every document which was originally written in Arabic carries an English translation in the same file. Such petitions and letters of protest can be found in the Agency Files: I.O.R. 15/2/12, 15/2/73, 15/2/88, 15/2/121, and 15/1/319.

Also of interest are two personal accounts of Bahrain, one by the Egyptian Ḥāfiẓ Wahbah: Khamsūna ʿĀman fī Jazīrat al-ʿArab (Cairo, 1960) "Fifty Years in Arabia", pp. 14-20. Wahbah was headmaster of al-Hidāyah School in Bahrain and a member of the Education Committee in the period 1920-21. The other is by Amīn Rihāni: Mulūk al-ʿArab (Beirut, 1925), Vol. Two, pp. 179-249. Rihāni, a well known writer, traveller and lecturer, visited the islands during the first half of 1923 and met Shaikh Isa in his Majlis in Moharraḡ. He was shown the Literary Club there and was greatly impressed by the activities of its members especially its President, Shaikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Khalifah and

Abdullah al-Zāyēd, writer and journalist who in 1939 founded and edited the al-Bahrain newspaper. (Some material from the educational column of that journal has been used in Chapter Six on Education.) Both Rihāni and Wahbah provided us with commentaries on the general history of Bahrain and especially on Shaikh Isa's differences with the Political Agent in the early 1920s. Wahbah's account, however, shows traces of his argument with Major Daly - the current Agent - who believed that the articles published by the Egyptian paper Al-Akhbar which were critical of him, were the work of Wahbah, and the latter was refused re-entry into Bahrain in 1922 when he returned suddenly from Kuwait by sea.

Yusuf al-Falaki's (Pseudonym): Qadiyat al-Bahrain, "The Case of Bahrain", is a clandestine work about Bahrain which was probably published in Beirut in the mid-1950s. Pages 11-15 contain some useful background information about the rivalries between the leading families of the Baharnah Arabs at the time of the Khalifi conquest of Bahrain in 1783 and the struggle put up by them, an aspect of the history of Bahrain not discussed in most other published works.

It should be noted that the actual texts of the letters and petitions submitted to the Government of India by Shaikh Isa, the tribal elements or the Shaikh's Shi<sup>c</sup>ah subjects are preserved in the India Office Files, and they provide a much more extensive and reliable source of information about Bahrain than do the above accounts.

Charles Belgrave's: Personal Column, is another book closely related to the period under study. Its importance lies in the fact that Belgrave served as financial Adviser, first to Shaikh Hamad from 1926-42, and continued thereafter in the same capacity to serve his son, Shaikh Salman, from 1942-57. The book is an account of his personal experience of Bahrain and, therefore, is essential background reading. However, Belgrave's correspondence with the Political Agent, which include his regular reports, are far more detailed and are available in

the India Office Files. Some of Belgrave's personal papers were later deposited at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge, but these are not currently available as they are being used by a member of the family who is writing a biography of Charles Belgrave.

Also of less direct relevance are the following articles by Belgrave published in the Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, J.R.C.A.S.:

- (1) Bahrain, J.R.C.A.S. 1928, pp. 440-45.
- (2) Pearl Diving in Bahrain, J.R.C.A.S. 1934, Vol. 21, pp. 450-52.
- (3) The Persian Gulf - Past and Present, J.R.C.A.S. 1968, Vol. 55, pp. 28-34.

Whereas several previous theses covered a larger period in the modern history of Bahrain, the present one limits its scope to 1920-45. This has made it possible to attempt a fuller treatment of the main topics in the history of the period. Apart from questions of scope and detail, there are some other features which set this study apart from others:

(a) Administrative reforms are treated here as a crucial and central theme of the 1920s. It is shown that the policy of reform was forced upon the Government of India by the Foreign Office whose officials in the area sought to improve relations with Tehran in the wake of the Persian allegations of ill-treatment of Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs in Bahrain with British connivance. Also, reforms meant different things to different communities. To the foreign community of Bahrain, especially the Indians engaged in inter-regional trade, reforms meant the introduction of an organized government, better public services, and a more secure base for the islands' commercial links with British India. To the Baharnah, reforms meant their liberation from tribal overlordship. To the Sunni tribal element reforms had to be resisted since their aim was to limit their powers and to treat them, for the first time, on a basis of equality with the rest of the population. For the ruling family reform meant innovation and a reduction in their traditional powers - and this was obviously undesirable.

(b) Previous works give scant account of Shaikh Abdullah's involvement with the Administration, his ambition to succeed his father, and his resistance to the new Administration of Shaikh Hamad - this is covered in detail in Chapters II and III.

(c) The Saudi influence, as exercised by the Najdi element in Bahrain in the early 1920s, was quite significant. The theses of Rumaihi and Khuri (see below) fail to mention the correspondence between Ibn Saud and Colonel Knox, acting Resident, especially those exchanged after the retirement of Shaikh Isa in May 1923, and the assurances conveyed to the effect that the British Government intended to bolster the rule of Al Khalifah and to ensure the continuation of Sunni domination over the Administration of Bahrain.

(d) The Government of India's action against Shaikh Isa generated resentment on the part of the Shaikh, his family and supporters. Their protests were voiced in a series of petitions, memorials, and even articles in journals in the period 1923-24. These protests have received little or no attention from previous writers.

(e) The planning and execution of reforms brought the Agent to the heart of the Shaikh's Administration. Greater British involvement in the affairs of the Administration created a new situation and this prompted a review of the reforms in 1927. The findings and the recommendations which resulted have received little attention in previous works and they are treated in considerable detail in Chapter Four.

(f) Pearlman in this study is examined much more systematically and with greater use of statistical data than in previous works.

(g) The discussion of educational affairs is also based, here, on a close review of archival material. The emphasis is laid on the politics of education rather than the mere survey of facts and figures of Primary, Intermediate and Secondary Education. Also dealt with in this respect are the sectarian prejudices of the early 1920s, the British developmental contribution in the years 1939-45, including the important

role of the British Council.

(h) In addition this thesis surveys the trade and finances of Bahrain and includes a review of the total value of the trade of Bahrain - imports and exports, Customs revenue derived from all sources, the total value of cargo trans-shipped at Bahrain for the mainland, and the annual budget estimates.

This introduction will conclude with a brief review and evaluation of the theses which have been written on the modern history of Bahrain.

Part Two of F.I. Qubain's Doctoral Thesis: The Impact of the Petroleum Industry on Iraq and Bahrain (University of Wisconsin, 1956) is concerned entirely with Bahrain. The opening chapters furnish general information about the geography, traditional economy, history and the population of Bahrain. The rest of the study is devoted to Bahrain's oil industry and its impact upon the people and the country particularly after the Second World War. For his data, Qubain relies mainly on the official publications of the Bahrain Petroleum Company, the Arabian American Oil Company, and on the Annual Reports of the Government of Bahrain. The thesis also contains information obtained by the writer personally, some of it by direct correspondence with the Company officials. The statistical data covers a wide range of topics pertaining to the oil industry and to the volume of trade between Bahrain, the United Kingdom and the United States, and a table on Cost of Living Survey Data for Bahraini Employees, June 1951, etc. However, Qubain does not use archival material of the India Office Library and therefore does not mention the strike of 1938 by the Bahraini work force of the Company and the issues which arose from that event.

R.E. Littlefield's M.A. Dissertation: Bahrain as a Persian Gulf State - With Reference to Its Relations with Great Britain and the Province of Al-Hasa (The American University of Beirut - A.U.B. - 1964) deals with the modern history of Bahrain beginning with post-World War One period. It contains an account of the Shaikh's government, the

power invested in the British Political Authorities, the abusive treatment of the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Arabs, the Anglo-Iranian controversy over the Sovereignty of Bahrain, and the development of the national movement in the early 1950s. While it is a sound study like the preceding one it makes little or no use of primary archival sources contemporary to the period studied.

A.Y. Al-Hamar's M.A. Dissertation: An Analytical Study of the System of Education in Bahrain 1940-65 (A.U.B., 1968), examines the development of the Primary, Intermediate and Secondary levels of education and this includes their corresponding curricula. Much of the information provided is based on official publications, Education reports, and the writer's own questionnaires and statistics, in addition to his personal experience in the field, which makes it a useful study.

Together with an earlier account by R.B. Winder: Education in Bahrain: From the Earliest Times to 1956 (Beirut, 1959), which traces the history of education there, including the earliest American Missionary Schools, these two works represent the first systematic approaches to the subject.

T.T. Farah wrote two studies of Bahrain, one of which is an M.A. Dissertation entitled: The Question of the Transfer of the British Residency (A.U.B., 1970) from Bushire to Bahrain. After a brief account of the history of Bahrain and the British connection with the Gulf, he deals with the transfer of the Residency and with the views of the various authorities involved in the decision-making process. He attributes both the transfer of the Imperial Air Route to the Arab Coast and of the Residency to Persian political pressure. However, he erroneously gives 1931 as the date on which the Route was transferred (Ibid., p. 113), though the correct date is, after the expiry of the Air Route Agreement with Iran on 31st May 1932. On the other hand, the transfer of the naval base from Iran to Bahrain took place in 1935. The decision to transfer the Residency was taken in 1936 but was not actually implemented

until 1946, largely because of the outbreak of the Second World War. Farah's dissertation draws its material from the documents of both the Foreign and India Office archives.

His doctoral thesis: Protection and Politice in Bahrain 1869-1915 (The University of London, 1979) was not available for consultation because of the restriction placed on it by the author. It is, however, concerned with an earlier period in the history of Bahrain, which ends before the present study begins.

M.G. Rumaihi's: Bahrain: Social and Political Change Since the First World War (Durham, 1976), examines aspects of the history of Bahrain in the post-World War One period up to the early 1970s. Rumaihi's study is, in many respects, sound and detailed and derives its data from the archives of the India Office Library. Areas in which the present study departs from those treated by Rumaihi have already been mentioned on the preceding pages. It remains to be said here that his statement as to the lack of information on the origins of the Baharnah (Part I, The People, p. 26) ought to be reconsidered since adequate information based on old Arab sources has come to light in recent years.<sup>1</sup>

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1 In his doctoral thesis Qubain states (Part II, page 286, op. cit.): " ... the Shi<sup>c</sup>is are all Baharnah. There is no agreement as to the ethnic origin of these people; however, they now speak Arabic and are regarded as Arabs." According to old Arab sources, the region of al-Bahrain including the island of Awāl, i.e. Bahrain, was largely peopled by <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Qais tribes, who controlled the entire region in pre- and early Islamic times. These sources mention place-names on the islands of Bahrain which were then inhabited by <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Qais and are presently peopled by the Baharnah Arabs who descended from <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Qais. Moreover these sources adduce strong evidence as to their Arab origins. On the other hand, J.G. Lorimer's broad statement which dates the emergence of Shi<sup>c</sup>ism in Bahrain back to the Safavid rule in Persia (1501-1732) is misleading (Gazetteer ..., Geographical and Statistical, Part IIA, p. 208, op. cit.). Arab sources trace Shi<sup>c</sup>ism in the region to the time of <sup>c</sup>Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, the fourth of the rightly-guided Caliphs. They mention <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Qais among his earlier supporters, Awāl island being their stronghold. They reveal that a large number of <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Qais personalities fought on his side in the battle of al-Jamal in 656 A.D., and in the battle of Siffin shortly afterwards. In the wake of the tribal conquest of Bahrain in 1783, the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Arabs there were persecuted on the pretext of their alleged non-conformity to Orthodox Islam. See my: Language and Linguistic Origins in Bahrain: The Baharnah Dialect of Arabic (1982), London.

F.I. Khuri's: Tribe and State in Bahrain (The University of Chicago, 1980) is according to the author an analysis of the transformation of authority from tribal rule to modern government. According to Khuri both British rule and the oil industry were responsible for shaping modern Bahrain. There is much in this study which merits attention such as the discussion of religious matters hitherto left almost untouched by authors who wrote about Bahrain, perhaps owing to the sensitivity of the topic. Nevertheless, this study falls short in certain respects: it does not provide adequate information about the issues related to the reforms carried out in Bahrain, viz. the role of the Foreign Office or the attitude of the Government of India towards the reforms and still less about the period of maladministration which endured until May 1923. From the start the author divides the population of Bahrain into tribal overlords and 'the peasantry', i.e. the Baharnah Arabs. Both Rumaihi and Belgrave state, with justification, that the Sunni tribes deprived the native Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Arabs of their lands after they had conquered Bahrain in 1783 (See, Political and Social Change ..., p. 25, op. cit. Also, C. Belgrave, Personal Column, p. 55). Khuri tends to play down this matter despite the abundance of archival material to support the case. As a matter of fact the 'peasants' were the original landowners whose conversion into tenant-cultivators came about as a result of deliberate policies of the Rulers in the period which preceded the reforms of 1923.

While Tribe and State in Bahrain contains much sound information, it also embodies a number of questionable generalisations. We are told (pp. 8-9) that: "Shi<sup>C</sup>a jurists rose to power not only as legal experts -- functionaries of tribal government -- but also as political leaders challenging the legitimacy of tribal rule". This statement contains an

element of truth, but it should not mislead us into believing that all the Baharnah leaders were either Qaḍis or jurists. It is generally recognized that Shi<sup>ḥ</sup>ah Qaḍis play a more active role in the affairs of their community than do their Sunni counterparts. None the less, a glance at the names of the Baharnah leaders in the period 1920-45 reveals that among their ranks were pearl-merchants, leading personalities from the villages, landowners, founders of Mātams (places where the Shi<sup>ḥ</sup>ah assemble especially during the months of Moḥarram and Ṣafar to mourn their martyred Imams), all of these people wielded some degree of influence among their followers in Manamah or in the villages. This is not to play down the high esteem in which Shi<sup>ḥ</sup>ahs held their Qaḍis nor to minimize the extent of their influence over the community, but it should not be assumed that the Qaḍis were the only source of leadership among the Baharnah.

The statement of Khuri, that Major Dickson (p. 89): "... sought to introduce reforms through the civil courts, municipal organizations, schools, and other modernizing institutions", requires some modification. Dickson had charge of the Agency in Bahrain from 6th November 1919 to 28th November 1920, i.e. he served as P.A. for just over one year. Except for the Agency Courts, Dickson did not involve himself with judicial reforms at all. The earliest attempt at such reform was made by Major Daly in July 1923 when Shaikh Hamad's Court was instituted and modelled after the Joint Court (see Chapter Three). As regards "municipal organizations" there were none during Dickson's time apart from the Manamah Municipality which was established in July 1920, five months prior to Dickson's departure from Bahrain and sanctioned by Shaikh Isa after sustained opposition. During Dickson's tenure of the Agency the Municipality was plagued by mismanagement and he spent much of his time trying to remedy its ills. The appointment of Shaikh Hamad as President of the Municipal Council in June 1921 marked the real start

of the municipal reforms.

As regards "schools", there was only Al-Hidāyah School started in the last quarter of 1919, and managed by a local committee, headed by Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifah. The Agent distanced himself from the affairs of this school because at this stage it was financed by private donations from the Sunni community of Bahrain. Finally, concerning "other modernizing institutions" this author knows no other such institutions which existed during Dickson's term of office.

On page 92 of Khuri's book, we are told that the appointment of "Mohammad al-Sharif" to the Municipality " ... marked the mobilization of the Shi<sup>c</sup>a ... against tribal power". There is an element of exaggeration in this statement, as the Agent's account of Sharif, and not al-Sharif, runs contrary to the assumption made by Khuri:

"Muhammad Sharif's detractors say that he encouraged the Bahrainis (i.e. the Baharnah) which however is quite untrue. He is a Sunni and has no sympathy with them. On more than one occasion I had to find fault with him for taking a high hand and forbidding them to come to the Agency."<sup>1</sup>

There are other aspects of Khuri's work too which require some degree of modification and these will be noted in the course of the relevant chapters.

The author of this thesis is aware that it too may well be challenged by later research, but it represents an attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of Bahrain's history - political, economic and social - during those crucial decades when it began, with much difficulty and some reluctance, to abandon its medieval appearance and to enter into an era of unprecedented change. Modernization came in several forms and as a result of a multiplicity of factors, the author hopes the following chapters will provide a useful and thorough examination of the many processes which were at work.

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<sup>1</sup> Daly: Note on Muhammad Sharif. I.O.R. 15/2/102, 12.6.1924. Muhammad Sharif Awazi became secretary of the Municipality shortly after the appointment of Shaikh Hamad as President of the same in 1921.

Chapter Two

Bahrain 1919 - June 1923

Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifah and the Administration

Until June 1921, Shaikh Abdullah, as the entrusted agent of his father, had discharged various official duties, and in the process had gained ample experience in the affairs of the Administration. Besides, he wielded considerable influence over two of the oldest villages in Bahrain: Jid Hafṣ and Sanābis, peopled exclusively by the native Baharnah.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly before World War One British warships en route to Mesopotamia anchored in Bahrain, and Abdullah assisted in arrangements for the landing of the Expeditionary Force.<sup>2</sup> In appreciation of his services and "possibly with a view to supplant his elder brother Hamad as Heir Apparent", Abdullah was invested with a C.I.E. in 1915.<sup>3</sup>

Shaikh Abdullah was keen on visiting England, and in 1919 he was invited there by His Majesty's Government. Accompanied by his son Shaikh Mohammad, his secretary Jasim Mohammad Chirawi and the then Agent Captain N.N.E. Bray, Abdullah proceeded to England on 6th June of that year.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of the visit was to convey to His Majesty the congratulations of Shaikh Isa on the successful outcome of the War.<sup>5</sup> On the 1st of August he was granted an audience with His Majesty the King, and a month later on 1st September he was interviewed by Sir Arthur Hirtzel, Assistant-Secretary of State - India Office, at Abdullah's request.

- 1 Abdullah's Wazir in the area was: Abdullah bin Raḍi, from Jid Hafṣ described by the Agent as a man of questionable integrity. See Major Daly to Col. Trevor, I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 1-G, 3.1.1922.
- 2 Report by Major Daly: Bahrain: Shaikh Isa bin Ali - Opposition to Reform, I.O.R. 15.2.73, April 1924.
- 3 Col. Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 24-S, 6.1.1922.
- 4 Telegram from Political-Baghdad to Political-Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/72, No. 8307, 31.7.1919.
- 5 J.G. Laithwaite: Memorandum on Bahrain 1908-1928. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1041, No. B. 396, 8.10.1928.

Acting on behalf of his father, Shaikh Isa, Abdullah communicated certain requests to the British Government, without the knowledge of the accompanying Agent. Hirtzel made a note of them and asked Abdullah to submit the requests in writing.<sup>1</sup> On September 4th, 1919 Abdullah embodied them in a Memorandum which he signed: "Abdullah bin Isa - The Successor".<sup>2</sup> The three requests originally recorded by Hirtzel were as follows:

- "(1) The Shaikh of Bahrain wished to be placed on an equality with other neighbouring Shaikhs. Asked for an example of inequality he referred to British jurisdiction over Arabs other than subjects of Bahrain, and to occasional intervention of the Political Agent to protect even Bahrainis.
- (2) He wished to be allowed to nominate the Bahraini members of the Majlis (i.e. Majlis al-<sup>c</sup>Urf) without any interference on the part of the Political Agent. He allowed the foreign members to be nominated by the P.A., which was in itself a derogation from his rights, but he thought he ought to be left alone in the choice of his own subjects.
- (3) Bin Saud is going to develop port of Ojair (where he levies Customs Duties at 8%), and Shaikh Isa wishes to develop the port of Zubarah on the Qatar peninsula, which he claims once belonged to Bahrain."<sup>3</sup>

A fourth request, added to the Memorandum, read:

- "(4) My father hopes he may correspond with the Seat of Government in London, should necessity arise ..."<sup>4</sup>

1 Note by Sir Arthur Hirtzel, I.O.R. 15/1/319, 1.9.1919.

2 Memorandum from Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa. I.O.R. 15/1/319, 4.9.1919. Commenting on Shaikh Abdullah's above visit to England, the Agent wrote: "He failed to deliver to His Majesty a letter from ... Hamad, the Heir Apparent, and the latter was not unnaturally chagrined as he had been neglected and was not asked to go to England". Daly's Report of April 1924, op. cit. It is worth noting here that in May 1925 the British Government invited both Shaikhs Hamad and Abdullah to visit England where they were accorded an audience by His Majesty, the King. A.R.P.A. 1925. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

3 Note by Hirtzel, op. cit.

4 Memorandum from Shaikh Abdullah, op. cit.

In his communication, Shaikh Abdullah was careful to stress his father's desire to be left in full control of the internal affairs of his Administration.

On October 27th, 1919 Shaikh Abdullah arrived back in Bahrain via Egypt, where he had a brief stay, and thereafter engaged himself in plans for the setting up of a modern school in Muharraq, then the Al Khalifah's place of residence. Abdullah's authority now was considerably greater than that of Shaikh Hamad the Heir Apparent.<sup>1</sup>

### The Ruler, the Agent, and the Rulings of the Bahrain Order-in-Council

#### 1 Jurisdiction over subjects of Arab Rulers

The Bahrain Order-in-Council<sup>2</sup> was initially introduced in August 1913, but owing to the outbreak of World War One, it was suspended until February 1919 when it was reintroduced, and was subjected thereafter to a number of Amendments carried out over the years. The Order was authorised by the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts of 1890-1913, and its purpose was to bestow legal powers upon His Majesty's representatives in the Gulf, to enable them to exercise extra-territorial jurisdiction over British subjects and dependents, and over those foreigners who were entitled to British jurisdiction, and also over Bahrain subjects in the employ of British subjects or foreigners.

Before the issue of the Order, Political Agents in Bahrain exercised legal rights over British Indians and foreigners, as indicated by the

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1 A.R.P.A. 1919. I.O.R. 15/2/951. A notable arrangement for Abdullah's return to Bahrain was the request by Shaikha <sup>c</sup>Aisha - his mother - that all houses of Bahrain be decorated with red and green flags for six days in his honour. Ibid.

2 To one writer, the Order conferred upon the Resident excessive powers normally invested in a Colonial Governor:  
 " ... Bahrain Order-in-Council, which in effect, defined Bahrain's status as that of a British Colony, with the Chief Political Resident - Persian Gulf having much the same powers over Bahrain as a Colonial Governor". J. Marlowe: The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century, p. 40.

commentary below:

"Successive Political Agents have for ten years past been exercising magisterial and judicial functions, which are not authorised by any law, and by doing so have established fairly definite customs and usages. The Order in Council is intended to put such a usage, or rather as much of it as convenient, on a legal basis ... and in fact section 82 says that the Political Resident or an officer subordinate to him can force 'the observance of any reasonable custom existing in Bahrein unless this Order contains some express and specific provision incompatible with the observance thereof'."<sup>1</sup>

After the introduction of the Order, three main Courts were created by the Agency in Bahrain: the District Court, the Joint Court, and the Sessions Court.<sup>2</sup> Cases of appeal from the Agency Courts were made to the Chief Court at the Residency in Bushire. Also, the Order recognised and defined local institutions such as Majlis al-<sup>c</sup>Urf, the Salifah Court, and the Shara<sup>c</sup> Qadi. The Order entitled the Agent to certain rights over the affairs of these institutions, rights which were previously exercised by the Ruler, to the exclusion of the Agent. More specifically, it empowered the Agent to select half the members of the Majlis al-<sup>c</sup>Urf; to accept or reject any of the Shaikh's nominees; and to sanction the appointment of the Shara<sup>c</sup> Qadi and the Salifah judge. The new regulations, which aimed at ensuring fair play, were nonetheless an encroachment on the Shaikh's customary rights. They gave rise to serious disagreement between the Shaikh and the Agent, in the following areas:

- (a) Jurisdiction over dependents of certain local Arab Shaikhs.
- (b) Majlis al-<sup>c</sup>Urf.
- (c) The Salifah Court.

On the following pages we intend to discuss the first two items above, leaving the last one to the Chapter on the Diving Industry of Bahrain.

The reduction of the Shaikh's power, as a result of the Order was

1 Major A.P. Trevor to P.A., Bahrain, I.O.R. 15/1/299, 5.5. 1915.

2 Also, see Chapter Three, under: The Administration of Justice.

resented by him, his family and his tribal allies. To the British Political Authorities, the Order provided safeguards against abuse of authority. However, its enactment in February 1919, coming after President Wilson's declarations of 1918, dispelled any local hopes of independence which those declarations had aroused among the small nations of the Middle East.

As of July 1909, Shaikh Isa had agreed to concede judicial power over foreigners in Bahrain to the Agent. To this effect he wrote:

"It is not hidden from you that I have had considerable trouble in many cases (that arose) in my territory in which foreigners were involved. For this reason, I wish that I may not be held responsible in these cases and I would be grateful to the British Government if they remove this trouble and responsibility from me. I mean that it (the British Government) should pass orders in all cases in which the foreigners only are concerned, but not in other cases. And in cases that occur between foreigners and my subjects, it is necessary that you and I should settle them jointly."<sup>1</sup>

Later on, Shaikh Isa explained that the above concession was not meant to include the dependents of local Arab Shaikhs with whom he had reciprocal judicial arrangements.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the occupation of Hasa by Ibn Saud in May 1913, Najdis, Hasawis, Qatifis in Bahrain were subject to the Political Agent's jurisdiction. After May 1913, Ibn Saud regarded them as his subjects and delegated authority over them to Shaikh Isa. When the Bahrain Order was introduced in August 1913, the Agent insisted that these Arabs were Turkish subjects, i.e. foreigners and therefore entitled to British Protection.<sup>3</sup> Meantime, Shaikh Isa presented a letter to the Agent in which Ibn Saud had authorised the Shaikh to exercise judicial rights over them. The letter read:

1 Translation of a letter dated 16th July 1909 from Shaikh Easa bin Ali Alkhalifah to Captain C.F. Mackenzie, P.A., Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/6, File No. A/9, p. 64.

2 No. B-422 of March 1930, pp. 2-3, op. cit.

3 Major Trevor - P.A. to Col. Sir P. Cox - P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 556, 9.9.1913.

"I (i.e. Ibn Saud) have informed all my subjects residing in Bahrain and merchants of Najd, Hasa and Qatif that in all disputes between them they must make reference to your honour; and your son (i.e. Ibn Saud) hopes from you that you will keep an eye upon them and that their cases be settled at your hands according to the Orders of God and His Prophet."<sup>1</sup>

At this point, the Resident, who did not anticipate any serious difficulties, advised the Government to avoid any definite ruling in the matter.<sup>2</sup> As the fate of the above Arabs remained undecided, Shaikh Isa on a number of occasions infringed the status quo by exercising judicial authority over them, regardless of the Agent's objections.<sup>3</sup> By the end of May 1914 the Resident informed the Shaikh that Hasawis, Qatifis, Najdis and Qataris were British Protected persons, subject to the Political Agent's jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly afterwards, in a letter to the Resident, Shaikh Isa voiced his concern over his own position as Independent Chief of Bahrain, adding that loss of a deputed right, a reference to Ibn Saud's authorisation to him, was detrimental to his prestige and to the reputation of his Government.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the War period, by informal arrangement, Shaikh Isa was allowed jurisdiction over the above Arabs.<sup>6</sup> From mid-April 1920, the situation was clarified, with Ibn Saud agreeing, after consultations with the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad, to submit his subjects to the Political Agent's jurisdiction.<sup>7</sup> Also, in August of that year, a similar

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- 1 Translation of a letter dated 9th Sha'ban 1331 (14.7.1913) from Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdur Rahman Al-Faisal to Shaikh Isa, Ruler of Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/1/319.
  - 2 Sir P. Cox to Mr. J.B. Wood, Officiating Secretary to the G. of I. in the Foreign Department, Simla. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 3011, 3.10.1913.
  - 3 Trevor to Shaikh Isa. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 525, 11.5.1914. Also, translation of a letter from Shaikh Isa to Major Trevor, P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/319, 19th Jamadi II 1332 (15.5.1914).
  - 4 Major S.G. Knox, P.R., to Shaikh Isa. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 266, 28.5.1914.
  - 5 Translation of a letter from Shaikh Isa to Major Knox. I.O.R. 15/1/319, 17th Ramadan 1332 (10.8.1914).
  - 6 Major Dickson to D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/12, No. 9-C, 17.1.1920.
  - 7 For Ibn Saud's authorisation to the Agent see: Telegram from the Civil Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department. I.O.R. 15/2/12, No. 4601, 15.4.1920.

arrangement was made whereby Shaikh Abdullah bin Jasim Al-Thani of Qatar requested the Agent in Bahrain to exercise judicial authority over Qataris.<sup>1</sup> Following these arrangements, Major Dickson issued a Notice to the Public to the effect that:

"In accordance with the Government of India's letter ... it is hereby notified that all foreign subjects, including Persians and subjects of Arab Rulers and Chiefs, other than those of Bahrain are while residing in Bahrain, entitled to the protection of His Britannic Majesty's Government and their cases and complaints are subject to the jurisdiction of His Britannic Majesty's Political Agent as has been the case for many years."<sup>2</sup>

To avoid any ambiguities, Dickson specified the nationals of Arab Rulers entitled to his jurisdiction. When he sent a copy of the above Notice to the Amir of Manamah for promulgation to the public, the latter suppressed it on the Shaikh's instructions.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 The Disagreement over the Majlis al-Urf

When the Majlis al-Urf met on 2nd April 1919, the Agent noticed that Shaikh Isa had effected changes in respect of the Arab members of the Majlis without consulting him, as the Order stipulated. Shaikh Isa had removed an old member, viz. Haji Ahmad Ali Yateem<sup>4</sup> from the membership of

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1 Translation of a letter dated 5th Zi l-Qa<sup>c</sup>dah 1338 (22.7.1920) from H.E. Shaikh Abdullah bin Jasim Al-Thani, Ruler of Qatar, to Major Dickson. I.O.R. 15/2/12, No. 229-C, 7.8.1920.

2 Notice to the Public from Major Dickson, I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 391, 26.11.1920.

3 Letter from K.S. Siddiq Hasan, Indian Assistant, to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 476-C, 6.12.1920.

4 Note that Yateem was a member of the Majlis since Captain Prideaux's time, P.A. Bahrain, Oct. 1904 - May 1909, when the Majlis used to meet in the Agency building. In a letter to Capt. Bray, Shaikh Isa claimed that Yateem resigned his membership; but when the Agent wrote to him enquiring about his absence from the meeting of 2.4.1919, Yateem did not confirm his resignation but simply noted that he had not been invited - i.e. by the Shaikh - to the Majlis since its meetings were shifted to the Custom House. Vide, translation of a letter from Shaikh Isa to Capt. Bray, P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/12, 12.6.1919. Also, see Yateem's letter to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/12, 6.7.1919.

the Majlis and appointed instead: Haji Abd Ali bin Rajab, without notifying the Political Agent. The Shaikh's action was regarded by the Agent as one-sided and therefore in breach of the Rulings of the Order.<sup>1</sup> By replacing one of his Arab nominees with another, Shaikh Isa was asserting his customary rights, without the Political Agent's intervention. His other objective was to put the Rulings of the Order, enforced recently in February 1919, to test and to sound out the Government of India's attitude thereon.

The established procedure governing the Shaikh's appointment of members was described by A.P. Trevor, who served as Political Agent Bahrain from November 1912 to May 1914, as follows:

"It has hitherto always been recognized that the Arab representatives in the Majlis are appointed by the Shaikh, subject to the approval of the Political Agent as representative of the Protecting Power ...

The Political Agent would never disapprove of any suitable man, and the Shaikh has only to refrain from appointing thoroughly objectionable persons."<sup>2</sup>

On 5th June 1919 the Agent wrote to the Shaikh disapproving of his action and stating that

"... any alteration required should be brought about by agreement and in writing ... and that at present this Court cannot carry out its duties ... "<sup>3</sup>

Shaikh Isa responded by defending his position, and refused to withdraw his appointees who, he insisted, should remain the same for a period of time. As regards Yateem, he wrote, he had accepted his resignation and had, in addition, nominated Abdullah bin Hasan ad-Dosari, Chief of the Dowasir, together with another peninsular Arab, Sagur bin Mohammad az-Zayani, to the membership of the Majlis.<sup>4</sup>

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1 See Minutes of the meeting held on 2.4.1919. I.O.R. 15/2/12.

2 A.P. Trevor, D.P.R. to Acting C.C. and Officiating P.R., Baghdad. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 246-S, 28.12.1919.

3 Captain Bray to H.E. Shaikh Isa Alkhalifah. I.O.R. 15/2/12, No. 162, 5.6.1919.

4 Shaikh Isa's letter of 12.6.1919, op. cit.

It was clear that neither side was prepared to shift from the position it had adopted, and as from early April 1919, the Majlis ceased to function.<sup>1</sup>

In November 1919, Major Dickson succeeded Captain Bray as Political Agent Bahrain and in January 1920 he wrote to the Shaikh suggesting the restoration of the normal functions of the Majlis, whose continued suspension was creating extra work for the Joint Court. He proposed 14th January as a suitable date for convening the Majlis. To accelerate the process, he submitted the names of his five nominees who were to represent the foreign community on the new Majlis. He also designated the Custom House as a convenient venue for its sittings.<sup>2</sup>

Shaikh Isa replied to Dickson's letter pointing out that he still awaited a Government reply to his requests which his son Abdullah had submitted earlier to the British Government on his behalf. He was hopeful that the Government would view his requests with favour, and promised to send his son Abdullah to discuss affairs with the Agent.<sup>3</sup>

Thereafter, Shaikh Abdullah met with Dickson and the discussion centred upon his father's requests to the Government. Moreover, both sides decided to restore the meetings of the Majlis, which accordingly met on the 23rd January 1920 with Shaikh Isa giving his approval to the Agent's appointees. More important, the Shaikh told the Political Agent that the resumption of the Majlis was intended for a period of six months only, during which time he awaited the receipt of a Government reply to his requests.<sup>4</sup>

1 A.R.P.A. 1919, op. cit.

2 Dickson to Shaikh Isa. I.O.R. 15/2/12, No. 10, 10.1.1920.

3 Translation of a letter from Shaikh Isa to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/12, 21st Rabi II, 1338 (13.1.1920).

4 Telegram from Dickson to D.P.R. Bushire. I.O.R. 15/2/21, No. 18-C, 23.1.1920.

It is noteworthy that three of Shaikh Isa's five nominees were peninsular Arabs. They are the first three on the Shaikh's list as follows:

- 1 Abdullah bin Hasan ad-Dosari
- 2 Abdur Rahman az-Zayani
- 3 Abdul Aziz al-Qusaibi
- 4 Yusuf Fakhroo
- 5 Haji Abd Ali bin Rajab

Foreign members of the Majlis elected by the Political Agent were:

- 1 Mohammad Shareef Awazi
- 2 Haji Abdul Nabi bin Ahmad Bushehri
- 3 Mr. Tika Gangaram Tikamdas
- 4 Seth Budha el-Banyan
- 5 Hafiz Khanbhai Mohammad Ali Bohra

The Political Climate at the Time of Major Dickson - November 1919-  
November 1920

Shortly after Dickson took over as Political Agent Bahrain he found, as his predecessor did before him, that there existed a strong current of anti-English feeling. Earlier, Captain Bray drew the attention of the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad to what he called:

" ... feeling of hostility to ourselves due to religion, economic and war reasons, assisted in a negative way by the Missionaries (i.e. American Missionaries of the Reformed Church) ...

Missionaries have ceased to convert, are entertaining largely, giving presents, holding Majlis and are friendly to those hostile to us."<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to the Deputy-Resident, Dickson wrote about 'wild

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1 Captain Bray to C.C. Baghdad. I.O.R. 15.2.93, 27.5.1919, p. 22.

political ideas' which Shaikh Abdullah had contracted from abroad, and the fact that Shaikh Isa missed no opportunity to remind him of his independence, viz.

"The recent world talk of the 'rights of small nations' and President Wilson's utterances regarding the policy of self-determination etc., would seem to have had its effect on the mentality of the ruling house in Bahrain. I have since my arrival been frequently reminded by Shaikh Isa that Great Britain never interferes in our affairs, such pointed phrases as 'Hukumat al-Bahrain' (i.e. Government of Bahrain), ... , 'Kul Dawlah fi hurraitha' (i.e. every state enjoys freedom), etc., have become rather common of late."<sup>1</sup>

Dickson believed that much of the Agency's troubles with the Shaikh and the people was caused by Y.A. Kanoo, the Agency interpreter, who Trevor described earlier in 1917 as follows:

"(He) ... has risen from being a young man in quite a small way of business to one of the most respectable and respected merchants of Bahrain. This is almost entirely due to his connection with the Agency."<sup>2</sup>

Following Bray's advice, Dickson embarked upon the holding of regular Majlis - Arab style - for the local people, wherein people with grievances aired them out in the presence of the Agent. Also, he employed an Iraqi Moslem by the name of Farhan Al-Rahmah as his personal assistant and go-between in matters concerning the Agency, Shaikh Isa and Ibn Saud, thereby reducing Kanoo's connection with the Agency. As a result, the latter charged Dickson with "lowering the Agency's prestige" by making himself accessible to the people. Dickson's assessment of Kanoo included some interesting remarks:

"... a past master in intrigue, he is rich, is looked upon by common people and wields great power. His policy as he had confessed to me on several occasions is 'Divide et Impera' in

1 Dickson to D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/319, 176 C/E 3, 6.12.1919.

2 Major Trevor, D.P.R. to Captain P.G. Loch, P.A. Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/241, 22.6.1917. Note that in recognition of his services to the Agency, Kanoo was first awarded Kaisar-é Hind Medallion in 1911, Khan Sahib in 1917, M.B.E. in 1919, and C.I.E. in 1924. See Dickson to D.P.R., I.O.R. 15/2/241, No. 430-C, 15.11.1920. Also, A.R.P.A. 1924. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

other words keep the P.A. and the Ruler in a state of enmity and manage them."<sup>1</sup>

The Government Replies to the Shaikh's Four Requests - May 1920

Before the close of 1919, British officials in the area exchanged views over Shaikh Isa's requests. In December of that year the Deputy-Resident set forth his reasons why the Shaikh was not eligible to be treated on an equal footing with other Rulers of the Gulf. Both Shaikh Isa and his father Shaikh Ali, he wrote, owed their positions to the British Government, "who was responsible for the good Government of Bahrain to a greater extent than in the case of other rulers". He went on to describe the Shaikh's Administration:

"... his Government is singularly inefficient and weak and is not nearly as good as most of the other Shaikhs. It's tendency is to exploit the Islands and their inhabitants for the benefit of the Alkhalifah and one or two leading Arab families."<sup>2</sup>

After some initial delay, the Secretary of State for India eventually communicated to Shaikh Abdullah the official reply to the four requests which he had submitted earlier on his father's behalf. The Shaikh's first request was turned down on the grounds that the Government could not permit him to exercise jurisdiction over subjects of Arab Chiefs, unless the Rulers concerned were willing to conclude written agreements with the Shaikh conferring upon him judicial control of their subjects.<sup>3</sup>

His second request for himself nominating members of the Majlis al-Urf without the Political Agent's interference was rejected because it contradicted the rulings of the Bahrain Order in Council. Shaikh Isa's

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1 See Dickson's note on Yusuf Kanoo and his past and present connection with local parties, attached to Memorandum No. 430-C, op. cit., hereafter referred to as Dickson's Note.

2 A.P. Trevor, D.P.R. to Acting C.C. Baghdad. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 246-S, 28.12.1919.

3 A. Carter, S.S.I., to Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Alkhalifah. I.O.R. 15/2/72, No. 1145/E.A., 5.5.1920.

other request for opening a port at Zubarah was dropped on the basis of the difficulties surrounding the issue. Earlier Major Dickson expressed his opposition to this request, basing it on the fact that the Shaikh of Qatar would certainly resist the development of a new port in Qatar since it would undermine his trade at Dohah, and so would Ibn Saud who had recently opened a trade centre at <sup>c</sup>Ojair.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Dickson wrote:

"The new move is obviously an attempt to extend his (i.e. Shaikh Isa's) power territorially and financially at the expense of Ibn Saud and Shaikh Abdullah bin Jasim and will only end in trouble ... Further, I consider it is the thin end of the wedge to Shaikh Isa laying afresh his claim to be ruler of the whole peninsula of Qatar, which claim was definitely I gather quashed some fifteen years ago."<sup>2</sup>

Shaikh Isa's final request for direct correspondence with the High Government was denied on the grounds that the political relations of Bahrain with the British Government were always conducted through India, and that arrangement, the Shaikh was told, would have to continue.

#### The Inauguration of the Municipality - July 1920

After a series of abortive attempts to institute a Municipality for Manamah, Dickson eventually succeeded in getting Shaikh Isa to agree to the scheme. On July 1st, 1920 the Municipality was inaugurated with Shaikh Isa appointing his son Abdullah as its first President. "At Shaikh Abdullah's request", wrote Dickson, "I drew up the Manamah Municipal scheme basing it on that of Basrah".<sup>3</sup>

Road construction and repairs, hygiene, sinking of artesian wells, creation of Municipal police, were among the Municipality's earliest tasks.<sup>4</sup>

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1 No. 176C/E3, op. cit.

2 Ibid.

3 Dickson's Note, para. 17.

4 Trevor to E.B. Howell, Officiating Secretary to G. of I., I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 626-S, 10.11.1923.

When first established the Municipal Council comprised eight members, four Bahrainis appointed by the Shaikh and four foreign subjects nominated by the Political Agent. The opening session witnessed demonstrations by large crowds who had assembled near the Custom House, the venue for the meeting, shouting slogans hostile to the Municipality. According to the Agent, the crowds were asked by certain interested persons, who included Kanoo, to demonstrate against the Municipal Council which was, they were led to believe, an alien body threatening the local institutions.<sup>1</sup>

After a number of sessions, the Council became a powerless body as a result of:

"Shaikh Abdulla and the Secretary, scandalously mismanaged the Municipality, and the Council so cowed, that its meetings had become a farce."<sup>2</sup>

To restore credibility to the Council, the Agent introduced a set of bye-laws which made its decisions subject to majority vote. He also decided to attend the Council's meetings, ex officio, thus providing further safeguard against foul play. Increased involvement in the affairs of the country gave rise to greater resentment by the Rulers and especially by Shaikh Abdullah and his supporters. A campaign against the Agent's intrusions in the Shaikh's Administration began and a petition was organized against him by Shaikh Abdullah's supporters.<sup>3</sup> The campaign coincided with Dickson's end of service in Bahrain. Before leaving Bahrain in November 1920, his final remarks about the political scene there were as follows:

"... that the political atmosphere in Bahrain is 'bad' in these days ... and among Arabs (it may be put down) to the increased hostility displayed by Shaikh Isa and family towards this Agency.

1 Dickson's Note, para. 19.

2 Report by Major Daly: Note on the Political Situation in Bahrain, November 1921. I.O.R. 15/2/131, hereafter cited as Daly's Report of 1921.

3 Ibid.

The hostility ... may in the first instance be put down to President Wilson's 'Right of Small Nations' policy, and to the present State of Affairs in India and Egypt. The idea is abroad here, ... , that you have only to make yourself unpleasant enough, and agitate enough and you will be given complete independence."<sup>1</sup>

Shaikh Hamad's Elevation to the Administration - June 1921

After Dickson's departure from Bahrain, Khan Sahib Saiyed Siddiq Hasan - the Indian Assistant - officiated for the Political Agent. The Agency's influence over the Administration of Bahrain had been on the decrease. In January 1921, Major Daly took up office as Political Agent Bahrain and one of his immediate priorities was to restore the Agency's prestige. When he first met Shaikh Isa, Daly reported how the Shaikh cautioned him on the consequences of interfering in his domestic affairs. Also, the Shaikh told him that his predecessor's transfer from Bahrain was due to his efforts with the British Government. Describing conditions in Bahrain early in 1921, he stated:

"Bahrain is in a constant state of unrest owing to the political intrigues of a small party under the leadership of Shaikh Abdulla, the youngest son of the Ruler, and as the result of years of oppression by the ruling family. Instances of this oppression are far too numerous to quote, but details are on record of a large number of cases of recent date, which include illegal seizure of property, wrongful imprisonment with cruelty, and political murders, for which no one has been brought to trial, and no effort made to enforce justice.

Oppression in the past two years has amounted to terrorism, which appears to have been deliberate policy of Shaikh Abdulla for retaining complete domination over his father's subjects. To this end, it is essential that the Agency should have little influence. The constant changes of Political Agents and periods during which a subordinate held charge, admirably suited his purpose."<sup>2</sup>

Shaikh Isa was now in his dotage, his decisions were influenced by his powerful wife, Shaikh Abdullah's mother.<sup>3</sup> Shaikh Abdullah

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1 Dickson to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/241, 26.11.1920.

2 Daly's Report of 1921, op. cit.

3 Daly described her as follows: "... a masterful person, and has the greatest influence on Shaikh Easa. This lady holds a regular court, and imprisons and punishes at will, with total disregard for the most elementary laws of even Arab justice." Ibid.

represented his father on the Administration of Bahrain, held the office of President of the Municipal Council and the Education Committee. Apart from the tribal elements, his supporters included: Jasim Mohammad al-Chirawi<sup>1</sup>, his Secretary and member of the Education Committee, and also Hafiz Wahbah - the Egyptian Headmaster of al-Hidayah School. On the other hand, Shaikh Hamad had no control whatsoever over the affairs of the Administration despite the fact that the majority of the Shaikh's subjects desired to see him replace Abdullah on the Administration. Several attempts by intermediaries, acting on advice from the Agent, to persuade Shaikh Isa to relieve Abdullah from office and to appoint Hamad in his place produced no results with the Shaikh. Fear of Abdullah supplanting Hamad in the question of succession to Shaikh Isa, finally forced Daly to write to the Shaikh urging him to elevate Hamad to the Administration.<sup>2</sup>

On the 18th of June, 1921 Shaikh Isa agreed to the Agent's suggestion and in confirmation of the same wrote:

"I have appointed my ... son Shaikh Hamad as my assistant in the management of the affairs of my administration under my guidance, and I have freed (i.e. relieved) my son Abdullah from the ... Administration."<sup>3</sup>

Thereafter, Shaikh Hamad replaced Shaikh Abdullah as the President of the Municipal Council. A Sunni Persian merchant by the name of Mohammad Sharif Awazi, upon whom the title of Khan Sahib was conferred in June 1919, was appointed Secretary to the Municipality, by the Agent. Awazi replaced Mohammad Akhtar, an Indian Moslem, dismissed earlier on account of 'tactless behaviour and dishonest methods'.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 Note that Chirawi's uncle Ali bin Abdullah was Shaikh Isa's Financial Secretary and Confidant. See Dickson's Note, op. cit.
  - 2 Daly's Report of 1921.
  - 3 Translation of a letter from Shaikh Isa bin Ali Alkhalifah to His Majesty's P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/73, 18.6.1921.
  - 4 A.R.P.A. 1921. I.O.R. 15/2/296. Note that A. Rihani in Around the Coasts of Arabia, p. 303, mistakenly regarded Mohammad Sharif as a Shi'ah.

These measures were lauded by the notables of Bahrain, Sunnis as well as Shiah, who now sent letters of thanks to the Agent.<sup>1</sup> To consolidate Hamad's image as the successor in the public eye, arrangements were made for a public meeting in which a number of speakers were supposed to deliver talks and poems, expressing their joy over the occasion. This projected meeting failed to materialize owing to the reasons adduced by the Agent below:

"Abdulla backed by his evil Adviser Jasim Chirawi has intimidated people ... and has ... succeeded in discouraging the movement which would have consolidated Hamad's position and restored lost Agency influence. Hamad is greatly perturbed and has asked me for definite assurances of our support against Abdulla."<sup>2</sup>

In July 1921, Major Daly asked Chirawi to give a written commitment to the effect that he would cease from "creating ill-feeling between the Representative of His Majesty's and the Government of Bahrain".<sup>3</sup> In November of the same year he was tried by the Political Agent's Court allegedly for breaching his earlier commitment, and was sentenced to two years banishment from Bahrain. His guilt was thus described by the Court:

" ... has acted in a manner dangerous to peace and order, and has endeavoured to excite enmity between the people of Bahrain and His Majesty and has, ... , intrigued against His Majesty's authority ... "<sup>4</sup>

Hafiz Wahbah, who witnessed the events of 1920-21, left us some critical remarks about the Agent's actions. He blamed Daly for

1 These letters and their translations are preserved in I.O.R. 15/2/121.

2 Telegram from Daly to the P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/73, No. 56-C, no date.

3 See translation of a document given by Jasim bin Mohammad al-Chirawi and filed in the Political Agency, Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/104, 17.7.1921.

4 For the Court's Order, see I.O.R. 15/2/104. It is worth noting that in May 1923, the Bombay Barrister questioned the legality of the sentence passed by the Agent's Court on the grounds that Chirawi was a Bahrain subject not liable to deportation under the Bahrain Order-in-Council. To this Daly replied: "Chirawi, as the name implies, is a Persian of Persian parents and was not born in Bahrain. It was only because he was not a Bahrain subject that he himself admitted that he was liable to deportation under the Order in Council and the Shaikh confirmed and witnessed the document he gave ..." Daly to the P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/104, No. 59-C, 8.5.1923.

driving a wedge between Shaikh Isa's two sons, and for unlawfully deporting Chirawi after holding him responsible for fomenting trouble between the Agency and the Ruler.<sup>1</sup>

Daly's task of improving the Administration of Bahrain was hemmed in by grave difficulties, but he was determined to carry it out despite all the odds. In a letter to the Resident, he spoke of the time lag between the Rulers and their subjects. He also spoke against Government policy which then advocated the use of 'indirect and pacific means' with the Shaikh, and added:

"It is evident from the files in this Agency, that no improvement as regards the internal administration of Bahrain has been effected, and several Political Agents have left on record notes concerning the unsatisfactory state of affairs. There is evidence on all sides that oppression has much increased of quite recent years, whereas the population is more enlightened and less inclined to submit to such treatment."<sup>2</sup>

At this juncture the Baharnah representatives saw the Agent and told him of Britain's dual responsibility towards the Ruler and his subjects. They argued that since Britain was committed to the protection of the Shaikh's Government against all sorts of threats, it was incumbent upon her, as Protecting Power, to remove the yoke of oppression from the people. They wanted Britain to check misrule in Bahrain or else they threatened to seek the protection of another Arab Ruler whose identity they did not reveal. These views seem to have reasoned well with the Agent who commented:

"I respectfully submit that these representations made on most adequate grounds, as we have ample proof, are worthy of consideration."<sup>3</sup>

On December 21st, 1921 the Resident arrived in Bahrain. Prior to his arrival Shaikh Isa had attempted to obtain a testimonial letter from the leading Baharnah vouching for their community's satisfaction with the

1 Khamsūna Āman fī Jazīrat al-Ārab - Fifty years in Arabia (Egypt 1960), p. 15.

2 Daly's Report of 1921, op. cit.

3 Ibid.

Shaikh's Administration, but he did not succeed.<sup>1</sup> On the first day of his visit, the Resident was met by a large deputation of Baharnah at the Agency Court Room, where he was handed a petition which, inter alia, read:

"... the Shiah Community is in a state of great humiliation and subject to public massacre. They have no refuge, the evidence of none of them is accepted, their property are subject to plunder and themselves liable to mal-treatment every moment."<sup>2</sup>

The deputation put to the Resident their community's specific grievances including the case of a man who lost his father and was himself threatened. The Resident granted him Agency protection and commenting upon the matter he wrote to the Government:

"It is obviously not desirable to make the Agency into a Court of Appeal against the decisions of the Shaikh, but on the other hand, as the deputation pointed out, Bahrain subjects are afraid to take the law into their own hands as the Shaikh is under our protection, and they urge with some reason that we ought to take steps to prevent the Shaikh from abusing his authority."<sup>3</sup>

Acting on a request from the Resident, the Agent despatched a detailed report about specific cases of maltreatment which the deputation had raised.<sup>4</sup> The report constituted the Resident's evidence to the Government on what he termed: 'Bahrain Misrule'.<sup>5</sup> More importantly, the Resident announced the futility of the official policy which required the use of 'persuasion' with the Shaikh:

- 1 Col. A.P. Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 45-S, 13.1.1922.
- 2 Translation of a Petition presented to the Resident on 21.12.1921. Appended to the Resident's letter to the Government. I.O.R. 15/2/83, No. 495-S, 30.12.1921. Note that the Agent did not reveal the names of the petitioners for the following reason: "As I deemed it better that it (i.e. the petition) should not be translated in my office for fear of possible persecution of the signatories, should their names be disclosed, I have made a translation which I attach." Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/83, 23.1.1922.
- 3 No. 495-S, op. cit.
- 4 Report from the P.A. to the P.R.: 'Some Examples of Oppression of Bahrain Subjects by the Ruling Family in Bahrain'. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 1-C, 3.1.1922. The report contained actual cases of arbitrary taxation, extortion of money, expropriation of land, forced labour, compulsory collection of fish and fowl, and acts of political violence.
- 5 The Resident's letters to the Government bore the title: 'Tyranny of the Shaikh of Bahrain and his Family over Bahrain Subjects'. See I.O.R. 15/2/83, No. 495-S, op. cit., I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 23-S, 6.1.1922; I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 24-S, 6.1.1922; I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 45-S, op. cit. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 76-S, 19.1.1922.

" ... that the policy adopted by His Majesty's Government after the events of 1904-5 that 'the amelioration of the internal Government should be brought by indirect and pacific means through the increase of influence with the Shaikh by gaining his confidence and trust' has not proved a success."<sup>1</sup>

The Resident attributed the problems facing Shaikh Hamad's Administration to the resistance put up by his younger brother, and towards solving them he suggested:

- a) That Shaikh Abdullah should be asked to leave Bahrain to the mainland for a period of time. That his return to Bahrain should be made conditional upon guarantees by the Ruler that his son would cease meddling in local affairs.
- b) That the Government should tell the Shaikh that mis-treatment of his Shiah subjects was laying her open to accusations of collusion with the Shaikh in Bahrain misrule.<sup>2</sup>

A few articles critical of the Agent's interference in the Administration of Bahrain appeared in the Egyptian paper Al-Akhbar during January 1922.<sup>3</sup> The Agent blamed them on H. Wahbah whom he described as "notoriously anti-British"<sup>4</sup>, and accused him of being "Abdullah's right-hand man in diffusing propaganda".<sup>5</sup>

In their opposition to Shaikh Hamad's Administration the disaffected elements resorted to acts of violence and on 12th January 1922 they fired on Manamah Police posts with the object of terrifying the Police.<sup>6</sup> As a result, the Agent drew the Shaikh's attention to the dangers facing the country, and asked him to take necessary measures aiming to contain the explosive situation before it deteriorated further and dragged various factions into acts of violence. Realising the seriousness of the

1 No. 23-S, op. cit.

2 No. 24-S, op. cit.

3 Telegram from the P.A. to the P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 10-C, 12.1. 1922.

4 Maj. Daly to P.A. Kuwait. I.O.R. 15/1/327, no number, 22.1.1922.

5 No. 45-S, op. cit.

6 Telegram No. 10-C, op. cit.

situation, Shaikh Isa resorted to the Agent for advice.<sup>1</sup>

At this point in time, Hafiz Wahbah arrived from Kuwait. Earlier he had been blamed for "creating dissension between the Agency and the Government of Bahrain".<sup>2</sup> His presence in Bahrain now was not desirable and Shaikh Isa, acting on advice from the Agent, denied him entry into the country.

On the 31st of January 1922, the Government of India sent a cable to the Resident which read:

"Government of India are not prepared to consider drastic action regarding Bahrain misrule until they are satisfied that all local resources of bringing pressure to bear are exhausted and that such intervention is imperative to secure protection of foreigners and our own position in Bahrain."<sup>3</sup>

It was clear that as long as the foreigners and the British position in Bahrain remained unharmed by 'Bahrain misrule', the Government was not prepared to consider anything other than moral pressure with the Shaikh. In other words, the Government was still committed to its earlier policy which had so far failed to convince Shaikh Isa to reform his Administration. The Government believed that Abdullah's presence in Bahrain boded less risk than if he had been on the mainland where he could have rallied greater tribal support and hence posed a bigger threat. They urged the Resident to proceed to Bahrain in order to:

"... impress your personal influence on Shaikh and his family and restore prestige of Agency. You should warn Shaikh of the danger he runs from his own subjects and make it clear if misrule leads to uprising Government will find it difficult to render him any support whatsoever."<sup>4</sup>

Thereafter Shaikh Abdullah was confronted with the evidence against him. He admitted to his role in the disturbances and pledged to rectify

- 1 Telegram from the Resident to the F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/327, no number, 15.1.1922.
- 2 Daly to the Resident. I.O.R.15/1/327, number not legible, 22.1.1922.
- 3 Telegram from Foreign, Delhi, to Political, Bushire. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 119-S, 31.1.1922.
- 4 Ibid.

his own position and to support Shaikh Hamad's Administration. Despite uncertainty expressed by Hamad over his brother's latest pledge<sup>1</sup>, nevertheless Abdullah was allowed a fresh start.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Baharnah Uprising of February 1922

On February 6th, 1922, while a Fidawi was escorting a Baharnah villager who was under arrest in Manamah, several Baharnah accosted the Fidawi, overpowered him and released their kinsman. According to the Agent, the villager was wrongfully incriminated, unlawfully arrested and beaten up. In Manamah, the Baharnah closed their shops in protest, bringing business in the bazaar to a standstill. They were determined to press their case with Shaikh Isa who, according to the Agent, was "oblivious to the fact that he was sitting on a volcano".<sup>3</sup> This communal action by the Baharnah posed a serious challenge to the authority of the Shaikh who sought advice from the Agent. The latter, not desiring to get involved directly between the Ruler and his subjects, urged Shaikh Hamad to find ways of appeasing the Baharnah.<sup>4</sup> It was decided that a deputation of leading Baharnah, accompanied by a number of Sunni personalities, should seek an audience with the Ruler.<sup>5</sup> During the meeting, the Baharnah submitted the following demands to Shaikh Isa:

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- 1 Translation of a private letter from Shaikh Hamad to the Political Agent. I.O.R. 15/1/327, attached to Daly's Memorandum to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 30-C, 7.2.1922.
  - 2 Ibid.
  - 3 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 29-C, 7.2.1922.
  - 4 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 34-C, 13.2.1922.
  - 5 The leading Sunnis who accompanied the deputation to the Shaikh were: Abdul Aziz al-Qusaibi, Yusuf Kanoo, and Mohammad Sharif Awazi.

- "(1) No one except the Ruler and Shaikh Hamad, to decide (Court) cases or to have the right to punish in any way.
- (2) Cases which Shaikh Hamad cannot decide to the satisfaction of both parties to be referred by him to the Shara<sup>C</sup>, Majlis al-<sup>C</sup>Urfi or Salifah as the case may be.
- (3) No one to be dragged off to the Ruler's Court without notice, but to be served with a summons signed by Shaikh Hamad.
- (4) Documents concerning gardens leased to subjects by the Ruling family to be in duplicate, a copy in possession of each party, and to be witnessed by independent witnesses. No conditions other than written in the document to be enforced.
- (5) Steps to be taken to stop the Shaikh's camels being allowed to enter and graze in private gardens.
- (6) 'Sukhrah' (i.e. forced labour; also commandeering of donkeys) to cease.
- (7) The practice of placing calves belonging to the ruling family with Bahraini bakers to fatten free of charge, to cease.
- (8) The prison to be put in proper order and a reasonable house provided for the same."<sup>1</sup>

After consulting with the chief members of his family, Shaikh Isa agreed to concede the above demands except the one for the abolition of what the Agent referred to as a religious tax. Whether Shaikh Isa intended to keep his word remained a matter open to different interpretations.<sup>2</sup>

On March 7th, 1922 the Resident visited Bahrain and while there communicated Government instructions to Shaikh Isa to the effect that "if misrule leads to uprising, Government will find it most difficult to render him any support whatsoever".<sup>3</sup> The Resident also cautioned Shaikh Abdullah not to oppose Shaikh Hamad's Administration and urged Hamad to show firmness in dealing with "oppression".<sup>4</sup>

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1 No. 34-C, op. cit. See also A.R.P.A. 1922. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

2 Ibid.

3 No. 119-S, op. cit.

4 Col. Trevor to D. Bray, F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 209-S, 11.3.1922.

After the visit both Shaikhs Hamad and Abdullah frequently sought the Agent's advice, and admitted to him that the difficulties facing them were caused by 'past misrule'. Commenting upon this change of attitude, the Agent noted:

"They have been compelled by recent events to realize that such tyrannical rule as they have exercised in the past is, with the spread of democratic ideas, bound to come to an end."<sup>1</sup>

Since February 1922 the Baharnah had refused to pay discriminatory taxes, with Shaikh Hamad pursuing a conciliatory attitude towards them. His efforts, however, were thwarted by Shaikh Khalid and his sons whose attempts at collecting taxes continued, giving rise to protests by the Baharnah. As a result, some fifteen hundred persons or more, all of them Shiah, gathered at the Agency during April of that year protesting at Shaikh Khalid's actions. As they refused to leave, the Agent asked Shaikhs Hamad and Abdullah to talk to their representatives. Thereafter the crowds dispersed after they had obtained assurances from the Shaikhs "to instruct Shaikh Khalid to cease interference with liberty of persons and to postpone collection of taxes ...". Besides, they were given an undertaking to the effect that the Rulers would consider their complaints regarding taxation and the administration of justice. Subsequent to the above incident, Shaikh Hamad and Shaikh Abdullah informed the Agent of their desire to introduce reforms with a view to eradicating the "obnoxious taxes" in preference to "reasonable and just taxation".<sup>2</sup> In addition to revenue from the Customs, the Shaikhs collected the following taxes:

- "1 Date-garden tax. Collected quite arbitrarily ... from Shiah only.
- 2 'Raqabieh', literally 'neck-tax' or 'poll-tax' levied on males at varying rates in different localities. It has been collected from Shiah only and is particularly obnoxious to them.

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1 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 70-C, 11.4.1922.

2 Ibid.

- 3 Fish-tax. Levied from Shiahhs only at varying rates.<sup>1</sup>
- 4 A special tax on Shiahhs during Muharram.
- 5 A variety of taxes collected in kind from Shiahhs only.
- 6 A pearling tax. This was originally collected from all pearling boats, which are mainly owned by Sunnis. Of late years a large number of the boat-owners have ceased paying."<sup>2</sup>

On being asked to advise on reasonable future taxation, the Agent after sounding local opinion, submitted the following scheme to the Shaikhs:

- "1 Date tax of 1-10th on gardens watered by flow, and 1-20th on those watered by lift, to be collected uniformly. This tax is admissible under Shara<sup>c</sup> law.
- 2 Fish tax of 1-10th on fish caught in the local fish traps, and 1-20th on fish caught otherwise.
- 3 Abolition of 'Raqabieh' and all other taxes on Shiahhs, and substitute therefor a very light ground tax for all houses, other than those in the towns of Manamah and Muharraq, which pay municipal taxes. To be collected without religious distinction.
- 4 The impartial collection of the existing pearling tax."<sup>3</sup>

As the Sunnis were virtually immune from taxation, it was anticipated that they would oppose the introduction of the above scheme. In the event of such opposition the Shaikhs wanted to know if the Government of India was prepared to back the scheme regardless of Sunni opposition. The Agent was in no position to speak for the Government, but he informed the Resident that if the Sunnis refused to pay taxes, the Shiahhs would follow suit, in which case the Shaikh's income would be drastically cut. Already, he added, the Shaikhs were in debt as a result of the Baharnah refusal to pay revenue. One way of making the scheme acceptable to both sections of the population was for the Government to give it its approval. At this juncture the Shaikhs were at a loss as to how to collect revenue from the Shiahhs without provoking further protests. They resorted to

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1 Khuri's statement in Tribe and State in Bahrain, p. 53, that "... fish traps (weirs) were left free of Alkhalifah control", runs counter to item 3 above, which confirms the collection of fish tax, hence represents some form of control by the Rulers.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

the Agent who advised them to open a Government Office to be run by two clerks.<sup>1</sup> This office was destined to become the precursor of a central bureaucracy.

Early in May 1922, the Government of India cabled the Resident:

"It is the ardent desire of the Government of India that they should not be drawn into interference between the Ruler of Bahrain and his subjects. But as the proposed reforms are mainly due to their warning against oppression, etc., and appear sound in themselves, you are authorised to inform the Shaikh that Government welcome his scheme and will lend their moral support to an honest attempt to put it into force impartially.

This authority is given on the understanding that you felt that more than moral support is unlikely to be required."<sup>2</sup>

Although the Government promised moral backing for the reforms, it was nevertheless keen to avoid any accusation that their introduction was imposed upon the Shaikh by them.

In June 1922 a reconciliation, apparently on firmer grounds than before, was effected between Shaikh Abdullah and the Administration of Shaikh Hamad. By virtue of the same, Shaikh Abdullah was promised "an attractive allowance from the revenues of the Islands" in return for assisting Shaikh Hamad in the conduct of affairs.<sup>3</sup> Commenting upon the same, the Resident noted:

"If an arrangement between Shaikh Hamad and Shaikh Abdullah can be arrived at on a pecuniary basis, so much the better; such an arrangement is more likely to be lasting than any other."<sup>4</sup>

The above reconciliation was described by the Agent as a serious blow to the disaffected tribal elements, since it separated Abdullah from the tribal camp which opposed Shaikh Hamad's Administration.<sup>5</sup>

1 Ibid. Also see Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 304-S, 14.4.1922.

2 Telegram from Foreign, Simla, to the Resident, Bushire. I.O.R. 15/2/129, No. 549-S, 2.5.1922.

3 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 105-C, 27.6.1922.

4 Trevor to Daly. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 506-S, 6.7.1922.

5 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 111-C, 13.7.1922.

The Dowasir Tribesmen Seek Support from the Mainland

During July of the same year, Abdullah ad-Dosari, chief of the Najdi Dowasir, and Ahmad ben Lāhej, head of a smaller group of Najdis, visited Ibn Saud, hoping to enlist his support in their stand against Shaikh Hamad's plan for tax-reforms: a plan which was envisaged to place both Shi'ahs and Sunnis on an equal footing. Subsequent to this visit it was reported in Bahrain that Ibn Saud had pledged them support.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to know that the Dowasir had settled in Bahrain, in Budayya and Zallaq, in 1845.<sup>2</sup> They had acknowledged Shaikh Isa's Chiefship only in name and were opposed to recognising Shaikh Hamad as his successor. Lorimer provides this account of their earlier dealings with Shaikh Isa:

"... their relations with the Shaikh of Bahrain are distant though not unfriendly. They insist on being dealt with through their own chiefs, and they have given the Shaikh of Bahrain clearly to understand that, if he should take any action affecting them of which they disapprove, they will quit Bahrain in a body."<sup>3</sup>

After the Baharnah uprising of February 1922, they approached Shaikh Hamad offering him support against the former, but he very wisely turned them down.<sup>4</sup> He was careful not to get involved in their designs, which conflicted with official advice, not to mention the fact that he could have alienated Baharnah support at a time when he could not afford to lose it. Their threat to abandon the islands in a mass was taken seriously by Shaikh Hamad who maintained good relations with Ibn Saud and intended to keep them so. In the past such threats worked to the advantage of the Dowasir, often forcing the Ruler to give in to their demands.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Ibid.

2 Lorimer: Gazetteer..., Historical Part I-B, p. 883, op. cit.

3 Ibid., Geographical and Statistical, Vol. II, p. 249.

4 No. 111-C, op. cit.

5 Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 529-S, 16.7.1922.

The movement for reform in Bahrain was a source of concern to Ibn Saud who feared lest it should spread among his own Shiah subjects in Hasa and Qatif, many of whom came from Bahrain and had relatives there. According to an official report, Ibn Saud taxed them heavily during 1922 as a result of which they approached the Agent in Bahrain desiring to settle there. The Agent refused to consider the matter for fear of providing an excuse for Ibn Saud to interfere openly in the affairs of Bahrain.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Foreign Office Intervenes

During the first half of 1922 Persian newspapers put out articles on Bahrain alleging that the British Authorities there condoned the mistreatment of Shiahs. These allegations were heeded by the Foreign Office which on two occasions, March and May 1922,<sup>2</sup> communicated with the India Office drawing its attention to the "highly unsatisfactory state of affairs in Bahrain" and to the damage it was causing to the interests of the British Government. During July of that year the Resident summarized the Foreign Office views to the Agent, as follows:

"The Foreign Office points out that the gross injustice involved by the Sunni immunity from taxation and victimisation of Shiahs with British connivance affords opportunity for anti-British agitations in Persia and elsewhere."<sup>3</sup>

In Bahrain Shaikh Isa remained adamant to suggestions of reform and the Resident believed that nothing short of a rebellion by the Baharnah could force him to introduce improvements to his Administration.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Shaikh Isa would not allow Shaikh Hamad to take any decision affecting the Administration without his prior consent. With the

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1 No. 111-C, op. cit. Also, A.R.P.A. 1923. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

2 F.O. Letter No. E 2649/1644/91, op. cit.; L. Oliphant to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 5373/1644/91, 29.5. 1922.

3 Telegram from the Resident to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/127, no. 1217, 11.7.1922.

4 Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 542-S, 22.7.1922.

Government of India committed only to moral support of Shaikh Hamad's plan for tax-reforms, and with Ibn Saud pledging to assist the Dowasir in their effort to resist the implementation of that plan, the Agent preferred to bide for time and to watch the developments, especially in view of Ibn Saud's renewed interest in Bahrain affairs.

In Persia the press campaign against the British position in Bahrain continued unabated. During September 1922, the British Consul in Shiraz sent translations of extracts from Shirazi papers to the British Minister in Tehran, drawing his attention to an appeal in one of them for the appointment of deputies in the Majlis to represent Persian interests in Bahrain.<sup>1</sup> One article demanded, inter alia, the appointment of a 'Karguzar' - Persian Governor - in Bahrain<sup>2</sup>, and one accused Major Daly of mistreating the Persians.<sup>3</sup> Another alleged that five hundred Najdis were allowed a Consul in Bahrain, whereas 30,000 Persians were under the control of a foreign official, a reference to the Political Agent Bahrain.<sup>4</sup>

In a letter to the Government, the Resident described these allegations as "wild and baseless" and blamed them on "anti-British agitators". The aim of the campaign, he wrote, was to enlist the sympathy of the Persian Government and to revive the Persian claim to Bahrain.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the Foreign Office was gravely concerned over the negative effects of the campaign on British interests in Persia, and in early December 1922 it intervened with the India Office urging the introduction of reforms on the following lines:

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- 1 H.G. Chick, His Majesty's Consul in Shiraz, to Sir P. Loraine. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 71, 30.9.1922.
  - 2 Istakhr, No. 24, 17.9.1922. I.O.R. 15/1/319.
  - 3 Asr-i Azadi, No. 116, 21.9.1922. I.O.R. 15/1/319.
  - 4 Asr-i Azadi, No. 120, 17.10.1922. I.O.R. 15/1/319.
  - 5 Trevor to D. Bray, F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 772-S, 17.10.1922.

"that steps may be taken forthwith for the introduction at Bahrain of reforms tending to ensure the equitable treatment of Shiahhs. Such action would, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, be likely to diminish in future the agitations as reported by the British Resident and Consul General at Bushire."<sup>1</sup>

### The Situation in the First Half of 1923

The faltering of the reforms represented a serious blow to the Baharnah hopes for achieving parity with the Sunni Arabs. Haji Ahmad bin Ali Khamis, one of their leaders, told the Agent that it was incumbent upon the Government of India to ensure a fair and just Administration in Bahrain; that on his accession to the Rulership of Bahrain, Shaikh Isa had committed himself to such an undertaking and therefore he ought to honour it; that the Baharnah would seek redress to their grievances and that in India they had friends who were prepared to expose their complaints to public scrutiny through the Indian press.<sup>2</sup>

The increased political awareness of the Baharnah was induced, according to the Agent, by a number of factors, internal and external, viz.: The Rulers' enhanced wealth and power, the pursuit of harsh policies against the Shiahhs, the spread of newspapers which covered the events of Iraq, India and Egypt, travel and interaction with foreigners especially during the pearling season.<sup>3</sup>

During January 1923 a number of leading persons made a final attempt with Shaikh Isa to try to get him to agree to the Manamah Municipality's scheme for Water and Electricity Supply, but the Shaikh remained as unyielding as ever.<sup>4</sup> Towards the end of January, the Resident informed the Government that so far persuasion had failed to produce results with

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1 L. Oliphant, F.O., to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. E 13476/1644/91, 7.12.1922.

2 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 2-C, 8.1.1923.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

the Shaikh. He also admitted that as reforms were pro-Shiah they were bound to create strong reaction with Ibn Saud. He summed up the position as follows:

" ... it is not necessary to consider for the purpose of practical politics, more than the minimum necessary for the removal of the most flagrant abuses ...

The decision as to which course should be adopted must be governed by question of imperial policy ... ... Forcible intervention is bound to attract hostile criticism, but so too is inaction; and at any rate the former has the merit of achieving some good, while the latter may be merely to put off the evil day."<sup>1</sup>

Early in March of the same year, the Foreign Office again communicated with the India Office urging them to adopt a policy of reforms in Bahrain on the lines indicated in their earlier letter of December 1922.<sup>2</sup> Despite the mounting pressure, the Government of India preferred to see the Shaikh taking the initiative for reforms rather than appearing as their mere recipient. For the first time the Government contemplated the use of drastic action against the Shaikh as a final resort:

" ... it is our protection alone which has hitherto prevented his subjects from rising against him, and that if he now introduces reform we shall back him up in carrying them out, but that if he does not we are determined to do so ourselves even if this means his enforced retirement and the deportation, if necessary, of Abdulla to India."<sup>3</sup>

During April 1923, Colonel Trevor left on recess and Colonel S.G. Knox officiated for him as Resident. On April 20th a fight broke out between a Najdi and a Persian over a watch in the main market place in Manamah. Soon the quarrel widened and engulfed members of both communities. In the clashes which followed several Najdis and Persians were wounded. In his report about the incident, the Agent mentioned that the casualties would have been higher if it had not been for the efforts of the small Police Force

1 The Resident to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 42-S, 27.1.1923.

2 L. Oliphant to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. E 2313/67/91, 8.3.1923.

3 Telegram from the Viceroy, Foreign and Political Dept., to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, 17.4.1923.

which was able to contain the violence. In fact, the Force was formed chiefly of Persians and was controlled by Mohammad Sharif Awazi, Secretary to the Municipality, himself a Sunni Persian. On May 10th fresh disturbances erupted between the two sides of the conflict leaving eight persons dead and many more wounded.<sup>1</sup> Hostilities continued throughout the following day and a force of Najdis, firing rifles, attempted a landing near the Agency but were deterred by the armed guards.<sup>2</sup> The Persians of Bahrain reported the matter to the authorities in Tehran.<sup>3</sup> On 12th May, third day of the clashes, the Dowasir attacked the Baharnah village of <sup>c</sup>Ali, wounding several persons and setting a number of houses ablaze.<sup>4</sup>

In a subsequent letter to the Resident, Ibn Saud claimed that the attacks against his subjects were instigated by the Persians, and blamed Mohammad Sharif, for the severity of the Police action against the Najdis. Furthermore, he accused the Agent of failure to stop the troubles at an earlier stage and suggested the conduct of an enquiry into the affair in order to determine the cause of the trouble.<sup>5</sup>

In his reply to Ibn Saud, Colonel Knox described the dispute as: "of the most trifling character, the repair of a watch of Rs. 3 value and the root trouble was religious fanaticism at the trying period of the Ramazan fast".<sup>6</sup> He spoke of evidence pointing to the role of Abdullah al-Qusaibi, brother of Abdul Aziz al-Qusaibi, Ibn Saud's Agent in Bahrain,

- 1 Telegram from Col. S.G. Knox to S.S.C.O. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, p. 248, 11.5.1923.
- 2 Telegram from Daly to Col. Knox. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 431, 11.5.1923.
- 3 Telegram from the Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department, to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, p. 257, 11.5.1923.
- 4 Telegram from Daly to Knox. I.O.R. 15/1/341, No. 62-C, 12.5.1923. Also telegram from Knox to His Majesty's Minister in Tehran. I.O.R. 15/1/341, No. 103/440, 13.5.1923.
- 5 Letter from Abdul Aziz ben Abdur Rahman al-Faisal al-Sa'ud to Col. S.G. Knox. F.O. 371: 8947, 5th Shawwal 1341 (22.5.1923).
- 6 Col. Knox to H.H. Imam Sir Abdul Aziz ben Abdur Rahman al-Faisal al-Sa'ud. F.O. 371: 8947, No. 172, 14-20th June, 1923.

in rousing the Najdis against the Persians and ruled out a purely Anglo-Saudi enquiry on the grounds that it could invite Persian interference not only in Bahrain but also in al-Hasa.<sup>1</sup>

During the first half of May 1923 Colonel Knox attempted to assess the situation in Bahrain with regard to the introduction of reforms there. On the ninth of May he sent a telegram to the Colonial Office arguing for the maintenance of the status quo in Bahrain which if altered by action against the Shaikh would antagonize other Sunni Shaikhs in the area as well as Ibn Saud, he wrote. "Misrule", he added, was no worse than the state of affairs twenty years ago and that raising the issue now would expose the weaker aspects of the British case before international opinion. He concluded his views as follows:

"You will not carry responsible Sunni opposition with you . . . unless you allow for the privileged position of Sunnis."<sup>2</sup>

In a subsequent letter to the Government of India Knox stated that the anti-British agitations in Tehran were not a genuine effort for the "removal of the inequities under which Shiahs are supposed to suffer in Bahrain". He believed the agitations aimed at reviving the Persian claim to the Sovereignty of Bahrain and that they would not subside by enforcement of pro-Shiah reforms in Bahrain. Knox reiterated his earlier view for the preservation of Sunni supremacy:

"But if the intention is to tax Sunnis and Shiahs equally, I very much doubt whether the influential opinion of the island will support such a proposal. Unless the well understood privileges of the Sunnis on the Sunni side of the Gulf are to be preserved to a material extent, the position of the Sunni ruler will be weakened."<sup>3</sup>

In a telegram to the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy disagreed with some of Knox's above views, and described his letter as "hastily drafted". He disputed Knox's statement that reforms were chiefly

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1 Ibid.

2 Telegram from Col. Knox to S.S.C.O. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, p. 255, 9.5.1923.

3 Col. Knox to Government of India. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 222-S, 11.5.1923.

desired by the foreign community in Bahrain, adding that they represented a long-standing local demand. Contrary to Knox's view, the Viceroy supported the raising of the issue with Tehran:

"Thus he overlooks the fact that the Foreign Office consider that the time has come to face the direct issue with Persia; that should Persia be so ill-advised as to appeal to the League of Nations over Bahrain, our acquiescence in the misrule would perhaps be the really serious flaw in our case; that even if the misrule is no worse than twenty years ago (which, judged by the official reports, we doubt) publicity is a new factor that can't be ignored ..."<sup>1</sup>

He agreed with Knox's view that after the departure of Sir Percy Cox and the termination of Ibn Saud's subsidy, the latter was "particularly difficult to handle". He summed up Government attitude as follows:

"We have never contemplated the introduction of all desirable reforms at one swoop. All we want is to put ourselves right with the world and the Bahrainis by the introduction of some measure of justice and equitable taxation."<sup>2</sup>

#### Shaikh Isa's Involuntary Retirement

Following the disturbances of May 10-12th 1923 the Resident proceeded to Bahrain, arriving there on the 14th. On the 18th of May, he effected Abdullah al-Qusaibi's departure from Bahrain by asking him to deliver a letter from him to Ibn Saud. He then warned the Dowasir Chiefs either to cease hostilities or else face a ban on their pearling fleet. His next step, the *raison d'être* of his visit, was to bring about Shaikh Isa's 'voluntary abdication' by asking him to step down in favour of Shaikh Hamad. The Resident's attempts failed to convince the Shaikh who was reported to have said:

"You can kill me or turn me out, but while I am alive, I will not retire."

He was also reported to have said:

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<sup>1</sup> Telegram from the Viceroy to S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, p. 242, 14.5.1923.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

" ... his private opinion was that Shaikhdom of Bahrain was to himself not worth a cigarette."<sup>1</sup>

At the request of the Resident, Shaikhs Hamad and Abdullah made further attempts with their father who refused to give in to their demand and asked them " ... to consult the tribes and send him a letter announcing his deposition". To this the Resident answered:

"I see no necessity for consulting the tribes when Government consistent with public weal, have decided that Shaikh Isa is too old to take active part in the administration of public affairs, which have been entrusted to Shaikh Hamad as his father's agent."<sup>2</sup>

On 26th May, Knox held a Majlis for the representatives of the people in which Shaikh Isa's forced retirement was announced. A speech was read by Shaikh Mohammad on behalf of Shaikh Hamad promising to carry on "his father's policy of working for the good of the people ..."<sup>3</sup> There followed another speech by the Resident who praised Shaikh Isa's 55 years of rule, and attributed his retirement to his unwillingness to carry out reforms "which had been found necessary to introduce to bring Bahrain up to the level of modern civilisation". He also gave assurances of British support for Shaikh Hamad:

" ... that the reforms would lead to ultimate benefit of Sunni community ... and that Shaikh Hamad's rule, assisted by his brother Abdullah, and supported by His Majesty's Government against external aggression and internal sedition, would lead Sunnis to their right place."<sup>4</sup>

Knox wound up his speech by warning the Shara<sup>c</sup> Qadis of the consequences of allowing leading persons to interfere with the administration of justice; the Ruling family not to rely heavily on the country's revenues; and the Baharnah not to expect immediate equality of treatment with Sunnis nor to anticipate a swift abolition of the latter's privileges.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Telegram from the Resident to the S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, p. 233, 20.5.1923.

2 Ibid.

3 Telegram from the Resident to the S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, p. 222, 29.5.1923.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

On June 15th Knox communicated with Ibn Saud over the action taken by the British Government in Bahrain. He attributed Shaikh Isa's removal from active rulership to his old age resulting in his loss of control of the Administration and to the emergence of a number of irresponsible persons who maltreated the Baharnah. He assured Ibn Saud of the British Government's intention to back the rule of Al Khalifah over Bahrain:

"We firmly believe that the steps that the British Government has been reluctantly forced to take will eventually conduce to the stability of the rule of the Al Khalifah family, will prevent foreign interference and preserve the essentially Sunni influence in the administration of the islands and the progress of all Sunni elements of the population."<sup>1</sup>

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1 S.G. Knox, P.R., to H.H. Shaikh Sir Abdul Aziz bin Abdur Rahman al-Faisal al-Sa'ud. F.O. 371: 8947, no. 174, 15.6.1923.

### Chapter Three

#### The Enactment of Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad

The introduction of administrative and institutional reforms in June 1923 was a novelty for Bahrain. It was bound to engender opposition among the tribes and influential groups who were the sole beneficiaries of the status quo which had existed until May of that year. Reforms meant the introduction of administrative changes, leading, in the end, to the erosion of the absolute powers of the ruling class. The plan for levying equal taxes, such as land-revenue, from all the inhabitants without distinction, though egalitarian in spirit, would, in effect, have amounted to imposing taxation for the first time upon the dominant groups. The bulk of the productive land was in the possession of the Rulers who were immune from any form of taxation. The idea of taxation by the State, no matter what form it took, would have engendered resentment among the powerful classes. Hereafter we intend to discuss the reforms which the new Administration of Shaikh Hamad sought to implement, the resistance shown by the tribal class to their enactment, leaving out reform of the pearling industry to the appropriate section.

#### The Institution of a Civil List - June 1923

The Civil List was the earliest reform executed by Shaikh Hamad's Administration. By determining the salaries and allowances of the Ruling Family, it was possible to control expenditure, to halt waste of public revenue, and to allocate some of it for the first time for public services, an important objective of the reforms. The total allocations on the Civil List, drawn up in June of that year, amounted to Rs. 30,000 monthly. Out of which Rs. 4,000/- was Shaikh Isa's monthly salary, plus an extra Rs. 2,000/- to cover up the cost of the Shaikh's Summer move

from Moharraq to Manamah. This was believed to be sufficient, for the Shaikh had a private income of Rs. 2,500/- monthly from his date-gardens which he was allowed to retain. These allocations were deposited in the Eastern Bank Limited, chosen by the Administration in June of the same year to function partly as the State Bank.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Customs: Reorganisation under a British Director

The Customs represented the chief source of revenue for the Government, income from which, it was envisaged, would finance the projected reforms. During June 1923, the Administration applied to the Government of India for a British Customs Director. Earlier, it had been farmed by a Hindu firm whose Director, for his own reasons, kept the accounts in Sindhi.<sup>2</sup> Such was the state of disorganisation in the Customs that the Resident described it as "the Augean Stables".<sup>3</sup>

In August 1923, Mr. G.N. Bower, Assistant Collector in the Imperial Customs, Calcutta, was despatched by the Government of India to organise the Customs in Bahrain. He discovered instances of "huge embezzlement" by the previous Director and of special arrangements with well-known merchants allowing them to pay their Custom dues on an annual basis.<sup>4</sup> These practices ceased to exist under Bower, and receipts for one Hijri month, corresponding to 4th October - 3rd November 1923, exceeded Rs. 100,000. The daily income amounted to Rs. 1,000 for the first time.

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- 1 Daly to Col. Knox, I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 77-C, p. 183, 10.6.1923.
  - 2 Captain Prior, P.A., to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. C-84, 29.6.1929.
  - 3 Col. S.G. Knox, P.R., to the Government of India. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 330-S, 1.7.1923.
  - 4 Daly to Knox. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 131-C, 4.10.1923. Note that the Hindu Firm lost its contract just before Bower was appointed in August 1923, and not in 1924 as Khuri stated in Tribe and State in Bahrain, p. 52.

Increased receipts from the Customs made it possible for the Administration to improve the existing facilities and to introduce new ones such as the construction of a light railway and the addition of bigger and proper warehouses.<sup>1</sup> Under the Hindu Director, the Shaikh was allowed to draw drafts on the Customs. After its reorganisation, such practices were disallowed and the revenue increased to such an extent that Bahrain's finances were described by the end of 1923 as "pleasingly solvent".<sup>2</sup>

Both the introduction of the Civil List and the Organisation of the Customs enabled the Administration to draft the first monthly budget. Now that income outstripped expenditure, a feeling of security and stability spread through the country. Trade and cultivation flourished and many Baharnah who had formerly desisted from investing their money, now availed themselves of the opportunities which a relatively stable and secure market was offering.<sup>3</sup>

#### Land Revenue<sup>4</sup>

By 1923, the various taxes imposed upon the Baharnah under the old regime had ceased to exist as a result of the uprising of February 1922. Instead the new regime considered the introduction of land revenue, which in turn necessitated land surveys and the registration of property. Earlier plans, devised by the Agent, envisaged a system similar to the Tapu System of Iraq.<sup>5</sup> The problem facing the new Administration was that the bulk of the cultivable land was in the possession of the Rulers "who

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1 A.P. Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 622-S, 10.11.1923.

2 Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 716-S, 22.12.1923.

3 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 208/C/9/2, 17.12.1923.

4 Vide the next chapter.

5 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 28-C, 11.2.1923.

have never paid revenue". After the enactment of the reforms in June 1923 the price of land rose, increasing the temptation to lay claim to other people's lands. To guarantee security of persons and property the new Administration drew up plans for a land survey. Lack of local expertise led to its postponement until early 1926 when a team of Indian Surveyors, engaged by the State, began work in Bahrain.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Administration of Justice

In July 1923, the Agent described the absence of proper native courts as "the root grievance of Bahrainis".<sup>2</sup> The local judicial system, then in operation, consisted of a Sunni Shara<sup>c</sup> Court and a Sunni Qadi, Shaikh Qasim al-Mehza<sup>c</sup>. Two Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Qadis, Shaikh Khalaf al-<sup>c</sup>Asfour and Shaikh Salman bin Ahmad al-Hirz of Jid Haf<sup>s</sup>, dealt with cases which were referred to them. The Agent blamed the shortcomings of the system on the sectarian policies of the day:

"Owing to the extremely bitter relations in Bahrain between Sunnis and Shiahs, which attitude has for their own ends been deliberately encouraged by the rulers for years, I see no possibility of obtaining justice for Shiahs in any purely native Court."<sup>3</sup>

The Agency Courts were the only Courts which functioned efficiently, viz.

- (1) The Political Agent's Court, also called The District Court, dealt with cases in which British subjects and foreigners were involved. Indian Criminal and Civil Codes were applied in this Court in addition to some other Indian acts.
- (2) The Joint Court in which both the Agent and Shaikh Hamad, the latter from 1923 onwards, investigated cases between Bahrain subjects and

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1 No. 622-S, op. cit.

2 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 99-C, 25.7.1923.

3 No. 28-C, op. cit.

British subjects or British Protected persons.<sup>1</sup> The Agent's rulings were based on the Indian Criminal and Civil Codes, but the Shaikh was at a disadvantage since he had no set of laws to guide him. Commenting on this inadequacy, the Agent wrote:

"At present in cases in which the police arrest British protected persons and Shaikh's subjects for one and the same offence, often committed in confederacy, the Bahrain subjects are dealt with by some member of the Shaikh's family and the others by the Political Agent with incongruous results."<sup>2</sup>

#### The Institution of Shaikh Hamad's Court - July 1923

During July 1923 Shaikh Hamad's Court, also called the Bahrain State Court, was created to satisfy a long-standing Baharnah demand for a proper Court. Its institution indicated that the new Administration meant to put an end to the earlier practices whereby "every member of AlKhalifah family used to convict and punish Baharnah peasants without trial".<sup>3</sup>

The example of the Joint Court was taken into consideration when the Court was created.<sup>4</sup> It was convened twice a week at the Custom House. Records of cases were kept, and parties in a case were summoned and not "dragged without notice", as had been the case in the past. Besides, no one except Shaikh Hamad dealt with cases. A major shortcoming of the Court was absence of Codified laws to which the Shaikh could refer when pronouncing sentences. One solution suggested was the use of the translations of Indian Criminal and Civil Codes, such as were in use in Aden and in Zanzibar during 1923. However, this deficiency remained difficult to remedy and continued to be a nagging problem of the 1930s and the early 1940s.

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1 Before the elevation of Shaikh Hamad to the Administration, Shaikh Abdullah represented Shaikh Isa on the Joint Court. In 1919 this Court used to sit at the Agency Court room. Thereafter, it was regularly convened on Wednesdays in the Shaikh's upper room at the Custom House in Manamah.

2 No. 28-C, op. cit.

3 No. 622-S, op. cit.

4 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/133, No. 37-C, 17.3.1923.

Another chronic grievance was the appalling prison conditions. The prison, a forlorn godown in the house of the Amir, was once described by the Agent as "the Black Hole of Calcutta". Measures to improve these conditions were adopted by the new Administration.<sup>1</sup>

#### Shortage of Trained Local Personnel

From the start, reforms were beset with various difficulties, not least was the lack of capable men either among the "Ruling Family" or the "notables of Bahrain".<sup>2</sup> Shaikh Hamad showed a keen interest in the reforms and was actively engaged in them.<sup>3</sup> This was in line with the Government of India's instructions to see the Shaikh "actively associated with measures of amelioration and not merely following passively in the wake of changes pressed upon him".<sup>4</sup>

Towards the end of 1923, Mr. Bower's term of office as Director of Customs was to expire soon and the Administration hoped to replace him with another British Director. As the Customs had been put in Order by Bower, the Government of India saw no harm in engaging an Arab functionary to succeed him. The Agent disagreed, arguing that there was local opposition to the appointment of an Arab functionary and, that, in the absence of an efficient local Arab, Shaikh Hamad was anxious to have an English Director.<sup>5</sup> Finally, in January 1924, Mr. C.L.L. de Grenier, formerly accountant in Baghdad and Bushire, was appointed Director of Customs under a three year contract with the Government of Bahrain.<sup>6</sup>

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1 No. 99-C, op. cit.

2 No. 622-S, op. cit.

3 No. 208/C/9/2, op. cit.

4 Telegram from F.S.G.I. to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 1688-S, 8.12.1923.

5 No. 208/C/9/2, op. cit.

6 A.R.P.A. 1924. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

The Resistance to the Reforms - June-December 1923

During the second half of 1923, alongside the reforms the country witnessed the emergence of a movement opposing their introduction. The opponents of the reforms organised meetings, produced petitions, memorials, cables and press-articles in defence of their case. The movement had the support of Shaikh Isa, his wife and certain other members of his family, the Dowasir tribesmen, tribal Nakhudas and a few Sunni merchants.

The Baharnah, who were to benefit from the reforms, were subjected to a campaign of intimidation which included scattered acts of violence committed against them. In June 1923, the Dowasir attacked the Baharnah village of <sup>C</sup>Ali, killing and wounding a number of persons.<sup>1</sup> Following this attack, one of their chiefs, Ahmad bin Abdullah ad-Dosari, was detained, questioned by Shaikh Hamad and, together with his men, convicted and penalized.

Besides intimidation, acts of violence served to show that Shaikh Hamad's Administration was unable to provide protection for the Baharnah. Nevertheless, for the first time the Administration in Bahrain arrested, tried and fined a Dosari chief. Moreover, the Chief was required to give an undertaking to the effect that he would not attempt to rally support against the Shaikh inside or outside Bahrain, breach of which made him liable to deportation and confiscation of his tribe's property. However, the penalty imposed upon the tribe was out of proportion with the severity of the crimes, as the Agent's commentary below indicates:

"In the <sup>C</sup>Ali affair they were fined Rs. 15,000, about Rs. 13,000 of which was paid as compensation to those who had suffered and the heirs of those killed, but as they had killed three persons, wounded four seriously and looted most of the village, they may be said to have got off very lightly. On the other hand, they have been guilty of many similar crimes against the Baharnah in the past, ... "2

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1 Telegram from Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 82-C, 24.6.1923.

2 Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 106-C, 22.8.1923.

It was at this time that Ibn Saud's regular subsidy from the British Government was halted and there was evidence to suggest that he was more inclined now, than ever before, to lend support to the Najdi Dowasir in their stand against the Administration in Bahrain.<sup>1</sup> As a result, Shaikh Hamad expressed concern over the situation and the Resident subsequently assured him of Government backing for the reforms.<sup>2</sup>

On the night of August 10th, a Shi<sup>c</sup>ah <sup>c</sup>Ālim Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmad and his colleague Hasan bin Ramadan were stabbed to death on the road between Budayya<sup>c</sup> and Diraz. It was reported that the <sup>c</sup>Ālim was murdered because he had called the villagers to testify in the <sup>c</sup>Āli case, a call the Baharnah dared to heed for the first time. Formerly, they were so intimidated by the Dowasir, that they had refused to supply evidence against them.<sup>3</sup> Meantime, the Baharnah forwarded a petition to Shaikh Hamad demanding that the culprits be brought to justice.<sup>4</sup>

#### The First Outrage at Sitrah - September 1923

On 18th September 1923 a camel belonging to Shaikh Khalid, Shaikh Isa's brother, was found wounded in a village in Sitrah, an island peopled exclusively by the Baharnah. Shaikh Khalid wielded great influence there and collected 'raqabieh', i.e. neck-tax, his chief source of income from the people there. For years, the Shaikhs allowed their camels to graze in date-gardens leased to the Baharnah, who complained about the damage the camels caused to their plantations and the financial loss that accompanied it. This incident instigated an attack by the Khalids against the

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1 Ibid. More on Ibn Saud's subsidy can be found in the Resident's letter to H.H. Imam Sir Abdul Aziz ibn Abdur Rahman al-Faisal al-Sa<sup>c</sup>ud. F.O. 371: 8947, No. 173, 14.6.1923.

2 Telegram from Knox to Daly. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 657, 24.6.1923.

3 No. 106-C, op. cit.

4 Petition signed by a number of Baharnah heads, dated 13.8.1923.

villagers in the course of which one villager was killed. On September 19th, Shaikh Hamad summoned the Khalids to appear before his Court. This they chose to ignore, stating their willingness only to be tried by the Shara<sup>c</sup> Qadi.<sup>1</sup>

Failure, on the part of the new Administration to try the transgressors was bound to produce accusations of slackness, which had been levelled earlier at Shaikh Isa's regime. Firmness in dealing with the matter would have bolstered the image of the new regime. On September 22nd, acting on advice from the Agent, Shaikh Hamad held a Court for the trial of Shaikh Khalid, the former's uncle, and two of his sons and followers. Having established their guilt, the Court fined Shaikh Khalid Rs. 2,000 for aiding and abetting the attack and ordered him to vacate Sitrah, his place of residence, and to move to Rafaa<sup>c</sup>. His son Ali, described as the "ringleader" was convicted of organising and executing the attack. He was initially sentenced to banishment for life, but later on his sentence was commuted to ten years at Shaikh Hamad's request. An allowance of Rs. 300/- monthly was ordered for him while serving his sentence in India. His brother, Salman, was sentenced to one year banishment, and two of Shaikh Khalid's servants were given prison sentences.<sup>2</sup>

These sentences were seen by the Baharnah as very lenient, and they failed to deter further acts of violence committed in early 1924. But the fact that Shaikh Hamad acted at all against his close relatives was seen as a triumph for the rule of law and order.

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1 Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 122-C, 20.9.1923.

2 Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 123-C, 25.9.1923.

The Campaign Against Major Daly

The action taken against the Dowasir and - more especially - against Shaikh Khalid and his sons bore, according to Shaikh Isa, the mark of Major Daly, whose influence upon Shaikh Hamad's Administration was paramount. Both the tribes and the disaffected members of the Ruling Family were now involved in a campaign against the Agent whose interference in the internal affairs of the country was, they believed, in excess of the powers invested in him. Also, a few merchants, who had been adversely affected by reform of the Customs, agitated for the abolition of the landing tax on goods.<sup>1</sup>

Early in October 1923, Shaikh Mohammad bin Abdullah wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for India, complaining about the Agent's violations against local institutions, about his hostile attitude to the Ruling Family, his unlawful arrest of Ahmad ad-Dosari, and his refusing Wahbah entry into Bahrain.<sup>2</sup>

Following on the above letter, the Syrian paper Fata el-Arab published an article by Shaikh Mohammad in which he criticized Colonel Knox for retiring Shaikh Isa against his will and for threatening to confiscate the property of the Dowasir.<sup>3</sup> Shortly afterwards, another article, also by him, appeared in the Syrian paper Alif Bā which was critical of the British Political Authorities.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, Shaikh Mohammad's activities against the reforms, including his frequent visits to Kuwait and Iraq from where he sent cables to various

1 Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 131-C, 4.10.1923.

2 Letter from Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Khalifah to S.S.I., 20th Safar 1342 (2.10.1923). I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, pp. 57-8.

3 Extract entitled 'Nejd, Iraq and Bahrain' from C.E.S. Palmer, His Britannic Majesty's Consul at Damascus, to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/327, 1.11.1923.

4 Extract entitled 'Situation at Bahrain' from Palmer to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/327, 5.11.1923.

addresses, were known to British officials in the area. But whether he sent them with his father's knowledge, i.e. Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa, there was no conclusive evidence.<sup>1</sup>

### The Protests of Shaikh Isa

One aspect of Shaikh Isa's protest against the new Administration was his persistent refusal to receive his monthly stipend of Rs. 4,000 as determined by the Civil List. As a result, money accruing to him was deposited in an account, opened in his name, at the Eastern Bank. By October 1923, Rs. 20,000 had accumulated in the Shaikh's account. Despite attempts by Shaikh Hamad to persuade his father to accept his stipend, Shaikh Isa doggedly refused and instead demanded that it be increased to Rs. 30,000 per month.<sup>2</sup>

In his efforts to gain the sympathies of the Government of India, Shaikh Isa wrote a number of letters, and sent a series of telegrams complaining about the Agent's encroachments upon his domestic affairs and asking the Government to restore him to his former position of rulership. During October 1923, he sent two cables to Baghdad and Delhi complaining of Major Daly and urging the Government to hold an enquiry into the affairs of Bahrain.<sup>3</sup>

Colonel Trevor, who was on leave, returned to office on 21st October. Both Shaikh Isa and the tribal elements hoped that his return might augur changes in policy. Accordingly they organised a petition which was delivered to the Resident on the day following his arrival.<sup>4</sup> The signatories, apart from Shaikh Isa, included the Dowasir who were angered

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1 Trevor to Government of India, No. 622-S, op. cit.

2 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 200-C, 8.12.1923.

3 Col. Knox to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 568-S, 9.10.1923.

4 See Translation of a petition signed by Shaikh Isa and certain Arabs of Bahrain protesting against the reforms, delivered to the Resident by one of Shaikh Isa's servants on 22.10.1923. See enclosures to the Resident's letter to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 601-S, 27.10.1923.

by their chastisement earlier and the Sunni pearling Nakhudas who feared that the Government intended to collect taxes on their pearling fleet and to reform the Salifah Court. It was also reported that the Nakhudas were partly instigated by merchants like Yusuf Kanoo and Yusuf Fakhroo who told them that reform of the pearling industry was designed to help the divers at the expense of the Nakhudas.<sup>1</sup>

The petition was critical of Daly's control of the Shaikh's Administration, of his high handedness during the riots of May 1923, of his raising a police force made up entirely of Persians and controlled by a Persian. The petitioners resented Shaikh Isa's forced retirement and the transfer of Customs revenues to a British Bank. They blamed the abolition of local Courts on Major Daly and criticised him for ordering the arrest and fining of Ahmad ad-Dosari. In the end they demanded the restoration of Shaikh Isa to the Rulership and threatened to leave Bahrain in protest if their grievances were ignored by the Government.<sup>2</sup>

The above petition was followed by a Cable to the Government of India dated 23rd October in which Shaikh Isa expressed regret over the sad state of Bahrain subjects who, in his view, had lost their national rights under the "so-called reforms". He reiterated his earlier request for an enquiry into the affairs of Bahrain.<sup>3</sup>

1 Daly to Col. Knox. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 141/1/9, 17.10.1923.

2 See Petition, op. cit. The signatories to the petition were: Shaikh Isa ben Ali, Sayed Abdullah ben Sayed Ibrahim on behalf of Sada tribe, Ahmad ben Rashed on behalf of Al Bu-Falaseh tribe, Jabur ben Mohammad Mosallam on behalf of Mosallam tribe, Shabin ben Sagur al-Jalahamah on behalf of Jalahamah tribe, Abdul Wahab Zayani on behalf of Zayani tribe, Mohanna ben Fadhel on behalf of Naim tribe, Mohammad ben Rashed on behalf of Manan'ah tribe, Ahmad ben Abdullah ad-Dosari on behalf of Dowasir tribe, Mohammad ben Rashed Al ben Ali on behalf of Al ben Ali tribe, Ahmad ben Jasem ben Jodar on behalf of ben Jodar tribe.

3 Telegram from Shaikh Isa to the Viceroy. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, 23.10.1923.

The Baharnah Support the Reforms

The campaign against the reforms gave rise to concern among the Baharnah who feared that the Government of India might be pushed into abandoning the policy of reforms, on which they relied for a more balanced form of Government. On the 25th October 1923, their leaders submitted a petition to the Resident signed by 328 Baharnah. In it, they defended the reforms and described their introduction as a step in the right direction. They said they were satisfied with Shaikh Hamad's Administration and voiced their concern over the future of the reforms. They appealed to the Government to allow Major Daly to stay in Bahrain until the reforms were firmly established. They were alarmed by rumours of his imminent departure from Bahrain, in which case, they wrote, reforms would discontinue and a return to the chaotic conditions which prevailed earlier would follow.<sup>1</sup>

On the 26th October, the day the anti-reform group held their Congress, seven leading Baharnah, headed by Haji Ahmad bin Ali Khamis, submitted a second and extended petition to the Resident which, inter alia, contained nine specific 'supplications', a summary of which appears below:

(1) They expressed satisfaction with Shaikh Hamad's Court established in July 1923, and looked forward to further judicial reforms.

(2) As native and loyal subjects of Shaikh Hamad they denounced the agitations against the reforms and hoped for their smooth execution.

(3) They appealed for reform of the Salifah Court suspended earlier, and desired the Government to appoint new judges, known for their integrity and fairness. The previous judges, they wrote, were biased and favoured the Nakhudas at the expense of the divers.

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1 Petition without date presented personally to the Resident by three of the signatories on 25th October 1923. I.O.R. 15/2/88. See enclosures to the Resident's letter No. 601-S, op. cit.

(4) They wanted to see an end to the depredations caused by the Shaikh's wandering camels whose chief sufferers were the Baharnah tenants of those gardens.

(5) They wanted the Government to levy equitable taxes from all the population, Shiah as well as Sunnis; they rejected the discriminatory taxes imposed exclusively upon the Baharnah and cited Raqabieh, neck-tax, as an infamous example of the same.

(6) They demanded proper care and attention for prisoners and objected to their jailing in a derelict godown in the house of the Amir.

(7) They desired Sunni Nakhudas to release their Shiah divers from duty on the 10th of Moharram - a day of mourning for the Shiah.

(8) That the Government should help reduce the taxes, levied in kind, from Baharnah fishermen who caught fish by weirs.

(9) That equal opportunities be given to Baharnah boys who, unlike their Sunni opposite numbers, were deprived of schools.

They concluded their petition by asserting their willingness to raise their case with the 'Great Parliament of the High Government', if their supplications were ignored.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Congress of October 1923.

On 15th Rabi<sup>c</sup> I, 1342, i.e. 26th October 1923, the tribal groups opposed to the reforms summoned their supporters to a 'Congress'. This meeting was organised by Abdul Wahab Zayani, whose family was engaged in the pearl-trade, together with Ahmad bin Lāhej. Zayani, described by Rihani as the leader of the national revival in Bahrain, had been agitating

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1 Translation of Petition from seven Baharnah representatives, handed to the Political Resident on 26th October 1923. I.O.R. 15/2/88. It bore the signatures of Haji Ahmad bin Khamis, Saiyed Ahmad bin Saiyed Alawi, Ali bin Hasan, Abdul Rasul bin Rajab, Ahmad as-Samak, Muhammad al-Darazi, Abd Ali bin Rajab.

for a parliament for some time.<sup>1</sup> Earlier in 1921, his campaign for constitutional rights made him unpopular with Shaikh Isa, and also with Major Daly who he criticised for interfering in the domestic affairs of the country. He was unofficially asked to leave Bahrain for a while and he therefore proceeded to Bombay just after Jasim Chirawi, Shaikh Abdullah's secretary, had been deported to India in November 1921. Both men returned to Bahrain, separately, in 1923.<sup>2</sup>

During the second half of 1923, Rs. 150,000 were reported to have been paid in subscriptions to Zayani towards financing the movement against the reforms. He was also reported to have introduced the idea of 'Parliament' in the guise of a 'Congress'.<sup>3</sup> Those who attended the Congress were exclusively Sunni Arabs, although Rumaihi notes that before it was convened Zayani had tried to engage the support of Abd Ali bin Mansour Rajab, a leading Shi'ah, but the latter refused.<sup>4</sup> Official correspondence pertaining to this period contains nothing to show that such a contact had actually taken place. The Congress met and produced a petition, said to have been written by Zayani, and also appointed twelve members to follow up its decisions. At this time, Shaikh Hamad who was anxious to contain the situation, summoned the tribal elements as well as some leading merchants to a Majlis with a view to discussing the affairs. Those invited all attended, except Zayani and the two Najdis, bin Lahej and Ahmad bin Abdullah ad-Dosari. The Majlis failed to placate the petitioners.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Rihani, Mulūk al-Arab - Arab Kings - Vol. II, p. 248, footnote 2. Note that according to Zayani's statement of December 1923 to the High Court of Judicature at Bombay, he was now sixty-seven years old. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, p. 50.

2 Daly's No. 141/1/9, op. cit.

3 Resident's No. 57-T, op. cit.

4 Rumaihi, Bahrain - Social and Political Change ..., p. 181, op. cit.

5 Telegram from the Viceroy to S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, 2.11.1923.

The Resident's Reply to the Petitioners

In his reply to the petition of 22nd October 1923 the Resident informed Shaikh Isa that the decision to initiate reforms in the administration of Bahrain was not taken at the "personal wish of Knox or Daly", but that the High Government, after a thorough investigation, became convinced of their necessity. He added:

" ... You have never introduced any reform either at the urgent request of the Government or in fulfilment of your own promises. And as the tyranny and oppression in your island has become a public scandal it became necessary for the High Government to take action ... " <sup>1</sup>

Alongside the above reply, the Resident sent two letters to the Baharnah in response to their earlier petitions. He told them that reforms were instituted by Order of the High Government which was committed to them as a fixed policy, regardless of whether he or the Agent were in or out of office. As regards the issues raised by the seven Baharnah leaders, he gave reassuring answers and stressed that the Administration would consider them in due course. <sup>2</sup>

Acting on the Resident's instructions, the Agent subsequently published the following Notice to the people:

"As it appears from petitions I have received ... that people are in doubt as regards the continuity of policy regarding reforms, I Colonel Trevor, hereby inform and make it clear to all people in Bahrain that His Majesty's Government after exhaustive inquiry decided last May that the condition of affairs in Bahrain Islands urgently demanded reform and therefore ordered reforms to be initiated. Be it known therefore that the Orders of Government will be carried out and the policy of reform recently initiated pursued without deviation." <sup>3</sup>

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- 1 For Trevor's reply to Shaikh Isa's Petition, see enclosures to his No. 601-S, op. cit.
  - 2 Letter to the Baharnah signatories of the petition without date handed to me on 25th October 1923 by three of their number. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 277, 27.10.1923. Also, letter from A.P. Trevor to Ahmad bin Khamis, Sayed Ahmad ben Sayed Alawi, Ali ben Hasan, Abdul Rasul ben Rajab, Ahmad as-Samak, Mohammad Darazi and Abd Ali bin Rajab. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 278, 27.10.1923.
  - 3 See enclosure two in Trevor's letter to the G. of I. No. 622-S, op. cit.

In a communication to the Government the Resident reported that the petition and counter-petitions showed that the reforms were unwelcome to the Shaikh, his family and the Sunni Arab Nakhudas, but they were particularly welcome to the Baharnah. "This is as it should be", he added, "as the reforms are in the interests of the latter."<sup>1</sup>

The Resident's Visit to Bahrain - 1st-7th November 1923

There followed a visit to Bahrain by the Resident which lasted throughout the first week of November 1923. On the first day of his arrival there, he was presented with a petition, on behalf of the Congress, on board the R.I.M.S. Lawrence. In it the petitioners asked a number of questions in respect of the reforms:

"Is it 'reforms' to dismiss the Amir of the Town from his duties against the wishes of the people? Is it 'reforms' to deport people and imprison and fine ... without trial? Is it 'reforms' for Major Daly himself to act like a Qadi, as if he were the Shara<sup>c</sup> and the Qadi?" ... etc.

The petitioners held the Resident responsible for not heeding their earlier demand for a parliament and were now asking for the following six demands which constituted, they wrote, the decisions of the Congress:

- "(1) Our Shaikh Isa to remain the Ruler ... without any interference from the Consul (i.e. P.A.) ... If he should of his free will appoint Hamad as his Agent we will accept him.
- (2) All court cases to be sent to the Shara<sup>c</sup> or <sup>c</sup>Urfi, which is in accordance with the Shari<sup>c</sup>a.
- (3) A national Parliament to be started to look after the interests of the people as in other countries.
- (4) A Court of four acceptable persons skilled in diving affairs to decide all diving cases.
- (5) The Consul to be forbidden to break the good relations existing between Great Britain and the Bahrain Government, or to interfere in internal matters.

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<sup>1</sup> Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 602-S, 27.10.1923.

(6) We have selected twelve persons to represent us."<sup>1</sup>

On the final day of his visit to Bahrain, Shaikh Hamad summoned the petitioners to a meeting with the Resident, held at the latter's request. All attended the meeting except bin Lāhej who initially absented himself but was later brought in at the Resident's insistence. An oral message was delivered by the Resident which was also read out in Arabic. The Dowasir tribesmen were told that His Majesty's Government backed Shaikh Hamad and was opposed to mass exodus by them; that the Rulers of the Gulf States had been asked by the Government not to give asylum to Heads of tribes or Nakhudas; that if they chose to defy these instructions, their property would be subject to confiscation by the Government, their divers would be freed from contractual obligations, and their boats would be banned from pearling in Bahrain.<sup>2</sup> When the meeting came to an end, both Zayani and bin Lāhej were detained and subsequently deported to India. This was done in accordance with an earlier request for their banishment, submitted by the Administration in Bahrain and sanctioned by the Government.<sup>3</sup>

Before leaving Bahrain, the Resident saw the Baharnah representatives who handed to him a petition in appreciation of the Government's positive attitude towards the reforms. This petition occasioned the following commentary from the Resident to the Government:

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1 For the above petition see enclosures to Shaikh Isa's Memorial of 13.2.1924. I.O.R. 15/2/73, op. cit. The twelve persons appointed as representatives were: Abdul Wahab Zayani, Abdul Latif bin Mahmood, Sa-ad Abdullah bin Ibrahim, Husain bin Ali al-Mannaee, Mohammad bin Rashid bin Hindi, Ahmad bin Kasim al-Jodar, Shahin bin Sagar al-Jalahimah, Isa bin Ahmad ad-Dosari, Ahmad bin Lahej, Mohanna bin Fazal an-Naeemi, Jabur bin Mohammad al-Mosallam, Mohammad bin Subah. Ibid.

2 See enclosure three to Col. Trevor's No. 622-S, op. cit.

3 Letter from Shaikh Hamad, Deputy to Government of Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/127, 27 Rabi al-Awwal 1342 A.H. (7.11.1923).

"We are now insisting on reforms to ameliorate the lot of the down-trodden inhabitants of Bahrain, and judging from this petition are doing it with some success."<sup>1</sup>

### The Dowasir Leave Bahrain

Early in November 1923, it was reported that a large section of the Dowasir tribesmen under their Chief, Ahmad bin Abdullah ad-Dosari, had left Bahrain for Dammam. They left behind their property and an estimated 1,000 men who stayed in Budayya<sup>C</sup> under another Chief, Isa bin Ahmad ad-Dosari. Earlier, during the attack on <sup>C</sup>Ali, Isa had restrained his men and in appreciation of this role the Administration of Shaikh Hamad had considered appointing him to the leadership of the tribe instead of the intractable Ahmad.<sup>2</sup> The division of the Dowasir into two sections, one in Bahrain and the other in Dammam, was viewed by the Resident with some suspicion:

"The object of the manoeuvre was fairly obvious, viz., to keep a foot in both camps, and to prevent confiscation as much as possible by pretending that most of the property in Budaiya belonged to the section who remained."<sup>3</sup>

The belief that Ibn Saud might try to employ the Dowasir of Budayya<sup>A</sup> for his own ends, led the Resident to write to the Government of India seeking their approval for a letter to him to the effect that any interference in the affairs of Bahrain would be "in breach of article VI of his treaty with us". Moreover, he was to be told that the Government would reciprocate by restricting "export of supplies to his territory from India and Iraq".<sup>4</sup> To this the Government agreed.<sup>5</sup>

In Bahrain, the Administration viewed the Dowasir exodus with a sigh of relief, as the official commentary below indicates:

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1 Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 662-S, 24.11.1923. This latest petition from the Baharnah was signed by Mulla Hasan bin ash-Shaikh Al-Majid. Ibid.

2 Daly's No. 80-C, op. cit.

3 No. 622-S, op. cit.

4 Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 631-S, 11.11.1923.

5 J.E. Shuckburgh to the Under-Secretary of State for India. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, 17.11.1923.

"Their departure from Bahrain has assisted Shaikh Hamad to assert his authority more than would ever have been possible had they remained engaged in constant intrigue with the Sultan of Nejd."<sup>1</sup>

#### Zayani Resorts to Law

After his deportation to Bombay, Zayani filed a suit in the High Court stating that his detention there by the Commissioner of Police was unlawful, and that he should be free to reside anywhere in Bombay. As a result, the High Court ordered the Commissioner to produce the petitioner on 7th December 1923 and to submit evidence for his detention. As the Commissioner failed to supply the required evidence on the set date, the High Court allowed Zayani freedom of residence within Bombay Presidency, and asked the Commissioner to furnish the required documents not later than 15th January 1924.

Subsequently the Government of Bombay corresponded with the Political Agent in Bahrain and asked him to send a warrant or "a proper authority in some other form" for both men, i.e. Zayani and bin Lāhej.<sup>2</sup> The Remembrancer of Legal Affairs thus summarized the affair to the Government of Bombay:

"I am not clear, however, under what authority the Political Agent - Bahrain - has acted. The Bahrain Order-in-Council applies to: 1) British Subjects 2) Foreigners 3) Bahrain subjects registered in the Political Agency as being in the service of British subjects or foreigners. It is not clear what Court has dealt with these persons. The Warrant mentions the Court of the Shaikh of Bahrain, but is signed by the Political Agent ...  
... al-Zayani seems to have been deported without any formalities whatever and there is no warrant for him. I can see no defence could be put up for his detention."<sup>3</sup>

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1 A.R.P.A. 1923, op. cit.

2 J.E. Hotson, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, to P.A. Bahrain. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 1775-B, 11.12.1923.

3 Extract from a note by the Remembrancer of Legal Affairs, to the Government of Bombay, No. 2307, 17.12.1923; attached to Hotson's letter to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, 19.12.1923.

The Second Outrage at Sitrah - January 1924

On the night of 7th-8th January, a second attack was made against the Baharnah village of Wadyān in Sitrah, in which a number of men and one woman were killed and several others wounded.<sup>1</sup> It was established from accounts of witnesses that Shaikh Ibrahim bin Khalid, Shaikh Isa's nephew and son-in-law, had led the attackers, most of whom came from Rafaa<sup>c</sup>.<sup>2</sup> The raid was timed to take place while Shaikh Hamad was on a hawking trip to Lingah, in South Persia. The object of the attack was to take revenge upon those villagers who testified in the first outrage of September 1923 as a result of which Shaikh Ali bin Khalid had been banished to India and his brother Salman to the mainland. Besides this the attack also aimed at saddling Shaikh Hamad's Administration with further difficulties.<sup>3</sup>

While Shaikh Hamad was absent from the country, his younger brother Shaikh Mohammad, acted for him. When the Khalid's role in the above offence was established beyond doubt, they expressed their willingness to Shaikh Mohammad to stand trial but only before the Shara<sup>c</sup> Court. To this the Agent objected, knowing only too well that the outcome of such a trial was a foregone conclusion. When he sounded out the Sunni Qadi over the same, the latter was reported to have said:

" ... that this was a political crime the punishment for which should be dealt out by the Ruler, or failing him, His Majesty's Government".<sup>4</sup>

The Baharnah submitted two petitions to the Agent dated 1st and 5th Jamadi II, 1342, corresponding to 8th and 12th January 1924.<sup>5</sup> Also, two

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- 1 Telegram from the Resident to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 51, 10.1.1924.
  - 2 The Resident to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 56-S, 17.1.1924. Note that Ibrahim was married to Moozah, Shaikh Abdullah's sister.
  - 3 Ibid.
  - 4 Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 13-C, 13.1.1924.
  - 5 The petitions were signed by: Mohsin ben Abdullah ben Rajab, whose father Abdullah ben Rajab was the representative of the British India Steam Navigation Company in Bahrain in 1873. See Lorimer, p. 921, Historical Part IB, Saiyed Mohammad al-Biladi, Abdor Rasul ben Rajab, Abdol Ali ben Rajab, Mahdi ben Ahmad ben Saif, Hosain ben Madhoob, Matrook ben Mohammad, Haji Ali ben Hasan, Saiyed Mohamad ben Saiyed Hosain. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042.

messengers delivered a separate petition to the Resident in Bushire on behalf of their community on January 12th.<sup>1</sup> These petitions stated that in their view the sentences passed against the offenders in earlier cases failed to prevent further acts of violence against members of their community.<sup>2</sup> The attacks at Āli and Sitrah came only six months after the reforms had started and therefore their implications did not escape the Agent, who wrote:

"... any scheme of reforms aimed at the improvement of the status of the oppressed Shiahhs of Bahrain, is rendered perfectly useless as long as their lives are in constant jeopardy. Of what avail is Hamad's Court, in which for the first time Bahrainis have an opportunity of obtaining redress, if after decisions therein, the witnesses can be murdered with impunity?"<sup>3</sup>

Shaikh Hamad returned to Bahrain on January 14th in response to a cable from the Resident.<sup>4</sup> There he found large crowds of the Baharnah gathered at the Agency demanding prosecution of the culprits. He told them that he was seeking the advice of the British Government in the matter. By this time, the chief offenders had already escaped to the mainland and the Shaikh, acting on advice from the Agent, ordered the arrest of the rest of the suspects.<sup>5</sup>

At this point, H.M.S. Crocus arrived in Bahrain, and the Baharnah representatives received a letter from the Resident assuring them of the commitment of the Government to improve the Administration of Bahrain on a gradual and steady basis.<sup>6</sup> In a letter to the Government of India, the Resident noted:

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1 No. 56-S, op. cit.

2 See petition of 5th Jamadi II, 1342. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042.

3 Daly's No. 13-C, op. cit.

4 No. 56-S, op. cit.

5 Telegram from the Resident to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 90, 15.1.1924.

6 Col. A.P. Trevor to the Baharnah signatories to the two petitions. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 16, 16.1.1924.

"... I may observe again that Bahrain Shiah community after years of oppression are absolutely incapable of doing anything for themselves and can only petition us and whine. If they banded together and resisted the oppression of Khalifah family I think they could have done a great deal long ago ...

This being the case, our task in Bahrain of bolstering up a ruling family, which cannot rule justly or efficiently, and of helping at the same time a community which cannot help themselves is an extremely thankless one."<sup>1</sup>

The Resident's letter drew a firm response from the Government who cabled him, ordering the arrest and punishment of the perpetrators of Sitrah crimes. Above all, they wanted to see Shaikh Hamad assuming the proper obligations of rulership, viz.

"You should inform Shaikh that Government desire and expect him to keep order amongst his own subjects even should it involve the arrest and punishment of members of his own family. In such action he will have the full support of Government."<sup>2</sup>

#### The Culprits Stand Trial

On 25th January 1924, the Resident visited Bahrain. On the following day, Shaikh Khalid accompanied Shaikh Hamad to the Agency to meet him. The Agency was surrounded by crowds of Baharnah who were "groaning or moaning: justice".<sup>3</sup> During the meeting, the Resident informed the Shaikh of the Government's wish to see the culprits tried and punished, regardless of who they were. Shaikh Khalid, whose presence there was demanded by the Resident, was ordered to vacate Rafea<sup>c</sup> and to move to Moharraq. A commitment was obtained from him to the effect that he would discourage his sons from further acts of lawlessness.<sup>4</sup>

As the chief offenders, Shaikh Ibrahim bin Khalid, his brother Shaikh Salman bin Khalid, and Abdur Razzaq - a distant relative of Al Khalifah,

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1 No. 56-S, op. cit.

2 Telegram from the G. of I. to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 195-S, 21.1.1924.

3 Col. Trevor to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 89-S, 2.2.1924.

4 Ibid.

had absconded to the mainland they were tried in absentia. The trial was conducted by Shaikh Hamad, in the presence of Major Daly. Some of those arrested were Najdis and Hasawis, whose cases were dealt with by the Agency Court. The absconders were given death penalties, and their property was subjected to confiscation by the State. In fact, Salman bin Khalid and Abdur Razzaq had been serving one year banishment for their role in the outrage of September 1923. Many others were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment ranging from ten years to six months, and a few were acquitted after proving their alibis.<sup>1</sup>

The Agent was satisfied with the proceedings of Shaikh Hamad's Court and he described the evidence supplied by the witnesses for the prosecution as "very conclusive and left no shadow of doubt as to the guilt of the accused".<sup>2</sup>

#### The Creation of a Force of Levies

Following the above outrages, the maintenance of law and order was to receive greater attention from the Administration. Towards the end of 1923 Shaikh Hamad's Administration applied to the Resident seeking Government approval to raise and train a force of armed police.<sup>3</sup> The Resident agreed to this suggestion and recommended it to the Government of India adding that members of the force ought to be derived from Arabic-speaking, trained Baluchis, preferably ex-recruits of the Muscat Levies. Local Arabs, he wrote, were "unsuitable", and the Persians were "objectionable to

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1 Col. Trevor to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 108-S, 9.2.1924.

2 Maj. Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 32-C, 29.1.1924. The Agency Report for 1924 offers the following commentary on the death sentence passed in the above trial: "Doubtless Shaikh Hamad brought himself to pass such a sentence in consideration of the fact that they (i.e. the absconders) were safely out of the way, and that it was extremely unlikely that it could ever be carried out". I.O.R. 15/2/296.

3 See translation of Shaikh Hamad's letter to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/127, 27 Rabi I, 1342.

the Arabs".<sup>1</sup> In fact, Shaikh Hamad had a number of armed fidawis, whom he described as: "half-hearted supporters of reforms and at heart prefer old regime as giving more opportunities for squeezing, etc." If he had had a police force at his command, it would have certainly bolstered his authority vis-à-vis the recalcitrant tribal elements, he added.<sup>2</sup>

Subsequently, the Government of India approved the creation of the levies on the lines suggested by the Resident.<sup>3</sup> By June 1924 a force of levies, whose recruits were exclusively Baluchis, was raised under the command of Captain A. Campbell of the Indian Army.<sup>4</sup> It comprised 150 men, detachments of whom were posted in Muharraq, Budayya<sup>c</sup> and Sitrah.<sup>5</sup>

Shaikh Isa's Memorial to the Government - February 1924

Acting in his capacity as Shaikh Isa's authorised Agent in Bombay, Abdul Wahhab az-Zayani engaged the legal services of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, barrister-at-law, then associated with the Bhaishankar Kanga and Ghirdarlal firm of Barristers, Attorneys for Shaikh Isa. On behalf of the Shaikh, the firm sent a detailed Memorial dated 13th February 1924 to the Viceroy and Governor General of India. It stated that Shaikh Isa's installation as Ruler in 1286 A.H. was effected by "the will and with the approbation of the Chiefs of all the tribes", that the Shaikh's rule was "peaceful and popular", and that "there have been no complaint of any maladministration or misrule ... or any breach of treaty engagements with the British

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1 No. 622-S, op. cit.

2 Telegram from the Resident to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 128, 22.1.1924.

3 Telegram from the G. of I. to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 222-S, 24.1.1924.

4 A.R.P.A. 1924, op. cit.

5 Telegram from the Resident to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 229, 7.2.1924. Note that from January 1934 the Police Force was formed, almost entirely, of Bahrain subjects. See letter from the Adviser to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/297, No. 923-9A, 6.1.1934.

Government".<sup>1</sup> It also underlined the negative aspects of the policies pursued by the Agent, accusing him of arrogating to himself, to the exclusion of the Shaikh, the "legislative, judicial and executive authority".<sup>2</sup> The British Authorities, it was alleged, had persistently refused to consider the complaints of the petitioners and had imposed the reforms upon the Shaikh and his subjects. As a result, they were forced to convene "a Congress of the aristocracy and intelligentsia of the land", the decisions of which were communicated to the Resident whose reply to the same was "insulting and minatory".<sup>3</sup> Shaikh Isa urged the Government to reconsider its earlier decision, which resulted in his forced retirement in breach, he claimed, of the contractual rights his treaties with Britain bestowed upon him.<sup>4</sup>

On 22nd March 1924, the Resident, to whom the Memorial was sent for consideration and comment, put forth his views regarding the issues raised by the Shaikh. He described the Memorial as "a farrago of suppressio veri and suggestio falsi".<sup>5</sup> He pointed out that Shaikh Isa's appointment to the Rulership of Bahrain was effected with British backing, that the Shaikh repeatedly ignored official advice to reform his Administration and to channel funds for public services. As regards the Shaikh's statement that his rule was "peaceful and popular", the Resident commented:

"... it has been peaceful from outside aggression thanks to the protection of the British Government, but by no means so internally for the indigenous population ... have been ill-treated, looted and murdered ... with perfect impunity by every member of his own family ...; and popular with a small section of the Sunni tribal heads and nakhudas because they could do what they liked.

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- 1 Memorial from Shaikh Esa bin Ali AlKhalifah to H.E. Sir Rufus Daniel Isaacs, Viceroy and Governor General of India, Bombay, 13.2.1924. I.O.R. 15/2/73. Attached to the Resident's No. 57-T, op. cit.
- 2 Ibid., para. 6.
- 3 Ibid., para. 13.
- 4 Ibid., para. 16-17.
- 5 No. 57-T, op. cit.

It is emphatically unpopular with the Shiah majority as countless petitions and reports have shown."<sup>1</sup>

Commenting upon the allegation that Major Daly abolished all law-Courts, he wrote that only the Salifah Court was "in abeyance from inanimation, as no one desires to go before it as no justice can be obtained". All the Courts were functioning normally, and what was abolished, he added, was the:

"Majlis which every Shaikh and Shaikhling had: these were not Courts but irresponsible vehicles of oppression, every Shaikh fining, imprisoning and expropriating the rayats (Shiahs only bien entendu) at his own sweet will."<sup>2</sup>

The Resident refuted the statement that the Agent pursued "repressive and reactionary" policies which were, according to the Memorial, provocative to the Arabs and harmful to the country. To this he replied:

"Any intelligent person however cannot fail to see a vast improvement. Even Bin Saud (who officially opposes the reforms and supports Shaikh Isa as the protagonist of Islam) admitted in private conversation ... that the state of the Islands has vastly improved while the Shaikhs are better off financially than they ever were before."<sup>3</sup>

With the removal of the chief obstacles to the enactment of the reforms, the resistance to them had gradually died out. First there came the retirement of Shaikh Isa, then the chastisement of the disaffected tribal elements followed by the creation of the armed Police. Shaikh Hamad's position as Deputy-Ruler, was now firmly secured especially after Shaikh Abdullah had agreed to serve the new Administration. Major Daly emerged as the actual architect of the reforms. It was he who backed Hamad's elevation to the Administration, ensured Baharnah support for the new regime, and continued to serve until 1926, thereby becoming the longest serving Political Agent in Bahrain.

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1 Comment on Memorial dated 13.2.1924 from Shaikh Isa bin Ali AlKhalifah to H.E. the Viceroy. I.O.R. 15/2/73, pp. 1-2.

2 Ibid., p. 3.

3 Ibid., p. 5.

Chapter Four

Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies: Bahrain 1924-9

First a brief Introduction

The resistance to the reforms had, by the end of 1924, almost subsided and the people became reconciled to the benefits to be gained from organised government. The relations between the Rulers and their Shi<sup>c</sup>ah subjects were, from 1925 onwards, showing gradual improvement, though the bitterness engendered by previous years of mistreatment still formed an obstacle to real harmony.

By the spring of 1925 two of Shaikh Isa's supporters, Shaikh Abdul Wahhab az-Zayani and Shaikh Khalid bin Ali, had died. Early 1926 saw a change in Shaikh Isa's attitude towards Shaikh Hamad's Administration and in May of the same year Shaikh Isa agreed to draw on his allowances from the State, after refusing to do so for about three years.<sup>1</sup>

The second half of 1926 witnessed a number of attempted murders, some with fatal consequences. On 1st August 1926 Ismail Shah Murad, a sepoy of the Levy Corps, shot and killed Subedar Niaz Ali Khan and Havaladar Nuur Daad of the same Force. He then shot at Major Daly who was fortunate enough to have escaped with minor injury. No political motive was mentioned for the attack, the repercussions of which were reported in the Persian press.<sup>2</sup> Ismail was tried and executed on 21st September. Two other members of the same Force, Mohammad bin Kunari and

1 Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/73, number illegible, 30.5.1926.

2 During 1930, the Persian paper Shafagh-i Surkh published an article on Bahrain which included the following statement about Major Daly: " ... it was unfortunate that he was only struck in the ear by the bullet that was fired at him some years ago at Bahrain". The British Minister in Tehran responded to the same by sending a personal letter to the Persian Minister of Court in Tehran, in which he described the above account as "outrageous". See Sir R. Clive to Mr. M.A. Henderson. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1045, E6026/193/91, 28.10.1930.

Murad bin Dilpul attempted to assassinate Haji Salman bin Jasim, the Bahraini Inspector of Police, but he escaped unhurt. Both men were tried and given prison sentences.<sup>1</sup>

In the wake of these incidents the Levy Corps was disbanded and Charles Belgrave - the Adviser - was sent to India to enlist new recruits of ex-Sepoy from the Punjab. Subsequently a new Police Force was formed and from 13th November 1926 Captain L.S. Parke was appointed in charge of the same.

More serious was the attempt on Shaikh Hamad's life on the night of 13th October 1926. The assassin, who fired four shots at the Shaikh, missed his target. The attempt revealed the extent to which Hamad's opponents were prepared to go in their resistance to his Administration. A reward of Rs. 8,000/- was offered for information leading to the culprit's arrest, but without success.

New evidence emerged during the second half of 1929, in consequence of which Shaikh Hamad was advised to deal with the matter. Subsequently, the Bahrain Court was convened at the Shaikh's request to investigate the charges against three members of the Ruling family accused of various acts of violence including the attempt on Shaikh Hamad's life.<sup>2</sup> Shaikh Salman presided over the Court, assisted by Shaikh Abdullah, the Adviser and four assessors: two Sunnis and two Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs. The accused were Shaikh Ibrahim bin Khalid, known for his earlier opposition to Shaikh Hamad, Shaikh Hamad bin Abdullah al-Ghatam and Shaikh Humūd bin Subāh.

Shaikh Ibrahim was charged with the assassination attempt on Shaikh Hamad. He was confronted with the evidence which included a letter he had written and ten rounds of ammunition which he had given to Habib bin

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1 A.R.P.A. 1926. I.O.R. 15/2/296. Note that Haji Salman died on 26 October 1934. He was described as "a loyal and capable officer".  
A.R.P.A. 1934. I.O.R. 15/2/297.

2 A.R.P.A. 1929. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

Sa<sup>c</sup>ad for use in the plot. He admitted to writing the incriminating letter and to handing over the ammunition, but denied any complicity in the plot. The Court found him guilty, but Shaikh Hamad stopped short of taking action in the case. It is worth noting that when the incident happened, Ibrahim was supposed to be serving a term of exile on the mainland.<sup>1</sup>

In the second case al-Ghatam, a relation of the Ruling Family, was retried for ordering an attack in 1924 on the house of a former Baharnah tenant of his from Farsiyah village. Two men were killed in the attack and the case was originally tried by Shaikh Hamad, who on finding him guilty of the charge against him, ordered him to pay the relatives of the victims Rs. 7,500/-. The motive for the attack was the victims' refusal to pay taxes which had been previously levied by the Shaikhs and were abolished shortly before the crime took place. After hearing the new and the old evidence, the Court now decided that the previous sentences should stand.

In the third case, Shaikh Humud was retried for his involvement in an attack in 1921 on Haji Husain al-<sup>c</sup>Uraibi, one of his tenants from the village of Tubli. <sup>c</sup>Uraibi was killed in the attack and his son, who was gravely wounded, was thrown into prison. The motive for the attack was long-standing dispute over land-boundaries and water rights. After hearing the testimony of the witnesses, the Court decided that the evidence as to his presence at the scene of the assault was insufficient, but was satisfied that the affair was instigated by him. He was ordered to pay two blood monies to the relatives of the victim who, as in the previous case, refused to accept the money.<sup>2</sup>

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1 C. Belgrave to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 355, 19.8.1929.

2 Ibid. Note that after his conviction in 1929, Shaikh Humud forfeited his post as President of the Majlis al-Tijarah. A.R.P.A. 1929.  
op. cit.

Official Concern Over the Bahrain Reforms - 1924

By the end of July 1924, the Government of India wrote to the Resident expressing their concern about the Bahrain reforms and stating their view that they had exceeded what was originally intended. They wrote:

"The Government of India welcomed the proposal that reforms should be introduced into the Administration of Bahrain, but had no desire to proceed further or faster than they could carry the Shaikh wholeheartedly with them. On seeing the details of the schemes actually recommended they have felt that both the Political Resident and the Political Agent Bahrain have shown a tendency to treat the island too much on the lines of a Native State in India ... " <sup>1</sup>

Answering the above communication, the Resident pointed out that Shaikh Hamad was in full agreement over the four chief reforms: the Customs, Municipal Sanitation, the Revenue Settlement, and Pearling reforms. Moreover, he was surprised to find that in the latest edition of the Foreign Office 'Consular Instructions' Bahrain was listed under: British Protected States, along with the Federated Malay States and the Principal Native States of India, Nepal and Hadramout. The level of development between these States, he wrote, showed great fluctuations. <sup>2</sup>

In a letter to the Agent in Bahrain, the Resident conveyed the views of the Government and noted that only 'moderately conceived objective' would receive their approval and that anything which would entail greater commitment would be objectionable to them. He put the following question to the Agent:

"Shaikh Hamad, I take it, at present holds all the reins of Government in his own hands. Is there a likelihood of his delegating any powers in the near future to a competent Cabinet of indigenous Ministers, or even to one Vazir?" <sup>3</sup>

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1 C. Latimer, Deputy-Secretary to G. of I., to Col. F. B. Prideaux, P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 36-X, 25.7.1924.

2 Prideaux to Latimer. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 484-S, 24.8.1924.

3 Prideaux to Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 487-S, 26.8.1924.

In his reply to the above letter, the Agent gave a number of reasons which necessitated the introduction of the reforms. He listed the original reforms which were planned by the Agency with the approval of the Shaikh, viz. Justice, Diving, Land Survey and Registration of Property. The Levies were created as a result of a request from Shaikh Hamad with a view to preserving Law and Order. The Municipality was established before the start of the reforms and the municipal schemes realized thereafter were part of the normal development of any town. The Bahrain Court, instituted in July 1923, ensured a reasonable measure of justice for Bahrain subjects and the diving reforms aimed at ensuring a fair treatment for the divers against their Nakhudas. Land Survey and Registration of property was meant to stop confiscation of land and boundary disputes. Daly concluded his letter with some interesting remarks, indicative of his understanding of the situation in Bahrain:

"That Bahrain is gradually becoming more civilized may or may not suit us, but I fail to see how we can stop it. Every year more people from here go to Europe in the pearl trade and come back somewhat enlightened, and a number of educated people now come here frequently from India. It is not possible therefore that ideas should remain fixed. It was precisely because Shaikh Easa refused to move a little with the times, while his subjects were advancing, that gave rise to necessity for a more enlightened Ruler.

I think the Government of India may rest assured that nobody wants to introduce any more 'reforms' or to commit them in any way further. Improvements in the administration will however gradually take place unless we take it upon ourselves to forbid Hamad to carry out his ideas. It seems to me that once the 'Record of Rights' is completed and the diving books are brought into use and the simple rules are got out for the Court the 'reforms' may be allowed to die a natural death."<sup>1</sup>

The above exchanges over the reforms revealed the Government's lack of familiarity with the specific issues of Bahrain which had necessitated the policy of reforms in the first place. They also throw light on the pressures to which the Agent was subjected while planning and supervising the implementation of the reforms, both from the Government and

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<sup>1</sup> Daly to Prideaux. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 209/9/1, 31.8.1924.

from the opposing tribal elements as shown in the previous Chapter.

### Land Survey and Record of Rights - 1924-26

Land Survey and registration of property was a question of great urgency to Shaikh Hamad's Administration. Its implementation would have halted what was officially described as:

"... the process of squeezing the indigenous Shiah population out of their gardens - a practice which has been going on for years."<sup>1</sup>

The survey, it was envisaged, would enable the Administration to levy land revenue from all landowners regardless of class or status. Much of the bitterness among the Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs was caused by the loss of their lands over the years. Many cases litigated in Shaikh Hamad's Court involved two owners claiming the same plot or garden. To do justice to the rightful owner, the Resident suggested the following:

"A great deal of the land held by the Alkhalifah family and well-to-do Sunnis has undoubtedly been filched from the original Bahraini holders. It will not be possible however to rectify the oppression of years, and I would suggest that when a land owner can furnish proof of possession for a definite period, say ten years, his right to the land should be considered valid."<sup>2</sup>

As early as November 1923, Shaikh Hamad applied to the Government of India to help find a team of surveyors to work in Bahrain. In the following year both Shaikh Hamad and Major Daly dealt with cases which involved land-disputes, and the experience they gained, while sorting them out, proved to be of great help to the surveyors later on. Some such cases obliged the Government to make up for damages sustained by owners under the old regime:

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- 1 Resident's No. 622-S, op. cit. Note that by 'gardens' is meant date-groves locally known as date-gardens.
  - 2 Ibid. Owners whose lands or date-gardens were illegally seized complained to the Political Agency. Their letters of complaint are preserved in the Agency File. I.O.R. 15/2/83.

" ... a large number of cases have come to light in which Shaikh Isa (generally as the result of false information supplied by his fidawis) has sold the same land several times over, or in selling a plot of Government land had given documents which included neighbouring plots already owned by others. In such cases Shaikh Hamad has either compensated the injured parties by grants of other plots of Government land, or by refunding the purchase money taken by Shaikh Isa."<sup>1</sup>

Also in 1924 the Government of Bahrain opened a Land Office to register sales and transfer of property and to deal with cases of land disputes. A year later an initial sum of Rs. 25,000 was earmarked for the implementation of the Survey, to be increased thereafter to Rs. 50,000 to cover the total cost of the scheme. In April of the same year, i.e. 1925, the Administration in Bahrain asked the Surveyor General of India to help furnish them with staff to survey Manamah Island north of Jabal Dukhan, the islands of Moharraq and Sitrah, and to produce maps to scale for the same. The Administration then estimated the inhabitants of Manamah at 30,000, and those of Moharraq at 20,000, and described the land as a stretch of about 15 miles along the coast of the main island, whose breadth varied in size and whose cultivation included date-groves and lucerne.<sup>2</sup>

In May 1925, both Shaikhs Hamad and Abdullah accompanied by Major Daly, left for an official visit to England. Captain G.L. Mallam, the then officiating Agent, followed up the preparations for the Survey. At this time, the Surveyor General drew up a plan which would have cost the Administration in Bahrain Rs. 70,000. This was in excess of what had earlier been allocated.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, the staff was reduced and the cost was brought down to Rs. 39,000, with the Survey to be completed in six months.<sup>4</sup>

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1 A.R.P.A. 1924, op. cit.

2 Daly to the Surveyor General of India. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 37/9/3, 28.4.1925.

3 Captain Mallam to Col. C.G. Crosthwaite, Acting Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 78/9/3, 6.9.1925.

4 Telegram from P.A. to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 1017, 30.9.1925.

In early 1926 the Indian staff began to arrive in Bahrain and during March of the same year a Land Registration Department was created to replace the earlier Land Registry Office. The new Department was initially run by a clerk, a surveyor and an assistant. It took the public some time to appreciate the useful work the Department was carrying out. This included the maintenance of records of all sales of immovable property. On completion of a sale, an official of the Department was despatched to measure and prepare a plan of the property in the presence of the owner. A brief description of the property was published and a period of one month was allowed for objections to the sale. In the absence of objections, the sale was allowed to take place and a new land deed was made with the plan of the property shown on its back. A registration charge of Rs. 10/- was collected on each sale conducted and a copy of the deed was kept by the Department, and an identical copy by the owner.<sup>1</sup>

Also during 1926, the Survey Department was started as a branch of the Land Registration Department. Its achievements during the year included the completion of a plane table survey of Manamah city and surveys of ten villages. In 1927, 369 transfers of property were registered by the Land Registration Department, as against 200 transfers in the previous year. Another fifteen villages were surveyed and Records of Rights and an index of maps for another five were made. The Department also supplied the Agency and the Bahrain Courts with a large number of plans and reports on houses and date-gardens which were involved in claims and counter-claims. The total cost of the survey carried out until 6th January 1927 amounted to Rs. 34,000 including the cost of equipment used in the process.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Report by the Adviser on the Land Registration Department. I.O.R. 15/2/296, 20 Sha<sup>c</sup>ban 1345 (23.2.1927).

2 Ibid.

While carrying out their work the surveyors came across a number of difficulties, such as overlapping boundaries of plots or gardens, disputes over water rights, and small gardens with numerous shares. Commenting upon the same, the Adviser wrote:

"Neither the owners nor the tenants show the slightest sympathy with the work, on the contrary they consider it unnecessary trouble. The owners who are generally Shaikhs have no knowledge of the size of the boundaries of their properties, and if they hold documents, the documents do not show the boundaries clearly. They appoint persons as their Agents to appear with their documents with the surveyors. The Bahraini tenants give little assistance seeing no benefit in the work, considering that their importance as possessors of knowledge of the garden boundaries will be diminished when the settlement is over."<sup>1</sup>

#### The Institution of the Department of Waqfs

Until 1926 Waqf property in Bahrain was managed by Mutawallis, i.e. executors or administrators of Waqfs. Government control of the Waqfs had not yet existed making it easier for the former to indulge in corrupt practices. Funds left for mosques, schools and charities were misappropriated by those in charge of them. To this effect the Adviser wrote:

"... the worst offenders in this respect being the old Sunni Qadi, ..., and his numerous sons and nephews, who occupy, but do not function in, many paid positions in mosques and non-existent schools. These facts were so well known that foreign newspapers, Egyptian and Iraqi, commented on the subject."<sup>2</sup>

In 1927, following the conviction of the Sunni Qadi of Moharraq for Waqf irregularities, the Government of Bahrain instituted a Department for Waqfs, Sunni as well as Shi<sup>c</sup>ah.<sup>3</sup> Three Sunni Shara<sup>c</sup> Qadis were appointed in charge of the Sunni Waqfs: Shaikh Abdul Latif bin ash-Shaikh Mahmud, Shaikh Abdul Latif bin ash-Shaikh Mohammad bin Sa<sup>c</sup>ad, and

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1 Ibid.

2 The Adviser to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 328/27, 25 Rabi<sup>c</sup> II, 1346.

3 Captain Alban to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. C-95, 26.8.1927.

Shaikh Abdul Latif bin Jodar. They were assisted by Mohammad bin Rashid Al Khalifah, a former judge on the Bahrain Court, and a clerk.<sup>1</sup> The Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Waqfs were entrusted to the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Qadi Sayed <sup>c</sup>Adnan bin Sayed <sup>c</sup>Alawi, Sayed Husain al-Mutawwa<sup>c</sup> and two clerks.<sup>2</sup> Shortly after it was introduced, the Department asked the public to produce all Waqf documents in their possession, which were then scrutinised for authenticity, registered and duplicated for the records. The Department's administrative and supervisory tasks included accounts of endowments, expenditure on repair and maintenance, the collection and disbursement of the Waqfs. Two months after it had been started, apart from the duplicating of the documents, very little progress was made in respect of accounts, registers, and inspection of Waqf property. To assist the Qadis in their task, Shaikh Hamad appointed a Council of notables, Sunnis as well as Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs, presided over by Shaikh Abdullah. A separation was made between the purely religious and the administrative affairs. The Qadis were entrusted with the religious aspect of the Waqf's work, and the lay members of the Council were made responsible for the secular side of it. Shortly afterwards, the Qadis became disenchanted with this division and with the members of the Council who, they believed, were encroaching upon their position as exponents of the Shara<sup>c</sup>. On the contrary, the public viewed the new measures with satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>

In December 1927, the three Qadis asked Shaikh Hamad to abolish the Council and to restore to them full control of the Waqfs. They even organised a petition, signed by Sunnis as well as Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs, in support of their case. Nevertheless, the Administration initially ignored their demand believing that the Qadis were more important to the Shara<sup>c</sup> Court

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1 See Official Notice from Shaikh Hamad to the three Qadis. I.O.R. 15/2/133, No. 1027/25, 21st Dhul Qa<sup>c</sup>d, 1345.

2 The Adviser to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 119/27, 12th Safar 1346.

3 No. 328/27, op. cit.

than to the Waqf Department.<sup>1</sup>

After the death of the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Qadi Sayed <sup>c</sup>Adnan in November 1928 the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Waqfs were temporarily entrusted to Shaikh Mohammad Ali al-Madani, the former's executor. Thereafter, both Shaikh Abdullah bin Mohammad Saleh and Shaikh Ali bin Hasan al-Mūsa were appointed Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Qadis. The former was willing to take charge of the Waqfs and was therefore entrusted with their affairs; Shaikh Ali, on the other hand, refused to have anything to do with them. The rural Baharnah voiced their opposition to Shaikh Abdullah's handling of the Waqfs, and as a result a Committee of laymen was elected in May 1929 to run their affairs.<sup>2</sup> The Committee consisted of six persons from the villages and four from Manamah. In order to placate the feelings of Shaikh Abdullah, the Qadi, no president was elected for the Committee<sup>3</sup>, whose members were so successful in their work that they were able to discover new Waqfs, and to raise income by Rs. 50,000.<sup>4</sup>

Meantime the Administration decided to leave the Sunni Qadis in charge of the Sunni Waqfs until such time as the public pressed for State intervention.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Return of the Dowasir Tribesmen - 1927

The Dowasir departed Bahrain against the wishes of the Government. As a result, their property was seized and their divers were freed from contractual obligations with them and from any debts which they owed to them. They were now settled in Ibn Saud's territory in Dammam, which

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- 1 Belgrave to Col. Barrett. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. C-17, 18.12.1927.
  - 2 Captain C.G. Prior to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. C/84, 29.6.1929.
  - 3 Belgrave: Notes on Expenditure (Budget) 1347 (1928-9). I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044.
  - 4 A.R.P.A. 1929, op. cit.
  - 5 A.R.P.A. 1931. I.O.R. 15/2/297.

provided relatively easy access to Bahrain. More important, news of Ibn Saud pledging to support them in regaining their confiscated property remained a cause for concern for the Administration in Bahrain.

Individual attempts by the Dowasir to retrieve their belongings from Bahrain were made from time to time. During January 1924 one of them, Ibrahim bin Abdul Latif ad-Dosari, delivered a letter to Shaikh Hamad from Ibn Saud in which the latter requested Hamad to assist Ibrahim in recovering his two jolly-boats from Budayya<sup>c</sup>. Shaikh Hamad referred the matter to the Agent who, believing that the attempt represented the thin end of the wedge, refused to concede the demand.<sup>1</sup>

In February of the same year, the Resident wrote to Ibn Saud drawing his attention to the circumstances which forced the Government of Bahrain to take action against the Dowasir, to the "unfettered license" which they enjoyed under Shaikh Isa's regime, to the resistance they showed to the changes contemplated by Shaikh Hamad's Administration, and to their departure in defiance of Col. Knox's earlier warning. He also reminded him that any support for the Dowasir against the Administration in Bahrain would be in violation of his treaty commitments with Britain. The Dowasir of Budayya<sup>c</sup>, he added, were Bahrain subjects and the decision to punish them for disobedience was a matter which concerned only the Government of Bahrain and the British Government.<sup>2</sup>

In replying to the Resident's above letter, Ibn Saud denied any knowledge of talks he was alleged to have held with the Dowasir or of promises he had made to them towards recovering their possessions in Bahrain. Nevertheless, he pointed out that "the Islamic State of Bahrain and its Shara<sup>c</sup> has no right to confiscate the property of Muhajirin."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Telegram from the Resident to the S.S.C. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, 31.1.1924.

2 Translation of a letter from Col. A.P. Trevor to H.H. the Sultan of Najd. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 49, 14.2.1924.

3 Translation of a letter from the Sultan of Najd to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 77, 16th Rajab, 1342.

Reporting the contents of the Sultan's letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Resident commented:

"... he styles the recalcitrant tribesmen as 'Muhajirin' and seems inclined to give the matter a religious turn and pose as the champion of Islamic custom. As a matter of fact, the appeal to the Shara<sup>c</sup> has, in the past, always been the last resort of the Dowasir. Whenever they have been taken to task for misdeeds they have invariably offered to submit to the decision of the Shara<sup>c</sup> which in the case of so powerful a body as they were when in Bahrain, has always resulted in their escaping scot-free, since, needless to say, the local Qazis were afraid to give a decision against them."<sub>1</sub>

During March 1924, the Dowasir appealed to the Sunni Qadi in Bahrain to intercede with Shaikh Hamad on their behalf, but the attempt failed owing to Major Daly's opposition. His aim was to see that they received sufficient punishment for non-compliance with the laws of Bahrain, and that their return to Bahrain should not take place before the arrival of the Levies. Towards this end, he wrote:

"To allow them to return would be a distinct breach of faith and reversal of the policy of the reforms, aimed at securing reasonable rule for the Shiah's, and after the solemn warnings they received before they left, it would be construed by them as a sign of weakness to allow them to return."<sub>2</sub>

The status of the Dowasir of Bahrain was highlighted by an incident of 26th August 1924 in which a Dosari nakhuda from Budayya<sup>c</sup>, Ibrahim bin Buti, tied a diver to the mast of a boat anchored off Manamah pier and left him naked without food or water. On being told of the diver's ordeal, the Assistant Political Agent ordered his release and the arrest of the offending nakhuda, who was tried and sentenced to four months imprisonment under the Indian Penal Code. When Ibn Saud learnt of the case, he demanded the nakhuda's immediate release, arguing that he was a subject of Najd regardless of the fact that the crime was committed in Bahrain. It was pointed out to Ibn Saud that the accused was a Dosari from Bahrain, therefore a Bahrain subject, and that as he had committed

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1 Letter from A.P. Trevor to the S.S.C. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 14/163, 2.3.1924.

2 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/87, No. 88-C, 31.3.1924.

the crime in Bahrain he was answerable to Bahrain laws in the same way as Bahrainis in Najd were subject to Najdi Courts for crimes committed in Najd territory.<sup>1</sup>

Early in September 1926, Col. F.B. Prideaux, the then Resident visited Bahrain. His visit lasted from 3rd to 19th September. At this time, Major Barrett had succeeded Daly as the new Political Agent in Bahrain. There followed an interview between Shaikh Hamad, the Resident and three Dosari Chiefs, Abdul Latif bin Ibrahim<sup>2</sup>, Isa bin Sa<sup>c</sup>ad and Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Hasan. They complained of the heavy taxes levied from them by the Wahhabi Amir of Qatif, and raised the question of their readmission to Bahrain. The Resident warned them not to expect to be allowed back as privileged tribesmen, a position they had formerly arrogated to themselves. More specifically, they were told that:

"... they could never again claim to be internally independent of the Ruler of Bahrain. They would have to pay the same taxes as other agriculturists and traders, they must be submissive to the Shaikh's Courts ... , and they should accept the police post which had been established in their chief town. Their official headmen would be nominated and could be changed, if necessary, by the Ruler, and their Bahraini tenants and negro divers be fully protected and have equal rights of citizenship with others of their class."<sup>3</sup>

These conditions were disagreeable to Ahmad bin Abdullah, who had earlier ordered his men out of Bahrain, and therefore he rejected them and discouraged the other two Chiefs from accepting them.<sup>4</sup>

When Colonel Haworth succeeded Prideaux as Resident in January 1927, he paid two visits to Bahrain on 29th January and again on 24th February. During his second visit, which lasted for nine days, he learnt about a

1 Daly to Prideaux. I.O.R. 15/3/1/6, no number, 13.10.1924.

2 Note that Shaikh Hamad showed his sympathy to the Dowasir by retaining the brother of Abdul Latif bin Ibrahim in his personal service.

3 Col. F.B. Prideaux to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 517-S, 4.12.1926.

4 Ibid.

letter which Ibn Saud had sent to Shaikh Hamad asking him to return the confiscated property to the Dowasir. Shaikh Hamad viewed this request with favour and spoke of the 'disgrace' he had felt over the confiscation of the Dowasir property carried out in his name. The Resident concurred with the Shaikh's views and agreed to allow the Dowasir to return to Bahrain, on condition that they abandoned their claim to special privileges and subjected themselves to the laws and rules of Bahrain on a par with all the citizens. On his part Shaikh Hamad assured the Resident of their willingness to return as ordinary individuals and to accept the police post established in their town. In a letter to the Government, the Resident described the Ruler's ties with the Dowasir as follows:

"In this reference it must be noted that Alkhalifah are a Sunni people governing a Shi'a population, and they do not desire to weaken themselves by the expulsion of a powerful Sunni support."<sup>1</sup>

Continued opposition to their return to Bahrain amounted, in Arab eyes, to disallowing an Arab Ruler to forgive an Arab tribe, he wrote, adding that:

"... there was no point that the odium of keeping them out against the obvious wishes of the Ruler should rest on us."<sup>2</sup>

Having returned to Bahrain, their first task was to retrieve their belongings. They then asked the Government of Bahrain to return to them the rents collected from their property during their absence, and also the cash which their divers owed to them. Already, the State had to buy back some of their houses which it had sold earlier, and to compensate their owners for money spent on maintenance and repair. Besides this, the Government had to call back all leases of date-gardens owned by the Dowasir, which had been leased out after their departure. This

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1 Col. L.B.H. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 87-S, 27.3.1927.

2 Ibid.

operation cost the State Rs. 40,000. Furthermore, they asked for Rs. 64,000 in lieu of rents collected by the State while they were away, plus Rs. 200,000 to 300,000 as compensation for debts owed by their previous divers and which had been cancelled by the State.<sup>1</sup>

In a gesture of goodwill towards Ibn Saud, who Shaikh Hamad admired as the great Arab ruler, Shaikh Hamad decided to concede to the Dowasir all of their demands. In support of this decision the Shaikh informed the Agent that the confiscation of the property of a tribe leaving a Ruler's dominions was contrary to Arab customs, and that he had agreed to it against his wishes. He sympathized with the Dowasir because they had left Bahrain, not in defiance, but out of fear of Government action against them. Unlike Āl ben Āli before them, the Dowasir did nothing to disturb the peace of the island. The Agent disagreed with the Shaikh's last statement and drew his attention to the outrages they had committed against the people of Āli and against the two Shi'ah Ālims. Moreover, he told him that the Dowasir affair had nothing to do with Bin Saud's wishes. To which Hamad replied:

" ... Bin Saud was the one big Arab Ruler and it was natural for all smaller Shaikhs such as himself to look up to him and try to please him."<sup>2</sup>

Shaikh Salman bin Hamad and his uncle Shaikh Abdullah agreed with the Adviser that Shaikh Hamad was unduly receptive to the Dowasir demands.<sup>3</sup> Meantime the Agent suggested the return to them of only one-third of the rents collected from their property - sufficient to enable them to re-establish themselves.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the Resident wrote to the Government that compliance with all their demands would be interpreted by

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1 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/87, No. 934, 20th Shawwal 1345.

2 Major Barrett to the Secretary to the Political Resident. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. C-53, 14.4.1927.

3 No. 934, op. cit.

4 No. C-53, op. cit.

them as a sign of weakness rather than forgiveness and would convey the impression that British attitude towards them was rash in the first place.

He concurred with the Agent in that:

" ... no diver shall be forced to go back to the Dowasir with his previous debt maintained against him. The pearl diving trade is built upon a form of slavery dependent upon the debts of the divers; and the cancellation of such debts will certainly be a very severe handicap to the Dowasir tribe."<sup>1</sup>

#### Leniency for the Prisoners

During May 1925, while Daly was away on leave, Shaikh Hamad approached the acting Agent with a request to sound out the Government about grant of leniency to four prisoners, Bahrain subjects, who were serving prison sentences in a Karachi jail in connection with the second outrage at Sitrah. The Shaikh was encouraged by the improved relations between the Sunnis and the Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs and by a general atmosphere of stability within the country.<sup>2</sup>

The Shaikh's suggestion received the approval of the Resident who recommended it to the Government with a request that leniency should also be extended to the two Hasawis sentenced in the same case.<sup>3</sup> The Shaikh's application came at a time when the Government of India was considering the legality of imprisoning the Shaikh's subjects in an Indian jail. The men

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1 Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. 138-S, 1.5.1927.

2 Translation of a letter dated 1st Rabi<sup>c</sup> I, 1344 (20.9.1925) from Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Alkhalifah - Deputy Ruler of Bahrain, to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/88. The four prisoners were: Salim bin 'Ambar - personal servant of Salman bin Khalid Alkhalifah, sentenced to ten years imprisonment, Ibrahim bin Mubarak bu-Khammas - eight years, Abu Humaidah to three years, Jasim bin Abdullah Daghath to two years. Daly to Captain B.S. Horner, Secretary to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 29/1/16, 14.2.1926.

3 Col. C.G. Crosthwaite, P.R. to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 346-S, 23.9.1925.

were then released, and on arrival in Bahrain they were kept in the Shaikh's prison for a short period of time and were let out on 6th February 1926.<sup>1</sup>

When Daly returned to office on 24th November 1925 he submitted certain clarifications to the Resident regarding the circumstances which surrounded the initial trial, noting that the procedures followed by the Shaikh at that time conformed to the instructions of the then Resident. He blamed the Government for failing to question the legality of the Shaikh's action. The men's release from the prison by the Shaikh without retrial, enabled them to escape with inadequate punishment, he wrote.<sup>2</sup>

On 16th March 1926 the two Hasawis were released. When asked about their role in the attack, they admitted that they had acted on orders of the Khalids.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of July 1926, Ali bin Khalid, sentenced to banishment from Bahrain for his part in the first attack at Sitrah, returned to Bahrain without securing Shaikh Hamad's prior consent. He was arrested, tried by Shaikh Hamad's Court and sentenced to six months imprisonment for breaching the Court's earlier order.<sup>4</sup> Commenting upon Shaikh Hamad's action, Daly wrote:

"Although the punishment of six months imprisonment for a ... murder cannot be considered adequate from our point of view, the fact that a member of AlKhalifah can be sent to prison at all is so revolutionary that it cannot fail to have much moral effect on badly behaved members of the family ..."<sup>5</sup>

In September 1926, Major Barrett replaced Daly as the new Agent in Bahrain. Early in January 1927, Colonel Haworth took over from Prideaux

1 No. 29/1/16, op. cit.

2 Ibid.

3 Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 46/1/16, 29.3.1926.

4 Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 73/5/18, 1.8.1926.

5 Ibid.

as Resident and suggested to the Government a review of the British position in Bahrain. The Government's response to this and the changes made as a result, are discussed separately in the next section. Suffice us to mention here that the reassessment resulted in changes in policy outlined below:

"It is the policy of the Agency to efface itself, as far as possible, and except for giving a lead in matters appertaining to Education and the Municipalities on one or two occasions ... this policy has been consistently followed. Sir Denys Bray's advice that direct British control should be relaxed even at the sacrifice of a certain amount of efficiency is being borne in mind ..."<sup>1</sup>

As a result the Shaikh was allowed a greater say over the domestic affairs of Bahrain than previously. At this time, Ibrahim bin Khalid Al Khalifah, sentenced to death for his part in the second outrage at Sitrah, corresponded with Shaikh Hamad hoping to negotiate terms for returning to Bahrain. Having caught wind of the arrangements which were being made behind the scenes, the Adviser wrote a protracted letter to the Agent which the latter described as 'Belgrave's letter of protest'.<sup>2</sup> The letter referred to the Shaikh's efforts to effect reconciliation between the Khalids and the Baharnah, and that the arrangements being made had an air of disingenuity about them since their aim was to persuade the witnesses to retract their earlier evidence. The injured party would be compensated and the Khalids would be saved a retrial by the Shara<sup>c</sup> Court. Belgrave concluded:

"In your (i.e. Agent's) letter to Shaikh Hamad you point out that murder is a crime against the State and that the prosecution for murder does not depend on the wish of the injured parties to prosecute ..."<sup>3</sup>

In the exchanges that followed over the matter between the Shaikh and the Agent, the latter underlined the gravity of the Khalids' guilt and the

1 A.R.P.A. 1927. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

2 Major Barrett to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. C-68, 14.2.1928.

3 Belgrave to Barrett. I.O.R. 15/2/88, no number, 10.2.1928.

enormity of the evidence against them. But the Shaikh insisted that they were guiltless and that when he sentenced them to death, he acted not out of conviction but rather a desire not to go against the wishes of Major Daly. Moreover, the Shaikh described the original trial as illegal because it was not conducted by the Shara<sup>C</sup>. Disagreeing with the Shaikh's views, the Agent reminded him that there were twenty-seven witnesses for the prosecution in the Wadyan case, and that in civilized countries many individuals were executed on evidence much less incriminating than had been recorded in this case. His advice for the Shaikh was to send them to the Shara<sup>C</sup> Court for retrial.<sup>1</sup> The Agent reported the matter to the Resident as follows:

"I think it is a point gained that a Persian Gulf Ruler should set himself to gain his end by suborning witnesses and compensating the injured rather than by main force and the murder of Shiah opponents, as would have been the case five or six years ago.

If the witnesses stick to their story and the Qadis are strong the accused will be convicted. It is possible however that Ibrahim and Salman may be acquitted by the Qadis or that some compromise may be arranged but in either case they will have been brought to trial and other members of the Ruling family will have been put to an amount of trouble and inconvenience to themselves that will have taught them that they are not above the law and that the Baharnah are not animals to be killed whenever they do not please them ... " <sup>2</sup>

On 28th April 1928 the Khalids, Ibrahim and Salman, and their relative Abdur Razzaq returned to Bahrain. Two days later, Shaikh Hamad held a Majlis with the aim of reconciling them with the Baharnah. It was attended by the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qadi, and by Hasan bin Marzouq, representative of the minors of the victims and headman of Sitrah where the attack happened, Abd Ali bin Rajab, an influential Baharanah and the Adviser. The latter asked the minors if they were willing to drop prosecution, to which they replied in the affirmative, adding that they were in receipt of assurances

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1 C-68, op. cit.

2 Ibid.

from the Shaikh to the effect that the Khalids would not indulge in offences against them in future.<sup>1</sup> A proclamation prepared in advance of the meeting was read out which, inter alia, contained the following:

"The Bahrainis who are connected with the Sitrah question have informed me (i.e. Shaikh Hamad) in the presence of Sayed Adnan ... the Shiah Qadi in Bahrain, that they have withdrawn this case, for this reason we have permitted the sons of the Shaikh Khalid to return to Bahrain."<sup>2</sup>

For the first time, since Daly's departure from Bahrain, Shaikh Hamad acted contrary to the Agent's advice by not ordering a retrial of the Khalids before the Shara<sup>c</sup> Court. Nevertheless, the Shaikh's decision and the accommodation reached thereon, received the Agent's approval for the following reasons:

"The proposals for this settlement had obviously emanated from Shaikh Hamad, and I considered it best not to oppose it. I understand that blood-money will be accepted and that the equivalent of the property looted will be returned to the people of Sitrah.

I trust that the biggest grievance which Shaikh Isa had against the British Government has now been removed and that at the same time the Shiahs are protected against a recurrence of the disgraceful events of 1923."<sup>3</sup>

The above accommodation involved monthly allowances ordered for the three offenders by the Shaikh, and also the return of their property to them which had been seized earlier by the State.<sup>4</sup> Commenting on this, the Resident noted:

"Bahrain has much changed. The Khalifah family are fully aware that they cannot now indulge in their old practices and in the circumstances I consider it advisable to accept the compromise which the Baharnah have made and so terminate the incident. So doing is more likely to bring the Khalifah and Baharnah together than keeping open a source of dislike and distrust between them."<sup>5</sup>

1 Belgrave to Barrett. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 32, 3.5.1928.

2 Translation of a Proclamation No. 290/17 of 1346. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042.

3 Barrett to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1042, No. C-151, 4.5.1928.

4 Adviser to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 977/2A, 22nd Dhul Qa<sup>c</sup>d, 1346.

5 Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 203-S, 16.5.1928.

The Consolidation of the British Position in Bahrain: Appeasement and Indirect Control

During September 1927 Colonel L.B.H. Haworth, the Resident, sent two comprehensive despatches to the Government of India on the subject of Bahrain and its future status. While expressing concern about criticisms levelled by the outside world at excessive British involvement in Bahrain, Haworth singled out three factors which directly affected the British position there: (a) Persia's persistent claim to the Sovereignty of Bahrain and the Foreign Office's reluctance to discuss the status of that place; (b) the resurgence of Wahhabi power; (c) the retirement of Shaikh Isa from active rulership and the appointment of Shaikh Hamad to the same with whose consent Britain was intervening in Bahrain.<sup>1</sup>

He then dealt with each factor in its historical perspective in great detail. Persia's claim to the sovereignty of Bahrain, he wrote, was based on the Persian occupation of the islands in 1602, when they expelled the Portuguese, and when they regained them in 1753, and finally lost them to the Arabs in 1783, discounting the fact that the islands came under Muscat in 1718, and subsequently under the Huwalah Arabs and the Wahhabis, in addition to long periods in which the Shaikhs were independent. The Persian case also relied on the unratified agreement which Captain Bruce negotiated in 1822, and on the Foreign Office communication of 1869 in which Lord Clarendon allegedly acknowledged the justice of the Persian protest.

Haworth pointed out the flimsiness of the Persian case and commented on British control of Bahrain's affairs which was, according to him, in excess of British rights there, thus:

"But the real danger is not from Persia, since, if the point was forced on us, we should have no hesitation and no difficulty in disposing of her very illusionary claims. But the resulting

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<sup>1</sup> Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1041, No. 294-S, 1.9.1927.

investigation would show the weakness of our own position in Bahrain, based, as it is, upon the continued content of the Sheikh. Our treaties give us no right to our present domination, a point mentioned by Sheikh Isa in his petition to Government, and which would certainly come out before an international tribunal. All that we could prove would be the independence of Bahrein and our protection based on custom and consent, but should Sheikh Hamad desire it, or should Sheikh Isa intervene, any international tribunal would limit our powers of action in the islands. Except so far as dependent upon the goodwill of the Sheikh our past protection would give us internationally no ground for maintaining our position in the future ...

British rights in the Persian Gulf relied not merely on the agreements concluded ... but on the custom, consent, and long-established relations between the local chiefs and the Government of India.

Persia is not then the real danger except in so far as she would expose the weakness of our position ...

The future danger to our policy is in the growth of the Wahabi power and its extension to the Arab littoral of the Persian Gulf."<sup>1</sup>

Haworth believed that the halting of Ibn Saud's regular subsidy (mid-1923) left him free to pursue his own policies towards his relations with smaller Shaikhdoms, Bahrain included. He favoured more stable relations with Ibn Saud, such as had existed under the Treaty of 1913.

In his second despatch Haworth examined the development of British interest in the purely internal affairs of Bahrain. This interest began in 1903 when Shaikh Isa refused to consider a suggestion from Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy, to reform the Customs by appointing a British Director, arguing that it was a matter which concerned him alone. After an incident in 1904 in which attacks were made on Persians and on a German subject, British interference in the Shaikh's administration became more crucial. When the Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs in Bahrain were subjected to gross mistreatment during 1917 and after, Tehran protested to the British Government who, as a result, prevailed upon the Shaikh to introduce reforms, but to no avail. Thereafter, Shaikh Isa was retired and his

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1 Ibid., paras. 69-71.

elder son Hamad was entrusted with real power and reforms were enacted. The Shaikh's lack of initiative in matters of administration led to the Agent assuming greater responsibilities and therefore occupying a position of prominence on the Shaikh's Administration. Hence, the Agent's role was transformed from one of extending advice to becoming actively engaged in administrative affairs. On this point, he wrote:

"... it is still obvious to the world that Shaikh Hamad does what the Political Agent wants him, that he frequently does what he does not want, because the Political Agent tells him."<sup>1</sup>

The Resident illustrated his argument by mentioning the case of the Dowasir whose property was seized with the approval of the British Government of India, though carried out under the Shaikh's seal. The people of Bahrain were aware of the Shaikh's sympathies with the Dowasir and that he punished them against his will. To help them retrieve their property, Shaikh Hamad had personally asked their chiefs to get him a letter of recommendation from Ibn Saud in order to facilitate his task with the British Government.

Haworth viewed British presence in the Administration of Bahrain as too obvious, represented as it was by a British Adviser who was also co-judge on the Shaikh's Court, a British Director of Customs, and a British Chief of Police, all of whom were appointed by the British Government. He wrote:

"The British are still looked upon as the rulers, and how indeed can it be otherwise? We make and unmake rulers, we appoint administrators and officials. Every important point is referred to us ..."<sup>2</sup>

Commenting upon the concept of independence and how it was construed by the Shaikh, the Resident noted:

"We have, however, always publicly insisted upon his (i.e. the Shaikh's) independence and he has imbibed the idea of the fact that he is independent.

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1 Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1041, No. 295-S, 1.9.1927.

2 Ibid., para. 48.

But with an uneducated Arab tribesman independent means the power to do many things which we do not approve. It means administering the islands for the benefit of the Chiefs of the tribe to which he belongs, it means - as it means in many native States in India - the exploiting of the people for the rulers, it means to a bigoted Sunni the treating of the Shiahhs as people of an unprivileged class ..."<sup>1</sup>

He concluded by asking the Government to prevail upon the Shaikh to apply for British protection, and urged her to extend it to him. The British staff on the Administration of Bahrain could then, he maintained, be reduced to one man and the Shaikh would be seen as the actual ruler, as was the case in an Indian State. He wrote:

"Bahrain is more important to us than it ever has been. There is little doubt that with the development of Persia our strength on that coast will be weakened. It is for us to see that it is not weakened with the Arabs as well.

The Persian Gulf is vital to us as a point on the line from which our oil comes. Bahrain is a key point on the air route to India and the East, and without it we could not maintain a service. We cannot lose Bahrain."<sup>2</sup>

Sir R.H. Clive, the British Minister at Tehran, received the Resident's suggestion with grave reservations. He was largely concerned about the impact on the Anglo-Persian relations of declaring Bahrain as a British Protectorate. He demanded the postponement of this step to such time when the outstanding issues were settled with Persia and a new treaty was negotiated and signed.<sup>3</sup>

Haworth's views brought about a visit to Bahrain by Sir Denys Bray, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, which lasted from 3rd to 5th November 1927. The purpose of the visit was to assess the process of reforms and the extent of British involvement in Bahrain. He described the British position there as 'unassailable' and was satisfied

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1 Ibid., paras. 51-2.

2 Ibid., paras. 57, 60.

3 Clive to Sir Austen Chamberlain. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1041, No. E 4499/184/91, 24.10.1927.

with British rights which were acquired by virtue of Britain's treaties with the Shaikh. These rights gave the British Government control of Bahrain's foreign affairs and jurisdiction over foreign nationals.

Although he was pleased with the reforms already effected, he saw British influence in excess of British rights there. He favoured a halt to the process of reforms:

"... matters should be given a somewhat different turn or the Arab facade will fall and we shall be left with a British Island pure and simple."<sup>1</sup>

Bray desired the curtailment of the Government's commitments to the Shaikh's Administration, thereby minimizing the risk of losing Trucial Arab Shaikhs to Ibn Saud whose popularity among them was on the increase. He advocated a set of new goals:

"Our aim should be not efficiency, for with this as our goal we could stop nowhere, but to demonstrate that an Arab State can advance on Western lines under British protection and yet retain its Arab character."<sup>2</sup>

British rule in Bahrain, he wrote, was 'over-advertised' by the presence of a Punjabi Police Force, uniformed as an Indian Regiment. He favoured the gradual withdrawal of the Punjabis and their replacement by Arab elements; the reduction of Britons to one instead of three and the transformation of the Agent's role to one of advice and supervision rather than actual participation in the administration. He envisaged a greater role for the Shaikh:

"It is no doubt very difficult to make the amiable Hamad rule, but it is better that he should rule and make mistakes than that he should rule and make no mistakes at all."

Bray also tentatively recommended that a Council be appointed to run the country on the following lines:

"... it would seem worthwhile to give a trial to a Council with Hamad as President and Abdulla and Mr. Belgrave and a third Arab as members."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Sir D. Bray: Note on Reforms in Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/127, Mohammerah, 6.11.1927.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

Concern Over the Westernization of Bahrain: A Reappraisal of the Reforms

- 1929

In May 1929, the Government of India wrote to the Resident enquiring about the extent to which it was possible to retrace the steps taken since the commencement of the reforms. They feared that the modernization of the Administration in Bahrain might backfire:

"As matters stand now, however, it would seem that the process has over-run its original limited objective. There are in Bahrain today a British Financial Adviser, a British Police Officer, and a British Customs Officer; that is, actually more administration than in an ordinary Indian State ...

There is an imminent danger that with this example before their eyes the minds of the smaller Arab rulers may be turned increasingly in the direction of Ibn Saud, as the greatest Arabian figure. Their fear of Wahabi absorption may be less than their fear of losing their local and Arab individuality in exchange for an uncongenial Western regime, however efficient and profitable that regime may be."<sup>1</sup>

They issued instructions to the Resident requiring him to consider the situation in Bahrain with regard to their remarks above, and to decide the extent to which it was feasible to go back on the reforms. In June 1929, C.G. Prior, the Agent in Bahrain, acting on a request from the Resident, responded with a report on the reforms already completed, the extent of British interference in the Administration of Bahrain, and whether it was practical to reverse the process. He went over British relations with Shaikh Isa from 1904 until 1923, underlining areas of disagreement, the shortcomings of the Shaikh's Administration and the introduction of reforms such as organisation of State finances, the Civil List, reform of the Custom House, the Opening of Government Offices, reform of the Diving Industry, Survey of towns and villages, the creation of the Levy Corps, the Bahrain Court, and reform of the Education System and Waqfs.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Deputy-Secretary to G. of I., to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. F164-N/29, 28.5.1929.

2 C.G. Prior to the Resident. I.O.R. No. C-84, op. cit.

The Agent praised the enlightening impact of the reforms upon the people and the prosperity their enactment had engendered in the country, citing the triple rise in the value of land as an example. To this effect he wrote:

"The Baharna have had security and justice for the first time for 150 years and have come to think of their rights. Divers serfage has been much ameliorated and there is little or no opposition to Government activities and crimes of violence have almost ceased ...

Instead of resisting reforms the public spirit now demands them, and an instance of this is the way in which the Shiahhs have undertaken the charge of their Waqfs."<sup>1</sup>

Prior saw the services of the existing British staff on the Administration of Bahrain as indispensable. The Adviser controlled the finances of the State and acted as Co-judge on the Bahrain Court. The Director of Customs, Mr. de Grenier, offered five years of invaluable service to the State. As chief revenue officer he had increased State revenue by 20% without raising customs duty. 97% of the revenue accruing to the State was the result of his efforts. The Shaikh was satisfied with the Director's work and should the Government order his departure, state revenue and the reforms would suffer immensely.

The institution of the Bahrain Court enhanced people's confidence in justice. Its abolition, Prior noted, would restore the old days of favouritism and venality, and moreover:

" ... because most of the crimes of violence would be by Sunnis and against Shiahhs, hence on the case being referred to the Sunni Qadi they would escape scot free or with light punishment ...

I feel sure that the Government of India could not favour a return to the chaos of the old regime where no State Court existed, and nothing to take its place except the Shara<sup>C</sup> ... , and the innumerable Courts maintained by petty Shaikhlings purely as a vehicle for their oppression."<sup>2</sup>

By mid-1929 the Survey of towns and villages had almost been completed,

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

and the public was showing greater appreciation for the various activities of the Land Department. Prior adduced two reasons for retaining the services of the British Commandant of Police: (a) the Force's great contribution towards reducing the rate of crimes of violence; (b) the imminent arrival of foreign employees of the Oil Company to start drilling operations making his stay on the Force highly desirable.

Finally, he stressed the fact that there was nothing in the reforms which could be discarded with impunity. What was earlier regarded as 'startling innovations' had later on become an essential aspect of the establishment, appreciated by the majority of the people. As regards British relations with the Arab Shaikhs of the Gulf, he wrote:

"If we wish to have any influence with smaller Arab rulers, who have leanings towards Bin Saud, we must be able to offer them something in return for their friendship other than demands or threats.

It must be remembered that if we will not assert ourselves in Bahrain, others will, and the ground is steadily prepared for Bin Saud by his powerful and assiduous agent."<sup>1</sup>

In a subsequent letter to the Government, the Resident concurred in the views of the Agent and refuted the claim that Bahrain was being hastily subjected to Westernization. Government policy towards the Shaikh, he wrote, was motivated by "fear of interference", and that even the action which they reluctantly took against the Shaikh in 1923 was pressed upon them by the Foreign Office. Barrett was opposed to the reduction of the British Staff on the Administration of Bahrain since it would pave the way for 'all the old oppressors' to resume their earlier practices. To illustrate the Shaikh's soft character, he cited a recent incident in which divers who were protesting at the reduction of advances forced the Shaikh to withdraw a decision which he had taken the previous day. In the circumstances, how could Shaikh Hamad be left to cope

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1 Ibid.

without an Adviser, he enquired. He also praised the efforts of the Director of Customs who had raised the annual revenue to over eleven Lakhs of Rupees in contrast to the earlier days of the Hindu Contractor when the State lost one Lakh of Rupees every year.<sup>1</sup>

While pointing out the achievements of the reforms, Barrett anticipated a large increase in the trade of the islands especially after the establishment of the British air route. His concluding remarks to the Government were equally interesting:

"In time the good works and the tyranny from which the British rescued Bahrain and especially the Shiah Baharnah will be forgotten, and only the privileged position of the British occupying the chief posts will be noticed.

To avoid the odium which would fall on Britain, in course of time, from this cause, it is necessary to educate natives of Bahrain to take the place of the British Officials ...

Bahrain is a large trading centre with a large foreign population. It is not part of Najd and would never be happy under Wahhabi rule. The real Bahraini, though an Arab, is a Shiah not a Sunni; and the history of the islands shows that for long periods it was subject to Persia. This, although not leading to any desire for Persian rule, must modify the tribal outlook.

If we interfere in Bahrain to put down misrule, depose its Shaikh, introduce reforms and then permit the country to sink back in the slough from which we have rescued it, then indeed we have forfeited Arab respect and cleared the way for Bin Saud. In 1920 Major Dickson reported 'our position in the island is founded on fear and not respect'. Now it is founded on respect. The Trucial Chiefs now see that our intervention has benefited Bahrain and even its Chiefs ... in time their aversion from contact with the European may be overcome through the influence of a civilized Bahrain. It will not be overcome through a reversion of Bahrain to the conditions of 1920 ...

All Arabs criticized our action in Bahrain when the supporters of the old regime were crying out under chastisement. The chastisement was salutary and Shaikh Isa's supporters have accepted the present regime, which is not unduly Westernized."<sup>2</sup>

The Government of India's intention to reverse the process of reform in 1929,<sup>3</sup> was clearly a hasty suggestion. It was obviously motivated by the dictates of wider policies and by unsubstantiated concern that Bahrain

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1 Col. C.C.J. Barrett, P.R., to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 385-S, 28.8.1929.

2 Ibid.

3 See Government's Letter No. 164-N/29, op. cit.

was being exposed to excessive Western influence threatening to militate against Britain's friendly relations with other Shaikhs of the Gulf.

Originally, the Foreign Office urged the introduction of the reforms with a view "to ensure equitable treatment of Shiah<sup>s</sup>".<sup>1</sup> By 1929 there remained much in the local administration which needed reforming. The events of the early 1930s, subject of a subsequent chapter, revealed a significant number of inadequacies especially affecting the Shaikh's Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Arab subjects in such areas as Education, Law and representation on various Government Councils. The desire to dismantle the reforms showed that the Government was a remote authority out of touch with the real problems of Bahrain. The arguments put forth by her representatives in the area in favour of the reforms confirmed that they were indispensable to the administration there and that Government fears about their negative impact upon other Shaikhs were exaggerated.

With the Persians asserting their national rights over their territory, Britain had to transfer her interests from Persia to a more congenial place. The Arab littoral of the Gulf was the natural choice and Bahrain, cut off from mainland Arabia and with which Britain had treaty relationships, offered the ideal place. The Persian threat to take the issue of Bahrain to the League of Nations during the late 1920s gave rise to serious speculations about the amount of control Britain exercised over the administration of Bahrain which, according to British officials, exceeded British rights as provided by the Treaties signed with the Shaikh.

The decision to appease the Bahrain Shaikhs, and to allay the fears of other rulers of the Trucial Coast, took the form of allowing the Dowasir to return to Bahrain, followed by the arrival of the Khalids and their subsequent reconciliation with the Baharnah regardless of the Agent's advice to order a retrial by the Shara<sup>c</sup> Court. Equally important was the easing of British control of the Administration thereby allowing the Shaikh a bigger role in its affairs.

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1 F.O. Letter No. E 13476/1644/91, op. cit.

During the tenure of Daly, who supervised the reforms, Shaikh Hamad had prosecuted the guilty members of the tribes and of his own family. After his departure from office, the Shaikh exonerated those very members, and admitted that he had wronged them against his will.

Chapter Five  
The Pearling Industry

Pearl diving was the most important traditional industry in Bahrain. Indeed before the advent of oil in 1932, pearl-diving was the mainstay of Bahrain's economy. The livelihood of many merchants, creditors, brokers, boat-owners and thousands of divers depended on the outcome of the season. Dealers from Europe and India gathered every year in Bahrain to buy the season's catch. Paris was the centre of the European pearl trade<sup>1</sup>, and Bahrain pearls were either taken there direct or sent to Bombay where they were polished, pierced, graded and re-exported to European capitals. In addition to pearls, Bahrain also exported oyster shells to Europe and Zanzibar, though this aspect of the pearling industry was of far less economic importance to Bahrain. A successful season was advantageous to both the people and the local Government. Money in the hands of the diving community meant enhanced buying power, and this in turn ensured greater imports and therefore increased revenue for the Government, which until 1934 relied chiefly on the income from the Customs.<sup>2</sup> Boat-building and sail-making were two other aspects of the traditional economy which flourished alongside

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1 In 1923 several Bahrain merchants were reported to have visited Paris to dispose of their pearls. See A.R.P.A., 1923, op. cit.

2 On the economic significance of the pearling industry the Agent wrote in 1923:  
" ... all the trade of Bahrain practically, is indirectly due to the pearling, and the ruler and his entire family and countless hangers-on live out of the Customs which indirectly result therefrom ..."  
Daly's No. 37-C, dated 17.3.1923, op. cit.

pearling.<sup>1</sup>

### The Diving Seasons

Pearling provided employment for the divers for about half the year. During the rest of the year, the divers were supposed to live on their earnings, but this was hardly the case. Boat-Nakhudas, i.e. skippers, required their contractual divers to carry out certain duties during the off-season in houses or date-gardens owned by the former.<sup>2</sup>

The main diving season, al-Ghaws al-Kabīr, lasted from mid-May to the end of September, during which time contractual divers had to dive for their Nakhudas. The main season was preceded by a less important and much shorter period of diving known as Khanchieh, and succeeded by a similar activity called Raddah, diving, i.e. the return of the boats to the banks after the great season. Divers were not obliged to dive for their Nakhudas during the Khanchieh or the Raddah diving. Every year the Shaikh issued a proclamation announcing the Rakbah: the start of the season, and the Qufāl: the closing date. The Rakbah was marked by traditional chanting and singing, with the families of the men bidding them farewell and wishing them a safe and prosperous trip.

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1 According to official reports the numbers of new sailing craft built and sold in Bahrain were 119 in 1926, 74 in 1927, and 89 in 1928. More craft were built in 1926 to make up for the 30 or 40 damaged by a cyclone which hit Bahrain on 1-2 October 1925. From 1930 onwards locally built launches were fitted with imported motor-engines. Their numbers over selective years were as follows:

1933 ... 17,	1935 ... 4,	1937 ... 4,	1939 ... 9,	1940 ... 16,
1941 ... 2,	1942 ... 3,	1943 ... 1,	1944 ... 0,	1945 ... 2.

There were also centres for canvas-weaving and sail-making industries at Darāz, Markh, Banī Jamrah, operated by the local Baharnah villagers. See Director of Customs' Annual Reports to the Political Agency, 1928-45. I.O.R. 15/2/296-301.

2 Belgrave to Colonel Prior: Slavery and the Bahrain Pearl Industry. I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. 1337/48, 9.2.1930.

Apart from the Futām: a nose clip, and a loin-cloth and a basket, no modern diving equipment was allowed. The banks were open to all divers from the entire Gulf region.

### Taxes

No export duty was levied on pearls, and no systematic tax was collected by the State before 1924.<sup>1</sup> Until 1920, the Ruler could by customary right levy a 10% tax ad valorem on a single pearl fished in Bahraini banks, provided its value amounted to Rs. 10,000 upwards.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Daly's No. 37-C, op. cit.

2 Colonel H.R.P. Dickson to D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/23, No. 284-C, 3.9.1920. An example of the Shaikh's customary right is an incident documented by Dickson, the then Political Agent. On the night of August 30th, 1920, Haji Ahmad bin Ali Khamis, an eminent Baharnah and pearl merchant from Sanābis village took refuge in the Agency. Dickson accorded him protection on realizing the gravity of the dangers that awaited him outside the Agency. Earlier, he and Sayed Ahmad bin Sayed Alawi, a leading Shiah notable and the former's partner, had bought a pearl for Rs. 42,000 from Dārin on the mainland and brought it to Bahrain where its value had risen to Rs. 200,000. Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifah, who wielded great influence over Sanābis, demanded that Haji Ahmad paid Rs. 4,200 to him on account of the Shaikh's right levied at 10% of the price paid for the pearl. Haji Ahmad disputed the fairness of the demand, his argument being that the pearl was purchased outside Bahrain. Shaikh Abdullah sent his fidawis after him, but he had fled his house and sought refuge at the Agency. In his statement to the Agent, Haji Ahmad cited an earlier, grim incident: "I attempted to resist Shaikh Abdullah, three years ago, when he sent for me and demanded Rs. 6,000 without a shadow of right on his side. For objecting to pay then, I was tied up with my legs and arms stretched apart and left three days in a burning summer sun without water or food. Seeing I was about to die, my relations came and paid the money and I was released." While Haji Ahmad was under the protection of the Agency, Dickson sounded out the views of the following merchants considering that the matter was 'an important test case': Haji Ali az-Zaiyani, Abdur Rahman az-Zaiyani, Salman Al-Matar, Abdul Aziz Al-Qusaibi, Seth Saleh of Bohra Community, Muhammad Shareef Awazi. They were all unanimous that the Shaikh's demand was unfair and that the pearl was un-taxable since it was bought outside Bahrain. Dickson then begged Shaikh Abdullah to inform him by what right he claimed Rs. 4,200 from the merchant. Shaikh Abdullah alleged that "all the Shaikhs' sons were entitled to such forced exactions from merchants. That the matter was now a custom and that the Shaikhs only took such money from the accursed Shiahs and not from their Arab subjects". Shaikh Isa was displeased with Ahmad's refuge in the Agency and with the granting of protection by the Agent to one of the Shaikh's subjects. In the circumstances, the Agent pleaded with the Shaikh to pardon Ahmad, which he did. The Baharnah hailed the outcome as a victory for justice. Ibid.

From 1924, the year the pearling reforms were implemented, the Government of Bahrain charged a boat-licensing tax, a full account of which is given under the pearling reforms.

According to J.G. Lorimer, two types of taxes were levied in Bahrain in the early 19th century, viz. Nōb: a boat-tax collected during Autumn diving, and Tarāz: a poll-tax collected on behalf of the crew of a boat during spring diving.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Customary Laws and Usages of Pearling

Under the Salafieh system, which operated widely in Bahrain, the sea-Nakhuda, i.e. captain of the boat, borrowed money from a creditor called: Musaqqam or Nakhuda el-Barr, i.e. Shore Nakhuda. From this loan the Nakhuda of the boat gave cash advances to his divers, equipped his boat, purchased provisions, Zād, for the consumption of the crew and also settled the boat-licensing tax. The principal cash advances granted to the divers were: Salaf offered at the beginning of the main season to enable the diver to sustain his family while he was away diving. Tisqām: given shortly after the end of the main season also to provide for the diver's family during the off-season. Kharjieh: a less significant sum given in the middle of the main season. Nakhudas used the Tisqām to tempt their divers to remain in their service in the following season. The divers on the other hand expected larger loans in the wake of a successful season. After the enactment of the pearling reforms of 1924 the advances were subjected to Government control and were announced to the public in a proclamation before the start of the main diving season.

#### Shares

The Nakhuda deducted the expenses from the profits obtained from the sale of the catch. He received one fifth of the proceeds, Khums el-Mihmal

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<sup>1</sup> Gazetteer, Part IV, p. 2241, Appendix (C).

against equipping the boat, and also deducted the licensing tax, the cost of provisioning the boat and, above all, the advances made to the divers. The remainder was distributed to the crew so that each diver, Ghais, got three shares, each puller, Seib, two shares, the assistant Radif one share. In addition to the one fifth, the Nakhuda was entitled to a diver's share.<sup>1</sup>

### The Diving Systems

Khammas, Azil and Salafieh were three distinct systems by which a Nakhuda operated. The majority of the Nakhudas were of tribal descent, who were allied to the Rulers. Under Khammas, more popular on mainland Arabia than in Bahrain, the Nakhuda himself financed the boat. No cash advances were given to the divers, and no creditors were involved in the process. Diving was done for about one month, at the end of which the Nakhuda and his crew returned to the shore. The catch was sold in the presence of the divers, the Nakhuda took one fifth of the profits and the rest was shared by the crew. Divers preferred this system because it bound them to shorter diving periods, after which they were free to join another Nakhuda. Also, it was devoid of the abuses which crept into the Salafieh, examined separately below. Khammas ensured the divers a fairer share of the profits without the risk of getting into debt such as carried over by the Salafieh diver year after year. Azil: under this system a diver joined a Nakhuda's boat, supplied his own food-stuffs and paid one fifth of his profits to the Nakhuda of the boat. As in the previous system, he was entitled to witness the selling of the catch.

The third system, the Salafieh, was the most widespread in Bahrain. A Salafi Nakhuda operated during the main season, controlled a large boat and therefore a large crew. The majority of his divers were

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<sup>1</sup> A. al-Shamlam: Sinat al-Ghaws: The Diving Industry (of Bahrain), pp. 63-65, 108-110.

non-Bahrainis working on a contractual basis. He operated either on Madyan or C-<sup>m</sup>Amil methods of boat-financing, both of which were defined by the Government proclamation of 1924, cited further on, as part of the Pearling Reforms. However, the differences between them are cited below:

<u>Salafieh</u>	
<u>Madyan</u>	<u>C-<sup>m</sup>Amil</u>
(a) Interest was chargeable on loans advanced by the creditor at not more than 20% on Tisqam and 10% on Salaf advances.	Loans were interest-free.
(b) Interest was chargeable on Nakhuda's advances to the divers at 20% on Tisqam and 10% on Salaf.	Advances were interest-free.
(c) Creditor was deprived of the right to buy the pearls of the boat he had financed.	Creditor was entitled to buy the pearls at not more than 20% less than the estimated market value.

(More about the Salafieh is provided under: The Pearling Reforms, further on.)

#### The Shortcomings of the Salafieh System

Prior to the pearling reforms of 1924, a diver was held in virtual bondage by his employer, the Nakhuda. In principle, the diving system was a profit-sharing concern and as such commendable. In reality, it was a wretched system. In a given season a diver's earnings from the profits rarely equalled or surpassed the debts he had incurred during the season. These debts, on which interest was charged, often swelled after a few unsuccessful seasons. Most of the divers were illiterate and improvident and this compounded their problems. Nakhudas failed to keep proper accounts, and even if adequate accounts existed, the diver had no access to them. Inflated prices were charged by the Nakhudas for the food-stuffs they supplied to the divers. If a diver died, his son was required to dive and to settle his father's debts. If there was

no son to take the father's place on the boat the deceased's belongings were liable to seizure by the Nakhuda. Also, the Nakhudas sold the pearls to the merchants in the absence of the divers. The price obtained was usually higher than that disclosed to the diver. A Nakhuda was entitled to punish a disobedient diver and this took the form of flogging, tying him in the sun almost naked, and sometimes even depriving him of food and drink. Nakhudas were not required to report deaths which occurred at the banks and no investigation was conducted after the boats returned to the shore.<sup>1</sup>

During the years 1921-22, the Salifah Court was presided over by an elderly man who acted as judge. He was described as 'venal' and was reported to have been in the pay of the Nakhudas. Divers were said to have boycotted the Court on account of its partiality towards the Nakhudas.<sup>2</sup> According to the Bahrain Order-in-Council, the Court should have consisted of one or more judges well-informed in diving laws, and their appointment was to have been effected jointly by the Ruler and the Political Agent. Prior to his retirement in 1923, Shaikh Isa consulted the Chiefs of the tribes and appointed the Salifah judge from the tribal ranks without securing the Agent's consent.

The Salifah Court was suspended, though not abolished, during the 1923 season when the Administration asked the Sunni Shara<sup>c</sup> Qadi to investigate diving cases. Commenting upon the Qadi's findings, the Agency report concluded:

"The appalling usury which such cases have disclosed calls urgently for remedy. Cases have occurred in which the Nakhuda claimed as much as Rs. 2,000 from the diver, whereas after proper inspection of the accounts in the Qadi's Court it has been found that a considerable sum was actually due to the diver from the Nakhuda. A typical set of diving accounts which the Political Agent had the opportunity to examine ... disclosed that all

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1 Adviser's No. 1337/48, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A. 1921. Also, A.R.P.A. 1922. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

the divers were apparently becoming in debt to the Nakhuda. The debts are of such a nature that it would be impossible for the divers to pay them off, so that in accordance with the diving tradition they would be compelled to dive annually for the Nakhuda. It was found that if the diver could succeed in repaying the debt he would actually have received on the average 5 or 6 Rs. per mensem for each actual month of diving. Even if the debts were not recovered from him the amount on the average would not exceed Rs. 30 per mensem - a coolie in Manamah earns on the average Rs. 4 per mensem. A diver's work is extremely hard and fraught with danger. The system as at present worked, amounts therefore for all practical purposes to enslavement from which the divers have been unable in the past to obtain any redress from the powerful and united class of Nakhudas."<sup>1</sup>

### The Pearling Reforms

Before the introduction of the reforms, the Administration in Bahrain explored various ways of improving the diving system. One possibility was to change the diver from a share-holder into a wage-earner. To this effect, the Agent wrote:

"The ideal diving system would be one in which the divers worked for a fixed wage and the pearls would belong to the Nakhuda. The work is strenuous and the divers would demand high pay and moreover half the attraction to the diver is the hope that his boat may get a big haul and he get a big share. In reality he seldom gets it as it is swallowed up by the Nakhuda; but it is what attracts men to the diving in the last instance."<sup>2</sup>

In their attempt to improve the system, British officials were careful not to alter the diving rules. They aimed at fairness for all those involved in the industry and at removal of practices which were alien to the original rules of diving. The task was not an easy one. In the Resident's own words:

"This reform presents the greatest difficulty if any, as any change introduced will be deeply resented by the Nakhudas or pearling masters, who under existing conditions have matters absolutely their own way. Besides this abuses in the pearling system are rife throughout the Gulf, and Nakhudas will consider reforms at Bahrain invidious ...

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1 A.R.P.A. 1923, op. cit.

2 Daly's No. 37-C, op. cit.

In these circumstances it might be argued that it is not advisable to take up the reformation of the Bahrain Pearling System independently of the other pearling centres, and that if reform is necessary the reform of the whole industry throughout the Gulf should be taken in hand. Against this however it may be said that Bahrain is the hub of the whole industry, that we exercise much more jurisdiction in Bahrain than in any other pearling centre and therefore incur more responsibility for abuses at that place, that if reforms are successfully introduced at Bahrain an improvement will slowly but surely result in the whole industry on the divers realizing that the hardships of their lot can be so greatly ameliorated ...

I would not suggest the slightest change in the general rules and usages of the pearling system which have been in force from time immemorial; what is necessary to enforce these rules with more regard to the interests of the divers and haulers, these of the Nakhudas being almost exclusively considered at present. The first essential is that the Nakhudas should keep accurate and intelligible accounts, the second is that each diver should be given a copy of his account each season by his Nakhuda, and the third that the 'Salifah' (Pearling Usage) Court should be composed of men of position and integrity capable of understanding such accounts."<sup>1</sup>

As the pearling reforms would have directly involved Shaikh Hamad's Administration with the tribal elements, who were opposed to the reforms in general, both reform of the pearling industry plus Survey and Registration of Land were delayed for some time. Early in 1924 the Administration sounded out the views of the Nakhudas over the introduction of account books. They agreed to the introduction of the books so long as the Government did not require them to reveal the actual price for which they sold the pearls. They feared that the Government would tax them in proportion to the value of the pearls.<sup>2</sup> Sample account books were prepared by the Resident which consisted of a general account for the whole of the Nakhuda's transactions, together with separate accounts for each diver and hauler. The Qadi was entitled to scrutinize the accounts and the diver for the first time had access to them.<sup>3</sup>

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1 No. 622-S, op. cit.

2 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 68-C, 3.2.1924.

3 Trevor to Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 122-S, 15.2.1924.

It was learnt from the Agent in Kuwait that the Government there collected a diver's share from each boat, which amounted to circa Rs. 500 per boat.<sup>1</sup> The Nakhudas, whose views were invited on the Kuwaiti method of taxation, refused to be taxed on a similar basis, and the Administration decided to levy a boat-licensing tax instead.<sup>2</sup> The collection of this tax, also enforced during the main 1924 season, took into consideration the size and number of the crew on each boat as follows:

1 - 5 seamen	Rs. 75
6 - 15 seamen	Rs. 100
16 upwards	Rs. 200

This was the first time that the State, not the Ruler, had collected a regular tax on pearling boats in Bahrain. Receipts from Pearling Licences amounted in 1924 to Rs. 49,368 levied from 604 boats; and in 1929 reached Rs. 55,000 collected from 538 boats; and in 1940 income from licensing dropped to Rs. 20,000 obtained from 191 boats.<sup>3</sup>

Failure to register a pearling boat was punishable by a fine of Rs. 5,000 and the boat was liable to confiscation by the State.<sup>4</sup> As part of the reforms a large and well-equipped boom was purchased for use as Hospital Boat during the 1924 season. An Indian sub-Assistant surgeon was employed to deal with cases of illness among the crews.<sup>5</sup>

There remained the question of interest to be charged on loans advanced by creditors to Nakhudas or to divers. The Resident recognised the right of the creditors to high interest on loans advanced by them to the Nakhudas on account of the great risks attendant upon the whole

1 No. 68-C, op. cit.

2 Resident to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 27-T, 13.3.1924. Note that the pearling reforms, as revealed by the above account, began in 1924, and not from 1921 to 1923 as stated in: Tribe and State in Bahrain, p. 107, op. cit.

3 Director of Customs to the P.A.: Boat Registrations and Pearl Licenses. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. PA/32, 12.5.1924. Also, Annual Budgets for 1929, 1940. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044.

4 See File on Pearling. I.O.R. 15/2/1349.

5 No. 27-T, op. cit.

business. A poor catch or a fall in trade, he wrote, could result in the creditor having to wait for years to recover his money. Similarly, Nakhudas were also entitled to charge high interest on money advanced to their divers, money which had not yet been earned. Death, sickness or default could prevent them from ever earning it, he added.<sup>1</sup>

Before the start of the 1924 season, Mohammad bin Şubāḥ, Chief of the Ben Ali tribe which owned sixty pearling boats, approached Shaikh Hamad with a request to relieve his tribe from boat-licensing tax. The Chief believed that his men merited this privilege on account of their long-standing alliance with the Rulers and on the strength of a document he had obtained earlier from Shaikh Isa, countersigned by Mr. J.C. Gaskin, Assistant Political Agent, 1900-1904, pledging tax-exemption for the tribe.<sup>2</sup> When the matter was referred to the Resident, he wrote:

"... documents of this nature given during the old regime granting exemption from revenue for no particular service rendered cannot be accepted. At the same time, as Muhammad bin Subah has such a document the Shaikh recognises that he is worthy of some consideration as an act of grace and as a special case he will be pleased to allow him to equip ten medium sized boats (tax Rs. 100) free of tax during his lifetime."<sup>3</sup>

This concession somehow implied recognition of the privileged position of the tribes by the new regime. It was, moreover, incompatible with the reforming outlook which the regime sought to establish.

During the 1924 season, Shaikh Hamad issued a proclamation whose aim was to regulate the financial relations between Nakhudas and their crew. It called upon the former to follow the new system of accounts, as defined in the proclamation, and to produce accounts whenever required to do so by the Court. Also, to keep a separate account for each diver,

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1 Col. Trevor to Major Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 233-S, 10.4.1924.

2 Daly to Trevor: Pearling Licences. I.O.R. 15/2/132, 1.4.1924.

3 Trevor to Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 232-S, 10.4.1924.

puller and assistant in their employ, and to show the nature and amount of every receipt and expenditure entered against their crew, and to sign and return the books to the men.<sup>1</sup>

The proclamation also defined the Salafieh system, i.e. Madyan and Amil, since it was the most widespread in Bahrain, and specified the amount of interest to be charged on loans from creditors to Nakhudas or those from Nakhudas to their divers as cited on page 134 above. Under Amil, for a deal to sell the pearls to be considered legal, two conditions were essential:

- (a) that both the shore and the sea Nakhudas were in agreement over the price to be paid for the pearls,
- (b) that two thirds of the crew consented to the selling price.

If for some reason the parties failed to agree over the value of the pearls, they were required to submit the matter to agreed arbitrators to determine their market value. The shore Nakhuda would then purchase at not less than 20% below the price estimated by the arbitrators. If agreement was still not possible, the two sides were required to refer the matter to a competent Court for decision. In these circumstances the Court was required to appoint reliable assessors to fix the price to be paid by the shore Nakhuda. If he still refused to purchase at the price determined by the Court, the sea Nakhuda was entitled to sell the pearls to whomsoever he wished provided that two thirds of the crew consented to the sale. He was also supposed to inform the shore Nakhuda of the time and place where he would receive the payment in order to refund the shore Nakhuda the full advance taken from him. One third of the crew were required to be present to witness the refund.

Under Madyan (also refer to page 134) the shore Nakhuda was denied

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<sup>1</sup> The men were told to obtain the account books from a Government office at the Customs, against a payment of six annas per book.

the right to buy the pearls of the boat he had financed, unless the sea Nakhuda and at least two thirds of the crew agreed to sell them to him. He was required to pay the full price at which the crew were willing to sell and was denied any reduction on the market value of the pearls and he had no right to object to their sale to any person to whom the crew might wish to sell.

The proclamation concluded by spelling out the penalties against any infringements. A first offence was punishable by a fine of Rs. 300, a second by Rs. 1,500 and the withdrawal of a Nakhuda's pearling license for a period of five years.<sup>1</sup>

Before the introduction of the new system of accounts, the Administration sought to verify old accounts, and this involved Nakhudas who had claims of huge debts against their divers. Some such debts had accumulated over a period of twenty years or so. On inspection of the accounts their lack of clarity and reliability were revealed. Many Nakhudas were asked to take their cases to the chief Shara<sup>C</sup> Qadi because they accepted his decisions. The Qadi, on his part, attempted to reduce the debts to a reasonable figure acceptable to the diver. Outstanding debts thus settled by the Qadi were then entered into each diver's book.

Finally, the Administration stipulated a minimum income of Rs. 260 for each diver during the season which lasted roughly four months plus ten days, i.e. 130 days at Rs. 2 daily.<sup>2</sup> Examination of the divers' previous accounts showed that the majority earned less than Rs. 1 per working day, whereas the advances they received from their Nakhudas amounted to Rs. 2 or 3 per day.

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1 See Translation of a Proclamation in Arabic ... issued by Shaikh Hamad bin Easa Alkhalifah - Deputy-Ruler of Bahrain to regulate the financial relations between pearling Nakhudas and their crews. I.O.R. 15/2/132.

2 During the 1930s the pearl-trade was hit by recession causing a sharp drop in sales, and the minimum earnings of Rs. 260 for each diver was no longer possible. See account of the 1930s further on.

At first, the Nakhudas refused to submit to the new system of accounting and they even tried to incite the divers against it by telling them that it did not work in their favour. The divers, on the other hand, took advantage of the reforms, filing their complaints to the Courts more frequently than before. Eventually, though somewhat reluctantly, the Nakhudas accepted the new system and started keeping a general account of expenditure on each boat, value of pearls sold, and shares given to each diver. Previously, they had refused to reveal their accounts except to the Salifah Court whose decisions they influenced.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the Nakhudas' opposition to the account books, the Administration had difficulty over finding adequately trained local clerks to operate the system. In 1925 they were compelled to employ an Indian clerk to keep the accounts while Bahrainis were being trained as Diving Clerks for work with the Nakhudas.<sup>2</sup> In September 1925, after the main season, the Nakhudas submitted a petition to Captain Mallam, who was officiating for Major Daly, now on leave. They protested at what they regarded as Government interference in the affairs of diving. They spoke against the new accounting system and against the sanctioning of the sale of the pearls by the crews of the boats. They asked for the restoration of the Salifah Court to its former status, and for the right to sell the pearls without the interference of the divers' representatives. Such an interference, they claimed, harmed their dealings with the creditors who financed their boats.<sup>3</sup>

They wanted a return to the old days when they exercised authority over their divers, punishing the recalcitrant among them at sea. Under

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1 A.R.P.A. 1924, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A. 1925, op. cit.

3 See Translation of an Arabic Petition dated 8th Rabi-ul Awwal 1344 (26.9.1925) from diving Nakhudas of Bahrain to the Government of Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/132.

the reforms, they were supposed to file complaints only after they had returned to the shore. The submitting of complaints to the Authorities, they argued, was a time consuming business, causing them delays and financial loss. To allow them to castigate the disobedient divers, they wrote, was a better way of dealing with the problem.<sup>1</sup>

After Daly returned from leave, he dealt with the issues the Nakhudas raised in this petition. As regards the Salifah Court, he wrote, it had stopped functioning before the start of the pearling reforms. The divers boycotted it because it was biased against them. Among them was a large number of British protected persons for whom he felt particularly responsible. Daly went on to distinguish between two things: the customary diving rules and the customary practises, describing the latter as a distortion of the original rules. Abuses were inherent in the customary practises which saddled the diver with uncontrollable debts aiming to hold him in bondage. It was to free him from the burden of debts that the State controlled the amount of Salaf and Tisqam every season. Daly believed that if the reforms in the industry continued over a number of years, the debts would be wiped out, diving disputes would diminish significantly, and thus no need would be felt for a Salifah Court. The system of accounting, which the Nakhudas saw as complicated, would then become much simpler. However, Daly failed to realize that a number of unprofitable seasons, such as Bahrain witnessed in the early 1930s, i.e. four years after he had left Bahrain, also increased the divers' debts despite control of the advances by the State.

Daly referred to the rivalry among the Nakhudas to recruit divers and the harm coming to the latter as a result. A Nakhuda acquired a diver simply by settling his debts to his previous Nakhuda. The actual

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1 Ibid.

price paid remained a secret between the two. But the figure quoted to the diver, which represented his debts, was in excess of that paid to the first Nakhuda. The new Nakhuda then enticed the diver with larger advances, especially in the first few years. As years went by a diver's debts increased beyond his control and the earnings he received in the season from the Nakhuda were less than what he deserved. This rivalry among the Nakhudas, he wrote, raised the cost of 'enslaving a diver for life'. But Daly also recognised the gravity of the risks facing the Nakhudas. These he defined as death and sickness among divers, and frequent cases of runaway divers, all of which resulted in the Nakhudas' financial ruin. The reforms were designed to ensure justice and this included giving the diver his actual earnings. Fairer treatment rather than the restoration of the Salifah Court would, in the end, attract divers from the Gulf States to work in Bahrain, Daly wrote. He quoted some of the 'enlightened' Nakhudas as saying that a Salifah Court was no use to them if it did not run on the old lines. Earlier, Trucial Shaikhs had resented the suspension of the Salifah Court, a local institution of Bahrain. Daly concluded by expressing his belief that in due course the Chiefs of the Gulf States would appreciate the benefits of the pearling reforms carried out in Bahrain and would even seek to adopt them in their respective States.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Industry Faces Hard Times

Bahrain's pearl trade was slack during the years 1920-21, particularly in 1921 when a number of small traders went bankrupt. During the second half of 1922 the market improved and continued so doing in 1923 as the official commentary below reveals:

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<sup>1</sup> Daly to Captain Stuart-Horner, Secretary to the P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 93/9/5, 20.2.1926.

"In 1923 the pearl market was exceptionally good. Mr. Ruben visited Bahrain ... and bought a considerable stock of pearls. Mr. Pack representing Rosenthals also came and bought pearls valued at between 50 and 60 Lakhs of Rupees ... .. It is notable that no purchases for the British market seems to be forthcoming. The trade seems almost entirely confined to Jewish firms in Paris."<sup>1</sup>

For the first time in 1924, the Annual Report of the Agency mentioned the introduction of Japanese pearls in international markets and the threat it posed to Bahrain's pearl trade:

"... the pearl market ... was somewhat dull. This is largely attributed to the uncertainty of the rate of exchange between India and France, the bulk of the best Bahrain pearls going annually to Paris. Another factor which is believed to have contributed to slackness in the trade is that the important European buyers adopted a cautious attitude, owing to the introduction of Japanese pearls, which they feared were mixed with the local variety. The State has strictly prohibited the importation of cultured pearls, with a view to protecting the Bahrain industry, but smuggling is extremely difficult to check and cultured pearls when mixed with genuine Gulf pearls cannot be readily detected even by experts, without the aid of X-ray apparatus ..."<sup>2</sup>

In 1925 the pearl market deteriorated during the second half of the year, and in 1926 it became worse than before. The catch was below average and European purchases fell sharply. The Rosenthals of Paris reduced their purchases by 65% over the previous years. Increased circulation of cultured pearls and the fluctuating value of the French Franc were cited as the main causes. Many Bahrain merchants were unable to sell their pearls and a number of bankruptcies were reported. The Government of Bahrain issued instructions to shopkeepers to postpone the collection of debts which divers owed to them.

Merchants, who were short of ready cash, were unwilling to finance their Nakhudas until they had recovered part of the money lent earlier. Nakhudas who had signed 'sanads' pledging to repay their creditors in annual instalments failed to do so, and the sanads were used against them

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1 A.R.P.A. 1923, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A. 1924, op. cit.

in cases filed by the creditors. The Nakhudas had no cash either and they offered instead their divers' debts and boats, which the creditors rejected. The Government formed a temporary Court to try and break the deadlock between the two sides. It consisted of the members: Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman az-Zayani, Haji Mohammad bin Hindi, Haji Abd Ali bin Rajab, and the Adviser as President. The Court enquired into the most urgent cases and after great difficulty was able to persuade the creditors to accept Nakhudas' boats and their divers' debts. The Nakhudas were also persuaded to accept less cash to themselves and to their divers from their creditors. Commenting upon the settlements effected, the Adviser wrote:

"It appears that in every case the tajjars (i.e. merchants) have got the best of the bargain. They have acquired boats or divers from their Nakhudas, but against this must be considered the fact that they have made very large advances to these Nakhudas in former years and according to them, they have not received reasonable profit on the money lent."<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, the divers' Tisqam advance was reduced from what it had been in the previous year. It was now Rs. 80 and Rs. 60 for a diver and a puller respectively. They had not been consulted over the reductions and the only justification for this was, according to the Adviser, absence of an organisation to represent them, and also a belief that they would have rejected the reductions anyway. The cuts infuriated the divers who argued that since their earnings for the 1926 season were less than average, the Tisqam for the next season should not have been cut back. The Administration insisted that the decision was in favour of the divers and it aimed at reducing their debts.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of 1926, less than two months after Daly finally left Bahrain, the Administration reconstituted the Salifah Court so that it now consisted of four members one of whom was a diver. Rashid bin

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1 Adviser to the Agent. The Pearling Industry. I.O.R. 15/2/296, 25 Sha<sup>c</sup>ban 1345 (28.2.1927).

2 Ibid.

Mohammad Al Khalifah, a member of the Ruling family, was appointed its President.<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterwards the duties of the Salifah Court were merged in those of the Majlis al-Urfi.<sup>2</sup>

During 1927 the catch improved by 20% over the previous year. Accordingly, there was more cash in the hands of the diving community and this in turn generated a corresponding increase in Bahrain's import trade. The Tisqam advance, offered at the end of the main season, was raised to Rs. 100 for a diver and Rs. 80 for a puller.<sup>3</sup> This improvement continued and in 1928 both the pearl trade and the general trade of Bahrain were good. Sale of exceptional pearls increased during the year by 10-15% over the previous year and that of inferior grades was down by 20%. The Tisqam for the following season was maintained at its 1928 level.<sup>4</sup> The catch for the 1929 season was good, but the pearl trade was static, because of dwindling sales. Bahrain dealers had unsold stocks and were desperate for cash. The year was described as the worst for twenty years.<sup>5</sup> The divers protested at the Salaf advances which were fixed at Rs. 100 for a diver and Rs. 80 for a puller. They expected larger advances after the successful season in 1928. Shaikh Hamad conceded their demand after a leading Nakhuda from Hedd, Jabur bin Musallam, owner of thirty boats, agreed to give his divers increased advances. As a result, they were all allowed a further advance of Rs. 30 and Rs. 25 for each diver and puller respectively.<sup>6</sup>

The global recession of 1930 aggravated the slump in the pearl-trade.

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1 A.R.P.A. 1926, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A. 1927, op. cit.

3 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/296, No. 564-9A, 5 Sha<sup>c</sup>ban 1346.

4 A.R.P.A. 1928, op. cit.

5 Belgrave, Annual Report for 1930. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044.

6 Captain Prior to Colonel Biscoe, I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. C/89, 24.5.1930.

The season's sales dropped to less than 28 lakhs of rupees.<sup>1</sup> Foreign buyers had unsold pearls from the previous season and they were reluctant to buy more. Only a few Bahrain merchants managed to sell, the majority of them were left with stocks built up over two years. Markets in Paris and Bombay were badly affected by the recession.

Before the start of the 1930 season Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifah and the Adviser held a meeting with the leading pearl-dealers in order to fix the advances for the season. The merchants complained of the scarcity of cash and desired that the advances should be reduced. Hence they were determined at Rs. 80 and Rs. 60 for a diver and a puller respectively. It was also decided that if a Nakhuda was unable to give his diver the authorised advance he should issue him with a Barwa, i.e. a document granting a diver the right to dive for any Nakhuda of his choice. When the reduced advances were proclaimed to the public on 14th May 1930, the divers protested and refused to go out diving. Their action created panic in the bazaar and the Agent had to allay the fears of certain merchants. On this occasion, Shaikh Hamad again defended the divers and agreed to allow them larger advances. The Agent, on the other hand, saw the increase as contrary to the aims of the pearling reforms which sought to control the debts by controlling the advances. Moreover, he was opposed to the withdrawal of the earlier proclamation. He believed that such a step would be damaging to the prestige of the Government of Bahrain. A way out was found and the Nakhudas were instructed to give an extra loan of up to Rs. 20 for a diver and Rs. 15 for a puller against the Tisqam for the next season. Following this settlement about half the divers were paid their advances either in full or in part, and many thousands were given free Barwas by the Government

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1 A.R.P.A. 1930. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

or by their Nakhudas.<sup>1</sup> On 21st May the divers ended their protest, and the fleet sailed to the banks thereafter. The Agent wrote:

"One is of course anxious to keep the divers out of debt as far as possible, but when they are setting out on four months very hard work a substantial advance is only reasonable, and an advance lower than this year's, would make the divers look about for some other employment."<sup>2</sup>

Investigations conducted in 1929 showed that many old divers owed their Nakhudas as much as Rs. 3,000. As the earnings were decreasing year after year, there was no chance of their settling the outstanding debts. 538 boats operated during 1929, and in the following year only 509 boats took part in the diving. The accounts of 249 boats examined by the Diving Clerks in 1930 revealed that only the divers of three boats received any shares in the profits. The rest of the boats paid no profits, because the expenses were greater than the income. Here is how the Advisor outlined the impact of two poor seasons upon the merchants:

"Owing to last year's bad season (1929) the small and medium merchants were badly hit, this year (1930) the big merchants as well have been seriously affected and at present only two or three of the leading pearl merchants are in possession of any funds. They all hold large stocks of pearls which they cannot sell at present even at a great loss. Debts and instalments are not being paid and merchants who two or three years ago could easily command several lacs of rupees are now hardly pressed to find a few thousands. If one of the big men failed he would pull down with him in his fall numbers of others."<sup>3</sup>

The worsening economic conditions twice forced the Government to increase the advances, contrary to the reform measure which called for their reduction. Early in 1930 the Adviser warned against those Nakhudas who "were dodging the rules by keeping side accounts". In a letter to the Agent, he called for stricter supervision by the Government and the Courts to prevent a return to the old days.<sup>4</sup> Earlier in December 1928, he spelt out a similar warning:

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1 Belgrave's Annual Report for 1930, op. cit.

2 Prior's No. C/89, op. cit.

3 Belgrave's Annual Report for 1930, op. cit.

4 Belgrave to Prior, No. 1337/48, op. cit.

"Although Shaikh Hamad is mildly sympathetic towards the divers, he dislikes countenancing any action which may possibly annoy any of the merchants or the Nakhudas. To enforce the diving rules it is sometimes necessary to punish persons who disobey them. Shaikh Hamad does not support the Courts in doing this."<sup>1</sup>

The economic situation worsened in 1931 and the pearl trade came to a virtual halt, except for the cheaper grades for which there was some demand in India. As a result, local dealers suffered financially and the extent of their loss is best described by the excerpt below:

"It is estimated that two thirds of the pearling capital in Bahrain had disappeared into the sea in the last three years (1929-31), and men who had a capital of ten or fifteen lakhs have nothing left except pearls for which there are no purchasers."<sup>2</sup>

The Salaf advance for the 1932 season was fixed at Rs. 30 and Rs. 25 for divers and pullers. The divers agitated for increased Salaf and on 25th May of that year their leaders were arrested. On the following day, divers from Moharraq and Hedd, armed with sticks and stones, crossed to Manamah to rescue a colleague who had been detained. They attacked Manamah Police Station where he was being kept in confinement and managed to release him. There followed a clash with the Natures, armed watchmen, who were reinforced by members of the Indian Police Force. The watchmen reacted by firing their rifles, killing two divers and wounding many others. The merchants and the Nakhudas blamed the troubles on the Government's earlier leniency in dealing with the divers. These criticisms compelled Shaikh Hamad to take a firm line with the divers on any future occasion.

According to the Agent, the authorised Salaf advances were the lowest ever approved by the State, much below what was essential for sustaining a diver's family throughout the diving season. Again, the Government instructed Nakhudas who did not have cash to issue their divers with Barwas. However, divers who received Barwas failed to find employment

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1 Belgrave, The Pearl Industry of Bahrain, 19.12.1928. I.O.R. 15/2/132.

2 A.R.P.A. 1931, op. cit. Also see Captain Prior to Colonel Biscoe. I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. C/91, 2.8.1931.

outside the pearling industry.<sup>1</sup> Reporting the matter to the Government, the Resident wrote:

"... the demonstration was intended as a protest against the smallness of the diving advances ... The economic position on the Arab coast is exceedingly serious. It is essential that divers should receive advances to support their families during their absence, and merchants, boat owners and others have not got the capital now to pay the customary advances owing to the fact that they have been unable to dispose of last year's pearls.

The divers ... are a heterogeneous community - Baluchis, Arabs, Negroes, Nejdīs, Persians, etc., and are difficult to control; I hope however that they have now realised that a resort to force is not the best method of representing grievances. On the other hand so far as economic conditions permit steps will have to be taken to remedy these grievances, though the problem is an exceedingly difficult one."<sup>2</sup>

During the 1932 main season, the catch was described as "disappointing", but this was compensated for during the Raddah diving, i.e. the closing season, when both the catch and the prices recorded some improvement.<sup>3</sup> In the following year, by order of Shaikh Hamad, a Diving Council presided over by the Adviser was introduced to advise on the affairs of diving. Greater numbers of Nakhudas operated on the Khammas system than before. This was due to the fact that Nakhudas could not secure cash from the creditors and under Khammas no advances were offered to the divers. A few merchants managed to sell pearls from previous years, but only at about a quarter of the price for which they had originally bought them.<sup>4</sup> The advances for 1933 were maintained at their 1932 level and no objection was raised by the divers, many of whom accepted advances below even what had been specified by the Government. They knew well that if they objected to them they would be asked to seek alternative employment. Although Government instructions obliged the Nakhuda not to exceed the authorised amount, he was nevertheless left free to give smaller amounts provided the arrangements he

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1 Prior to Biscoe. I.O.R. 15/2/848, no number, 30.5.1932.

2 Col. Biscoe to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/848, No. 354-S, 4.6.1932.

3 A.R.P.A. 1932. I.O.R. 15/2/297.

4 Belgrave, Annual Report for 1933. I.O.R. 15/2/297, No. 923-9A, 6.1.1934.

had made were acceptable to his divers.

As the industry's future was becoming more uncertain, merchants demanded mortgages of land and property from their Nakhudas against the cash they loaned to them. This is borne out by the cases litigated in the Courts during the years 1932-33. The Nakhudas were unhappy with the merchants' demands because they violated the established usages of the diving system. In the past, only a Nakhuda's boat and divers were subject to seizure in settlement of his liabilities.<sup>1</sup>

In 1934 the merchants still suffered from lack of cash, and the advances were fixed at Rs. 20 and Rs. 15 for divers and pullers. The number of boats which took part in the diving fell by 96 over the previous season. The table below shows the downward slide of the industry during the years 1930-34.<sup>2</sup> Compare the tiny value of the catch for the years specified below with the annual average value of "one to three million pounds", estimated by the Adviser in 1928.<sup>3</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Boats</u>	<u>Estimated Total Value of Pearls in Lakhs of Rupees</u>
1930	509	21,25,000
1931	504	18,32,000
1932	458	12,14,000
1933	436	13,40,000
1934	340	10,00,000

#### Factors Which Militated Against the Industry

By the end of 1934 people saw little hope in the industry's future and they began to doubt if it could ever regain its former prosperity. Various reasons were given for the decline of the pearl-trade.

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1 Belgrave, The Pearl Trade and the Diving Industry, 1352 (1933). I.O.R. 15/2/195.

2 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 875/9A, 25 Shawwal 1353 (30.1.1935).

3 Belgrave, The Pearl Industry of Bahrain, 19.12.1928, op. cit.

Bahrainis attributed its ills to diminishing numbers of oysters on the pearl banks, to the deteriorating quality of the pearls, and to the belief that the banks had been over-fished. Some even took into their consideration the harm caused by the local wind, Bāriḥ, a cool north wind which used to blow for forty days before the start of the main diving season, and which since 1930 had coincided with the season itself, making the sea unbearably rough for the diver. At the end of 1933 several pearl-dealers urged the Adviser to close the banks for a whole year so that the oysters might be given a chance to grow and multiply. The closure would also help dealers to dispose of large stocks of unsold pearls from previous years. But the suggestion was rejected because, although it would have helped the dealers, it would have at the same time put divers out of work for a whole year. Moreover, without the full co-operation of all the Gulf States, the closure restricted to Bahrain boats only, would have damaged the islands' economy.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1930 the number of divers engaged in the industry as a whole had steadily decreased. On the other hand, the number of divers operating on the Khammas system was increasing. In 1934, out of 292 boats whose accounts were kept by the diving clerks, 116 were Salafieh and 176 were Khammas. It was even believed that in the absence of any improvement in the industry the Khammas system would replace the Salafieh as the customary system. It was also believed that the divers' debts would cease to be a problem once the Salafieh system collapsed. The debts of 500 divers, calculated in 1934, showed that the average diver owed his Nakhuda about Rs. 507, that the debts of eight elderly divers

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1 In April 1930 information was received to the effect that the firm of Qusaibis had ordered three diving suits from Europe for use during the main season. The Residency advised the Administration in Bahrain to legislate against their use. A foreign dealer believed that the only reason why Bahrain banks had not been exhausted, as the Australian and Philippine banks had been, was due to the absence of the diving apparatus and to intensive pearling. See Captain Prior to Col. Biscoe. I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. C-38, 5.4.1930. Also, Col. Biscoe to Prior, I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. 174-S, 12.4.1930.

reached over Rs. 2,000 and those of nine others exceeded Rs. 1,000.<sup>1</sup>

Concern among European dealers about the circulation of cultured pearls was reported by the Agency Report as early as 1924. Over the years greater numbers of people were attracted to cultured pearls because they were cheaper and practically identical in appearance to genuine pearls.<sup>2</sup> In May 1929, the Administration was informed that the Qusaibi firm was conducting negotiations in Bombay with the aim of introducing methods of cultivating pearls into Bahrain. This the Administration could not allow to happen and, anyway, trade in cultured pearls had already been prohibited.<sup>3</sup> Also in 1929 a local man was convicted by the Court of infringing Government regulations governing the handling or trade in cultured pearls.<sup>4</sup> Commenting upon the impact of Japanese pearls, the Adviser noted:

"It has taken the Bahrain pearl dealers several years to realise what harm is done to their trade by the cultured pearl industry ... As the production of cultured pearls increases and improves yearly I see no prospect of improvement in the Bahrain pearl trade."<sup>5</sup>

So far we have accounted for those factors which influenced the pearl trade directly. As regards the attitude of the divers, Nakhudas, merchants, the Administration's view was thus outlined by the Adviser in 1934:

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- 1 Belgrave, The Pearl Trade and the Diving Industry 1353 (1934). I.O.R. 15/2/195.
  - 2 Cultured pearls were sold for one thirtieth of the price of genuine pearls of similar weight and appearance. See Belgrave's No. 875-9A, op. cit.
  - 3 Belgrave to Prior, I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. 1492-9A, 9th Dhil Haj 1347 (18.5.1929). Also, Prior to Captain Russell, D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. C/77, 2.6.1929. And also, Russell to Prior, I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. 1448, 20.6.1929.
  - 4 The person involved in the above case was Abdullah al-Zayed. In another case of 1933, Khalil Bakir, a pearl dealer from Qatar trading in Bahrain was found guilty of a similar offence. Belgrave, The Pearl Trade and the Diving Industry, 1352, op. cit.
  - 5 Belgrave's No. 875-9A, op. cit.

"The protection of the interests of the divers is a thankless task, the divers themselves do not realise that their interests are being safeguarded, they are utterly improvident and never think of the future, the Nakhudas and pearl merchants, with a very few exceptions, are callous and selfish and although the Ruler is sympathetic towards the divers in principle he is liable to be influenced by the arguments of the Nakhudas in individual cases."<sup>1</sup>

#### The Industry's Fortunes from 1935-1945

During the first half of the 1930s, the pearling industry was hit by the recession, and even some time after the world had recovered from the recession, the industry remained in a bad shape. Greater production and circulation of cultured pearls, absence of European and American demand for Bahrain pearls, meagre sales and prices at home and abroad, oil replacing pearling from mid-1934 as the chief source of income for the country, and finally divers being attracted to the stability and security of wage-oriented jobs, all served to weaken the industry's foundation.

Some slight improvement was recorded during the years 1935, 1937, 1941, 1943, and 1945, but these were only temporary improvements. The main trend of the industry was one of gradual decline as is borne out by the falling number of boats operating during the season and the corresponding drop in the number of crews manning them. (See Table supplemented to the present Chapter.)

From 1935, European buyers, who used to visit Bahrain every season, more or less ceased to come and the catch was taken to Bombay for sale there. The Indian demand for Bahrain pearls was mainly restricted to the lower grades.<sup>2</sup> With the expansion in the Oil Company's installations, many divers found manual work with the Company during 1936. As wage-earners they were now able to settle their debts to their

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1 Belgrave, *The Pearl Trade and the Diving Industry*, 1353 (1934), op. cit.

2 Belgrave, *Annual Report*. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1221-9A, 6.2.1936.

ex-Nakhudas by monthly instalments of Rs. 5. In this way both the diver and the Nakhuda benefitted from the oil industry.<sup>1</sup> Alternative employment on an even larger scale became available first in 1940, and again in 1944. In 1940, the Government was involved in the extension of the Moharraq sea-road, and in 1944 both the Oil Company and the R.A.F. executed large construction plans.<sup>2</sup>

The price of pearls improved slightly in 1937. The catch for the year, which consisted principally of small and seed pearls, was nevertheless bigger than that of the previous year.<sup>3</sup> The improvement was short-lived and 1938 turned out to be a very bad season owing to a poor catch and to decline in the price of pearls.<sup>4</sup> In the following season the catch was small but of a better quality. Both absence of foreign buyers and the unstable world condition helped reduce the price of pearls considerably. The firm of Qusaibi availed itself of the opportunity and bought pearls worth seven and a half lakhs of rupees.<sup>5</sup> The Qusaibis managed to sell half the pearls on the Indian market during 1940, which was another bad year for the Bahrain pearl market.<sup>6</sup> The catch improved during the 1941 season, but the pearls fished were mostly of medium and low grades. Nevertheless, the Indian market was still active and there was a greater demand for Bahrain pearls than in 1940, as a result of which the market in Bahrain itself was stimulated. An increase of 50% was recorded in the price of pearls over the 1940 season,

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1 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1303-9A, 7.2.1937.

2 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 56-9A, 3.2.1941.  
Also, Belgrave's Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/300, No. 427-9A,  
8.2.1945.

3 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1846/S.F., 8.2.1938.

4 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 2298-9A, 14.2.1939.

5 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 2369-9A, 3.2.1940.

6 No. 59-9A, op. cit.

despite the virtual closure of the American and European markets throughout the War period.<sup>1</sup> The improvement of 1941 raised new hopes and more boats participated in the diving during the next season. Regrettably, the catch for 1942 was poor, few boats made any profits and the majority of the divers simply increased their debts to their Nakhudas. High winds were reported to have forced smaller dhows to seek shelter much of the time.<sup>2</sup> From 1942 onwards the cost of provisioning the boats increased, largely owing to the great rise in the price of foodstuffs (see Chapter Eight). The increase had adversely affected the Nakhudas and the divers, and to match the rising cost of living the advances were slightly increased during the years 1942-45 (see Table provided).

The 1943 season was described as reasonably good owing to the Indian demand for medium and lower grades of pearls and to slightly higher prices paid on the Bombay market compared with the previous year. Almost all Nakhudas and divers were said to have made profits and the average earnings of a diver during the season was over Rs. 150.<sup>3</sup> However, for the first time during the War the divers had to eat Jareesh, crushed wheat, and dates instead of the more popular rice.<sup>4</sup> In the following year, Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, occurred during the season and diving had to be halted for a whole month. A diver's average earnings for the season, i.e. 1944, was given as Rs. 165.<sup>5</sup>

In 1945 fewer boats operated in the season than in the preceding

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1 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 81-9A, 31.1.1942.

2 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/343, No. 273-18, 11.2.1943.

3 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 240-9A, 3.2.1944.

4 Director of Customs' Annual Report for 1943 - Food Control. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. PA/HL/10/88.

5 No. 427-9A, op. cit.

year, but the catch was comparatively better and the prices obtained were slightly higher. The improvement was attributed to the ending of the War.<sup>1</sup> The season was described as "the best flicker of prosperity from pearls".<sup>2</sup>

Despite the smallness of the advances throughout 1935-45, divers did not raise any objection as they did earlier in 1929, 1930, 1932. This was perhaps partly due to the lessons learnt from the troubles of 1932, but more certainly to the fact that they had reconciled themselves to the economic realities of the pearl trade, harsh though these were.

#### Recent Views and Counter-Views

A recent article, critical of the pearling reforms, states that "the reforms were not well received ... even by the divers and pullers they were presumed to benefit".<sup>3</sup> This statement fails to mention the Nakhudas whose resistance to the reforms was, in some respects, greater than that put up by the divers. Examination of the archival material reveals that the Nakhudas, not the divers, asked for the abolition of the account system introduced under the reforms. Again it was the Nakhudas who demanded the restoration of the Salifah Court to its former position, so that they selected its judge from among their ranks. It was also the Nakhudas who desired a return to the earlier practice of selling the pearls without consulting the divers or as the Agent put it "on the sly". Furthermore, it was the Nakhudas who asked to be allowed to castigate disobedient divers, as the case was before the initiation of the reforms, instead of reporting the matter to the Authorities at the end of the

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1 Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/301, number illegible, 23.1. 1946.

2 Belgrave, Personal Column, p. 134.

3 S.K. Datta and J.B. Nugent, Bahrain's Pearling Industry: How It Was, Why It Was That Way and Its Implications, in J.B. Nugent and T.H. Thomas (ed.), Bahrain and the Gulf (1985), p. 31.

season. (See Nakhudas' Petition of September 1925, cited earlier.)

On the other hand, the divers protested mainly against the reduction of the advances, i.e. Salaf, Tisqam, essential to sustain their families while they were absent diving. As to their earnings from the sale of pearls, they were less certain whether a season was going to be profitable to them or not. They were long used to living and providing for their families by means of borrowed money, and the hope that the next season would be a more auspicious one. Poor yields, bad markets, and falling demand were the sort of risks that the industry had to face from time to time. These risks became even greater in the 1930s when expenses surpassed earnings and the business gradually lost its previous lucrative-ness through fall of prices and sales. The same article goes on to say:

"Most analysts ... have approached the issues involved in a normative perspective, emphasizing whether the system was 'good' or 'bad'. Most such analysts have tended to stress the unfairness of the exploitation and control of one party by another. What they leave unexplained is why the industry developed in the way it did ...

To come into existence and to remain in effect so long, the system must have been relatively efficient (though not necessarily 'good'). It was a system designed to maximize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages of all three basic forms of organization mentioned above."<sup>1</sup>

The diving systems by which the Nakhudas operated, Salafieh, Khammas, <sup>C</sup>Azil, survived as long as the industry functioned profitably. Before the age of oil, the diving industry provided employment to tens of thousands. Manual work, at that time, was limited. Government-sponsored public works increased only after revenue from oil started accruing to the Government, i.e. in 1934 when Bahrain began to export oil. Similarly, alternative employment created by the construction work of the Oil Company postdated the discovery of oil in 1932. Date-plantation,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-3.

boat-building, weaving, pottery, etc., were traditional industries pursued predominantly by the Baharnah Arabs, the native islanders. In its heyday, pearl diving was the greatest single employer during the season.

The Salafieh system of diving was the most widespread in Bahrain and the reforms of 1924 were designed to rectify the malpractices which had affected it over the years. The system was controlled by the tribesmen who were loyal to the Rulers. Finance and captaincy of the boats operating on the Salafieh system, together with the old Salfah Court, were heavily influenced by these same people. Apart from Bahrainis, most of the divers operating on the System were Persians, Baluchis, Muscatis, Omanis and many other coastal Arabs from all over the Gulf. It was easier for a foreign diver to seek employment on the Salafieh than on other systems.

True the system survived, but it was taken over by Khammas from the mid-1930s. The fact that it survived does not necessarily indicate that it was efficient. What is certain is that it was managed unscrupulously by those in charge of it. Moreover, Salafieh owed its survival not to its agreeability to the divers, but to the sheer weight of the pearling fraternity behind it.

As regards the risk factor in the industry, the article argues:

"One reason why a fixed rent system was not common in the pearling industry was probably the much greater income risk that characterized pearling than date production ...

The dominance of share contracts in which the risk is shared among all parties presumably reflects the fact that pilots and in turn merchant financiers were not willing to accept all of the very considerable income risk that such a system would impose on the pilot and the merchant-financier."<sup>1</sup>

Normally, the income risk was more real for the divers and pullers

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 33-4.

than for creditors and Nakhudas. A creditor was bound to take his money back plus interest before the Nakhuda and the divers got their shares. After him came the Nakhuda who deducted the amount of loans he paid out to his divers plus the interest and all other expenses such as equipping and provisioning the boat. What remained from the profits, thereafter, determined the volume of the shares to be distributed among the divers, pullers and assistants. It was this portion of the profits which was more prone to fluctuations.

The article praises the advantages of share contracts wherein the risk was shared among all parties, and the incentive thus provided for good team work, etc., and draws the following conclusions:

"Given the aforementioned advantages of the flexible share-profit system ... .., it is quite possible that many, if not all, of the British-stimulated reforms of the 1920s may have been counter-productive, contributing to the demise of the pearling industry rather than providing for its revival."<sup>1</sup>

It is claimed that the reform measure which terminated 'inter-generational transfer of debt' had possibly increased the cost of 'recruitment of labour' and the 'granting of loans'. It is also claimed that the introduction of the account system had added to the overall cost of the operation, and that the giving out of uniform loans to all divers without paying attention to their skills weakened the desire to be competent in diving, and therefore made the system less effective.<sup>2</sup>

There is a measure of truth in these arguments. No doubt bureaucratic innovations such as the introduction of diving clerks to keep the account books, or the boat-licensing tax, raised the Nakhudas' expenses, but only marginally. However, there is an element of exaggeration in the statement that the reforms were counter-productive

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1 Ibid., p. 38.

2 Loc. cit.

and contributed to the collapse of the pearling industry. From 1930 onwards, the industry's fortunes began to decline owing to a set of factors which had nothing to do with the reforms enacted by the Administration. The downward trend was irreversible and as years went by it became clear that the chances of the industry recovering from its ills were getting slimmer. It is only fair to say that when the pearling reforms began in 1924, the industry had already been through a couple of bad years, for example 1920-21, as a result of poor markets and sales. The market picked up during 1923, but again in the following year receded to its earlier state of inactivity, mainly as a result of the caution of the European buyers who were concerned about the spread of cultured pearls. Apart from 1926 which was a bad season, the pearl trade remained active and profitable during 1927 and 1928. Thereafter, the industry went into a slow and steady decline as indicated by lack of demand from Europe, falling sales and prices, and the wider currency which Japanese pearls had attained worldwide.

The reforms recognised the customary laws and rights of all the parties involved in the business. They sought to protect the diver against victimization, against faulty accounts, against bequeathal of his debts to his son, ensured to him a fair trial, and endowed him with the right to witness the sale of the pearls as a shareholder. By reducing the seasonal advances, the reforms aimed to free the diver from perpetual indebtedness and from life-long attachment to his employer, the Nakhuda. The reforms also safeguarded the interests of the Nakhuda, by conceding to him high interest on his loans to the divers and by barring the impoundment of his personal property against failure to settle his debts to the merchant. The reforms recognised the great risks to the merchants, and therefore allowed them high interest rates on money lent to the Nakhudas.

It is difficult in view of the evidence to see how legislation

against malpractices could have been injurious to the pearl trade when all the facts show that the real culprit was global recession, Japanese pearls, poor sales and prices. In short, nothing could have averted the collapse of the pearl trade, not even the absence of the pearling reforms altogether. After the 1930s the industry was progressively becoming less and less remunerative.

There remains one unanswered question, viz. since the Khammas system was fairer to the divers than the Salafieh, and the Adviser's views quoted above vouch for its fairness, and since Khammas was compatible with the teachings of Islam in that, unlike Salafieh (Madyan)<sup>1</sup>, it did away with interest-bound loans, so why did not they encourage the Khammas system? The Administration could have persuaded new divers or those of them with little or no arrears owed to their Nakhudas to switch to the Khammas system. The irony is that the wretched divers were eventually relieved of the Salafieh by the slump in the pearl trade. And even when Salafieh failed, its failure came at a time when the industry was ailing irretrievably, dashing even Major Daly's earlier hopes that in due course other Gulf States would seek to adopt the pearling reforms of Bahrain.

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1 Many Indian merchants in Bahrain were involved in the financing of boats whose Nakhudas operated on the Salafieh system. S.B. Miles thus recorded their influence:  
 "The management and profits of the pearl trade are entirely in the hands of Hindoo and Khoja merchants, who reside in Bahrain, the towns on the Pirate Coast, and at Lingah and Muscat. These astute traders not only own most of the boats but advance provisions, clothes, and other necessaries to the pearl fishers at exorbitant prices and receive the whole produce of the industry, which they thus continue to turn almost entirely to their own profit and advantage." The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf (2nd Edition 1966), p. 415.

Statistics of Boats and Advances for 1935-1945

Obtained from the Annual Reports of the Political Agency, the Director of Customs, the Adviser to the Shaikh (I.O.R. 15/2/298-301).

Year	Number of Boats	Tisqam		Salaf	
		Diver	Puller	Diver	Puller
1935	316	Rs.20	Rs.15	Rs.20	Rs.15
1936	264	20	15	20	15
1937	271	40	20	40	20
1938	252	20	15	20	15
1939	219	20	15	20	15
1940	191	25	20	25	20
1941	222	25	20	25	20
1942	298	30	25	30	25
1943	278	30	25	30	25
1944	188	40	30	40	30
1945	121	40	30	40	30

## Chapter Six

### The Politics of Education: From Seclusion to Integration 1919-1945

#### The Emergence of Modern Schools in Bahrain

1919 is usually taken to mark the start of modern schooling in Bahrain. In that year the first Arab school: Madrasat al-Hidāyah al-Khalifiyah was built by the Sunni Community of Bahrain. Rs. 300,000 were collected in donations for the school, which was built in Moharraq, the Rulers' place of residence then.<sup>1</sup> It was supervised and run by a secular Committee, which was presided over by Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifah. Members of the Committee were mostly merchants who, themselves deprived of modern schooling, were keen to see that their children did not miss it either.

During the Summer of 1919 Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa was invited to England where he visited schools and was greatly impressed by what he had seen there. On his return to Bahrain, both he and his associates involved themselves in a plan for a modern school with a view to secular as opposed to purely religious education.

Certain Arab writers have tended to regard al-Hidāyah as the first modern Arab school in the Gulf, which contradicts the facts as they now stand. The Mubārakiyah School in Kuwait, named after Shaikh Mubarak bin Subāh, was opened in 1912 and therefore pre-dated al-Hidayah by about seven

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1 Memorandum from C. Belgrave to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 1366/2E, 15th Ramadan 1348. Also note that after Shaikh Abdullah's return from England in late October 1919, a public meeting was held at which funds were collected for the new school. Yusuf Kanoo, hoping to become President of the Education Committee, donated Rs. 40,000 towards the school, but instead Shaikh Abdullah was elected President and Kanoo was offered mere membership of the Committee. This provoked him into uttering angry remarks as a result of which Shaikh Abdullah returned to him, in public, the contribution he had made towards the school. In resentment, he told the Agent later on that the school was " ... a deeply laid plot for the teaching of anti-English doctrine and pan-Islamism". See Note on Yusuf Kanoo attached to Dickson's Memorandum No. 430-C, op. cit.

years.<sup>1</sup> And in all fairness, if by modern we mean Western-style schools, then mention should be made of the Girls' School started in Bahrain by Mrs. S.W. Zwemer of the Arabian Mission in 1892, which was clearly the pioneer of modern schooling in Bahrain.<sup>2</sup> For history's sake, mention should also be made of the Persian school: Ittihād, founded in Bahrain in 1910.<sup>3</sup>

Mosque-based schools were the precursor of modern education in Bahrain, as in most other Islamic countries. Some such schools were dependent on trusts and endowments from members of the community and were listed as Waqf-schools. A large number of Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Waqf Schools existed in Bahrain from earlier times. These were destroyed, over the years, by opponents of the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah faith, for example, the school once attached to the mosque at the ancient village of Bilād al-Qadīm. These were places for religious teaching carried out by traditional Mullahs or <sup>C</sup>Ālims. The advent of modern schools, however, hastened the disappearance of those that remained, and their number by early 1927 had dwindled to twenty.<sup>4</sup>

From December 1923, the Administration of Shaikh Hamad paid a regular monthly subsidy to al-Hidāyah School, to the exclusion of the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah who wanted equal rights, as the statement below indicates:

"A scheme he (i.e. Shaikh Hamad) does not favour, but for which there is a considerable demand, is for a school for Shiah. The Civil List includes a monthly contribution of Rs. 1000 to the Sunni Boys' school".<sup>5</sup>

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- 1 H. Wahbah, Arabian Days, p. 48. Wahbah served as Headmaster of al-Hidāyah from October 1920 to the end of November 1921. See his letter to the Resident dated 14th February 1922. I.O.R. 15/1/327.
  - 2 R.B. Winder, 'Education in Al-Bahrain' in The World of Islam: Studies in honour of Philip K. Hitti. Edited by J. Kritzeck and R.B. Winder, p. 310.
  - 3 A.Y. Al-Hamar, An Analytical Study of the System of Education in Bahrain 1940-65, pp. 8, 104.
  - 4 C. Belgrave, Education. I.O.R. 15/2/296, 23.2.1927.
  - 5 See Monthly Budget, Government of Bahrain in Major Daly's letter to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 208/C/9/2, 17.12.1923. Note that the total monthly allocation on Bahrain's first Civil List drawn up by Daly in December 1923 was Rs. 36,000.

The Administration was highly dissatisfied with the way schools were run by the Education Committee whose members sought to appoint relatives and friends to teaching posts, regardless of training or qualifications. In 1925 lack of adequate cash and absence of trained local teachers prevented the Administration from taking over the control of schools.<sup>1</sup>

During the school year 1926-27, there were three schools in Bahrain and the teaching staff was increased with the arrival of a number of trained Syrians whose employment, nevertheless, touched on local susceptibilities as the commentary below shows:

"There is considerable feeling against the importing of foreigners, but there was no remedy as local teachers do not exist."<sup>2</sup>

Three hundred boys received free education in the schools. Their ages ranged from six to sixteen. They were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, elementary algebra and geometry, and English. Head teachers received a salary of Rs. 250/- to 300/- monthly and were provided with quarters in the school. Several local teachers were former pupils. What the Administration sought to do with school-leavers was outlined by the Adviser as follows:

"It is hoped that after the schools have been in existence for a year or two more, that some of the pupils will be qualified to take up posts as clerks in the town."<sup>3</sup>

In 1927 the wife of one of the Syrian teachers opened a class for girls. When it was first started it was attended by a few girls from the Ruling and the merchant classes. It took parents considerable time to adapt to the idea of sending their daughters to modern schools to learn

1 A.R.P.A. 1925, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A. 1927, op. cit. Note that the word 'Syrians', at this time, subsumed both nationals of present-day Syria as well as Lebanon.

3 C. Belgrave, Education. I.O.R. 15/2/296, 23rd February 1927. It is interesting to note that it was Sater Baig, ex-minister of Education in Iraq, who recommended the introduction of Syrian teachers to Bahrain. See Belgrave, Education. I.O.R. 15/2/296, No. 564/9A, 5th Shaban, 1346 (February 1928).

reading and writing. They feared that they might be tempted to correspond with boys. In 1928 a girls' school was inaugurated in Moharraq at the request of Mrs. Belgrave.

Commenting on the school-boys' standard of education, Belgrave wrote in early 1928:

"At present the best results are obtained from the American Mission Boys' School. Two scholars from the Mission School have been taken on in Government Offices, but when an attempt was made to fill another vacancy of a clerk from the Khalifa Schools nobody was found with the requisite amount of education.

The Government has every wish to encourage the State schools by giving appointments to the scholars in the various Government Offices but so far the standard of education falls considerably below that required in a junior clerk."<sup>1</sup>

#### The First Educational Mission to Beirut

Seven boys were selected in 1928 for further study at the American University in Beirut (A.U.B.) at the expense of the State.<sup>2</sup> The aim was to train a number of Bahrainis for vacant jobs on the Administration of Bahrain. The son of Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa and that of his brother Shaikh Mohammad were among those destined for Beirut. Shaikh Abdullah bin Shaikh Ibrahim Al Khalifah had already joined the University in the previous year, also at State expense.<sup>3</sup> The mission was exclusively formed of Sunni boys in line with official policy which favoured the prevalence of the Sunni element in the Administration of Bahrain.

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- 1 No. 564/9A, op. cit. Rev B.D. Hakken was head of the above School founded around 1905.
- 2 Those included in the Mission were: Khalifah bin Shaikh Mohammad AlKhalifah, Hamad bin Shaikh Abdullah AlKhalifah, Ahmad bin Ali bin Musa, Abdul Aziz bin Sa<sup>c</sup>ad Shamlan, Rashid bin Abdur Rahman Zayani, Abdur Rahman bin Qasim Ma<sup>c</sup>awda, Mohammad Kamal bin Shaikh Jasim. See letter from Major Barrett, P.A. to the Registrar, A.U.B., Beyrout, Syria. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, 28.6.1928. Although the decision to send the boys to Beirut was approved by the Administration in Bahrain and by Shaikh Abdullah, it was nonetheless done at the instigation of Uthman al-Hawrani, Headmaster of al-Hidāyah School. See Petition, in Arabic, addressed to Shaikh Hamad by members of the Education Committee, attached to the Adviser's Memorandum to P.A., No. 1366/2E, op. cit.
- 3 A.R.P.A. 1928, op. cit.

For the first time the Ruling House of Bahrain allowed its members to join a Christian institution, in this case the A.U.B. - formerly the Syrian Protestant College - in order to benefit from Western education. Earlier in 1923, Shaikh Hamad turned down a suggestion from the Agent to send his sons to a missionary school, viz.

"I (i.e. Daly) mentioned Van Ess's School at Basrah. Shaikh Hamad did not appear to like the idea, he emphasized that he would like them to go to a Muhammadan Institution ...

He would regard with the greatest suspicion any attempt on our part to wish to advise him to send them to a Mission School and even if he consented I think ill-wishers would make capital out of it."<sup>1</sup>

#### The Formation of a Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Education Committee

In 1927 leading Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs headed by the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qadi Sayed Adnan made their first attempt at establishing a modern school for boys. The village of Sūq al-Khamis was chosen as a suitable site for the proposed school. The choice was made because of the existence in the surrounding areas of a number of densely populated villages. Donations for the school came mainly from the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah community. Pledges of support were also made by Shaikh Hamad and this included contributions towards the cost of construction and the running of the school.<sup>2</sup>

On its completion, the school was inaugurated by Shaikh Hamad in May 1928. It had two teachers, one Iraqi and the other Bahraini, and a total of 25 boys on its register.<sup>3</sup> On March 15th of the following year a second school, al-Madrasah al-Ja<sup>C</sup>fariyah, bigger than the previous one, was opened in Manamah town also by Shaikh Hamad.<sup>4</sup> It was financed jointly

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1 No. 208/C/9/2, op. cit.

2 No. 564/9A, op. cit.

3 A.R.P.A. 1928, op. cit.

4 A.R.P.A. 1929, op. cit. It is interesting to note that a modern Shi<sup>C</sup>ah School also called al-Madrasah al-Ja<sup>C</sup>fariyah had existed in Baghdad prior to the outbreak of World War One. See Amal Vinogradov, The 1920 Revolt in Iraq - The Role of Tribes in National Politics, International Journal of Middle East Studies, No. 3 (1972), pp. 123-39.

by the Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs and by the Shaikh's Administration. Its management was entrusted to a Committee of Prominent Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs presided over by Sayed Ahmad bin Sayed <sup>c</sup>Alawi. Mohammad Sa<sup>c</sup>id Āl-Jum<sup>c</sup>ah, educated in Baghdad, was appointed headmaster of the School. The staff of the school comprised the former's brother plus three Iraqi teachers. At the time of opening 198 boys attended the school, the maximum number that it could take. Support for the school came from the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Qadis and from the Baharnah Community in Manamah, and the State budgetted Rs. 1100/- during 1347 (1928-29) for the annual upkeep of both Shi<sup>c</sup>ah schools.<sup>1</sup>

The Dismissal of the Syrian Headmasters: The Beginnings of Centralization

In 1928, actual State expenditure on Education totalled Rs. 70,000.<sup>2</sup> There existed then four Sunni boys' Schools located in Manamah, Moharraq, Rafaa<sup>c</sup> and Hedd. The last one was opened during the year. The total number of boys in them amounted to 442, in addition to 75 girls in Moharraq Girls' School. The number of teachers had grown to 26, among them were 13 Bahrainis, 8 Syrians and 5 Iraqis.<sup>3</sup>

In response to a demand by the Sunni Community in Manamah, a Girls' School was opened there in 1929. The increase in the number of schools made the task of supervising their affairs that much harder. The Education Committee was now responsible for the affairs of six Sunni Schools, not to mention the two Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Boys' Schools, managed separately by a Committee of Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs. In June of that year Shaikh Abdullah approached the Adviser suggesting the formation of a Government body to assume control

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1 C. Belgrave, Notes on Expenditure 1347 (1928-29). I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044.

2 For Annual Budget Estimates - not actuals - in respect of Education, See Table provided under the Budgetary Affairs of Bahrain.

3 A.R.P.A. 1928, op. cit.

of education in Bahrain.<sup>1</sup> At this time, the official view regarding Education was thus outlined:

"Education is still backward, but thanks to the push of Shaikh Abdulla ... it has made immense strides during the past two years. The drive in this case has come wholly from Bahrain subjects themselves."<sup>2</sup>

Certain changes were envisaged for the school year 1929-30, as first steps towards control of Education by the State. These were described by the Adviser as follows:

"There is shortly going to be a complete change in the administration of Education Department ...

An inspector of Education is shortly to be appointed and the Department will have its headquarters in an office in the Government buildings ..."<sup>3</sup>

This was the first time that the Adviser mentioned the Department of Education, by name, twice. It shows that the Department existed in August 1929, when the above letter was written.

In September 1929 Faiq Adham, the new Lebanese Inspector, was engaged to supervise the affairs of Primary Education in Bahrain. He was appointed on the recommendation of the A.U.B., where he obtained a degree, and his wife, who was a qualified teacher, was made headmistress of the Girls' School opened in Manamah in the same year. During January 1930 he attempted to introduce a number of changes, including a new pay scale for teachers in replacement of the one then in force. The new scale determined a teacher's pay according to his 'qualifications' rather than 'personality or influence'. He clashed with the two most experienced Syrian headmasters, Sayed <sup>c</sup>Uthman al-Hawrani of al-Hidāyah, and <sup>c</sup>Omar

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1 Captain Prior's No. C/84, op. cit. In 1929, the Sunni Education Committee consisted of the following merchant members: Abdul Aziz al-Qusaibi, Haji Abdur Rahman az-Zayani, Yusuf Abdur Rahman Fakhroo, the treasurer of the Committee.

2 Col. Barrett, P.R., to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 385-S, 28.8.1929.

3 Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 409/2E, 26th Rabi I, 1348 (31.8.1929).

Yahya al-Hawrani of Manamah Boys' School, both of whom resisted the proposed changes including Adham's plan for introducing English in the lower forms of Primary Schools. <sup>C</sup>Uthman, who felt secure in his position, initiated a strike in al-Hidāyah which spread to the Boys' School in Manamah, bringing the two to a complete halt. Teachers and students of both schools demonstrated in support of the Syrian headmasters, and the strike lasted for around ten days.

Shaikh Abdullah summoned the two headmasters who refused to appear in person and instead submitted to him a number of demands, viz. that the Inspector be stripped of authority to inspect schools, that the staff's pay should remain unaffected by the proposed changes, and that appointments for posts should be on a permanent basis.<sup>1</sup> The two Syrians were dismissed from their posts on account of 'unsatisfactory behaviour' and on 6th February 1930, they were deported.<sup>2</sup> Some members of the Education Committee spoke against Government interference in the affairs of Education, and together with the public expressed sympathy for the two Syrians. The Adviser described the departure of the men as an "occasion for hysterical demonstration".<sup>3</sup> The Agency Report thus commented upon the Inspector's plan for education in Bahrain:

"The new Inspector of Education has been a great success, but undoubtedly showed too great a tendency to model the schools on the Beirut System, and introduced English into all except the very lowest forms. The Political Agent drew attention to this and suggested that the schools should model themselves on Baghdad and Basra, and not on Beirut, and since the indigenous boy is not very intelligent, urged that time should not be taken up with English until he had obtained a good grasp of his own language."<sup>4</sup>

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1 Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 1339/2E, 11th Ramadan 1348 (February 1930).

2 Telegram from P.A. Bahrain, to P.A. Muscat. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 210, 6.2.1930.

3 No. 1339/2E, op. cit.

4 A.R.P.A. 1930. I.O.R. 15/2/296. It is not quite clear if the Beirut system of which the Agent disapproved was American oriented. However, the same Report quoted above, warned the American Missionaries in Bahrain to restrain their missionary fervour:

"The American Mission deserve every credit for the pioneer work they have done for female education in Bahrain. The Reverend Mr. Hakken's ardent evangelism caused some excitement and the Political Agent advised him to abate his zeal if he wished to remain in Bahrain." Ibid.

During the crisis rumours circulated suggesting that the Government intended to introduce English lessons at the expense of religion and Arabic. To appease the public Shaikh Abdullah called for a meeting to which members of the Sunni Education Committee, the Sunni Qadi, a number of merchants, and even teachers of religion, were all invited. Members of the Sunni Committee defended the ousted headmasters and regarded their dismissal as unfair and rash. They blamed the State for meddling in education and submitted a petition to Shaikh Hamad which contained a number of requests, chief of which was the one for the reinstatement of the headmasters. They referred to the debt the country owed to Uthman al-Hawrani, especially for his efforts towards the initiation of female education in Bahrain, the sending of the boys to Beirut, etc. They blamed the new Inspector for failing to patch up his differences with the two men, deliberately allowing the dispute to heighten beyond control.<sup>1</sup>

Following the above developments the Agent wrote to Shaikh Hamad suggesting that it was time for the State to assume control of Education:

"The Education Department has very properly dismissed the two headmasters, who merited severer punishment, and they should on no account be allowed to return ...

It has been freely asserted that the Education Department were trying to interfere with religious education and abolish Arabic, but Shaikh Abdulla held a meeting and clearly proved that the rumours were baseless ...

Since the Government pays the whole cost of the Schools,<sup>2</sup> they have every right to do what they please with them. Bahrain must be the only country in the world where the schools are controlled by a Committee who can barely read and write and it would be far better if Shaikh Abdulla and the Inspector were left to manage them without interference ... "<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Petition addressed to Shaikh Hamad, attached to Adviser's No. 1366/2E, op. cit.
  - 2 State Expenditure on Education during 1348 (1929-30) was budgetted at Rs. 90,000. See Prior to Col. H.V. Biscoe, P.R., I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 789, 12.5.1930.
  - 3 C.G. Prior to Shaikh Hamad, Deputy Ruler of Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 112/V.O., 15.2.1930.

In the wake of this suggestion, the schools were subjected to direct State control. Shaikh Abdullah presided over the affairs of Education and the Inspector supervised the technical side of the same. As far as the Education Committee was concerned the developments were too abrupt for its members and, in the circumstances, it was left to die a natural death having served from 1919 to early 1930.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after the arrival of the headmasters in Syria, an article dated 11th March 1930 appeared in the al-Ayyam newspaper of Basrah, which blamed the dismissal of the Syrians on the Political Agent and accused him of involvement in the affairs of education in Bahrain. The article attributed the removal of the men to their refusal to allow the teaching of English to the lower forms.<sup>2</sup>

The Education Authorities in Bahrain responded quickly to the same by publishing their own account of the educational developments in Bahrain. Their account appeared in the Beirut paper, al-<sup>C</sup>Ahd al-Jadid - The New Epoch - of March 29th, 1930. It was signed by "a Syrian in Bahrain", but was published with the approval of Shaikh Abdullah and the Adviser, it was reported.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Recalling of the Mission from Beirut

From 1930 onwards, the Administration was pre-occupied with the question of further training of Bahraini boys who had completed their primary schooling. Primary education, the highest available in Bahrain then, fell

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1 No. 1366/2E, op. cit.

2 al-Ayyam Newspaper, No. 26, 11.3.1930. I.O.R. 15/2/1231. Also vide Memorandum from P.A. to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 554, 26.3.1930.

3 Col. H.V. Biscoe, P.R., to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 167-S, 9.4.1930. Also, Translation of an article from al-<sup>C</sup>Ahd al-Jadid, 28th Shawwal 1348 (29.3.1930), attached to the Adviser's Memorandum to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 1903/2E, 9th Dhul Haj, 1348.

short of qualifying a local boy for a clerical post with the Government or with an independent employer. To take on further studies, the boys, encouraged by their parents, looked forward to Arab countries.

Commenting on the same, the Resident wrote:

"The question is where to send them, there are objections to Syria, Iraq and India. In the circumstances, would it not be possible to make a beginning with secondary education in Bahrain as students finish their primary education and the demand for it is felt? The finances of the State are thoroughly sound and can, I imagine, well afford some increased expenditure on education, and there are obvious advantages in educating boys in Bahrain instead of sending them abroad and the cost of course would be very much less."<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the academic year 1929-30, the seven boys had been withdrawn from Beirut. The decision to call them back was taken in the middle of the year, but they were allowed to stay until the end of June 1930. The official reason for this action was that the courses they were doing were above their academic standard and that they were not chosen for their academic excellence in the first place.<sup>2</sup> Much to the dissatisfaction of the Administration, when they were back in Bahrain most of them refused to work with the Government. The official displeasure with the boys was thus outlined by the Agency Report:

"They have learnt very little and show no sign of gratitude for the large sums spent on them and all the State has to show for an expenditure of over half a lakh is a few young men with wind in the head."<sup>3</sup>

Earlier, the boys had sent a cable from Beirut, protesting at the sacking of the Syrian masters, which accounted, partly, for the Administration's anger with them. Moreover, British officials suspected the training of Bahrainis in an American institution. In December 1929, the Resident described Beirut as a 'highly Westernized' place, which

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1 Col. Biscoe to Col. Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 72-S, 20.2.1930.

2 A.R.P.A. 1929, op. cit.

3 A.R.P.A. 1930, op. cit.

provided the 'wrong atmosphere' for Bahrainis.<sup>1</sup> Over the years suspicion did not abate and in 1939 the Adviser wrote:

"I have often heard Beirut University described as a hotbed of nationalism and anti-English propaganda."<sup>2</sup>

The subjection of Bahraini boys to political indoctrination abroad and the search for an alternative continued to be one of the main concerns of the Administration. This quest sometimes produced bizarre ideas, such as:

"The great mistake in Bahrain as in India, has been to educate the few at the expense of the many ... since we have a number of these little schools attached to mosques and Wakfs, it is obviously our policy to find them out and encourage them to organize themselves into more efficient bodies."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Thirties: Education in the Age of Oil

By the end of the school session, 1930-31, most of the old teaching staff were released from duty and a new batch of teachers, five men and three women, were recruited from Syria. Their services were hired by arrangement with the Islamieh College of Beirut, where Adham<sup>4</sup> had his first training. Some of the old teachers were re-engaged including three Bahrainis, one of whom had a B.A. degree from the A.U.B. Also engaged, with difficulty, for the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah schools were three Iraqis. The new staff had to sign regular contracts which stated the terms of employment based on a new pay scale.

At the start of the School year 1931-32, two educational Councils were formed, whose members were Sunnis as well as Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs. They were partly elected by the public and partly appointed by the Government. Shaikh

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1 Resident to I.G. Acheson, Deputy F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. P.S.-8, 14.12.1929.

2 Belgrave to H. Weightman, P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/373, 20.7.1939.

3 No. 789, op. cit.

4 During 1931, the Inspector, i.e. F. Adham, entered into partnership with Khalil Kanoo, a leading merchant, to produce tiles. The tiles they produced were said to have been as good as those imported from Basrah. The partnership, however, collapsed owing to falling sales and to mutual distrust. A.R.P.A. 1931, op. cit.

Abdullah bin Isa, was recently appointed Minister of Education. The State now controlled the finances, pay and appointment of teachers. Members of the Councils resented tight State-control since it deprived them of opportunities for mal-practice such as had existed earlier. The Administration, however, had a low opinion of the Councils:

"The existence of those Councils of Education, composed almost entirely of persons with no knowledge or experience, is of no real assistance to the government and is the cause of constant disputes."<sup>1</sup>

There were six boys' schools during 1931-32, four Sunni, two Shi<sup>C</sup>ah, in addition to two girls' schools. The number of boys in those schools totalled around 500, and the girls 100. Students were supposed to pay for their books, though few of them did. Members of the education Councils were themselves opposed to any requests for payment. Arabic was the medium of instruction, and English was taught from the fourth grade (Primary) upwards, at the request of the Councils. The school year spread over nine months and attendance was divided into a morning and an afternoon session from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, and again from 2 p.m. to 4.30. Books and curricula were largely standardized, and the subjects taught included: the Qur'<sup>ā</sup>n, Arabic, reading and writing, grammar, recitation of poems, composition, arithmetic, geometry, book-keeping, history, geography and hygiene. Commenting on the educational changes and local reaction, the Adviser wrote:

"On the whole the public appreciate the efforts of the Government to encourage education, but the slightest innovation appears to provoke a general outcry so all improvements have to be effected very slowly and carefully."<sup>2</sup>

The advent of oil in June 1932, heralded brighter prospects for education in Bahrain. During that year both Sunni and Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Boys'

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1 Adviser's Annual Report on Education, 1350 (1931-32). I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044, No. 105/SF, 5 Safar 1350. The President of the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Council was a local <sup>C</sup>Alim, Shaikh Mohammad Ali al-Jish-shi, with whose performance the Adviser was unhappy. Ibid.

2 Ibid.

schools in Manamah were amalgamated and subjected to a central authority.<sup>1</sup> A new era had begun in the field of education, implemented more appropriately for reasons of economy than anything else. Boys of both religious sects were for the first time subjected to a unified system of schooling. Fears of Shi<sup>c</sup>ah opposition to the amalgamation proved unfounded. On the contrary, mixed Sunni-Shi<sup>c</sup>ah education was conducive to the unity of the two sects, first at school level and, later on, at the national level. The events of the late 1930s and, more especially, the early 1950s, bore this out.

With the rise in the political awareness of the people, education became the focus of attention. During 1934 the Baharnah demanded the restoration of Shi<sup>c</sup>ah representation on the Educational Council, the opening of new schools in the villages, and the appointment of a competent Baharnah: Ibrahim al-Urayyedh to the headmastership of Manamah Boys' School. In the past, lack of cash was the State's only justification to not building schools. After the export of oil in 1934, royalties began to accrue to the State, and public pressure for more schools and better education increased greatly. Absence of cash was no longer a valid pretext. During 1935 the Department appeased the Baharnah by opening a Boys' School in Sitrah, followed at a later stage by two more schools at Budayya<sup>c</sup> and Karzakkan. In 1937 the Administration decided to send Mohammad Saleh Sayed Adnan, the son of the late Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Qadi, to Madrasat al-Wa<sup>c</sup>izīn, a Shi<sup>c</sup>ah school in Lucknow in order to train as Qadi for the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Waqfs.<sup>2</sup> Earlier, the British Authorities in Baghdad had advised against sending him to a Shi<sup>c</sup>ah institute in Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

By 1938 the Company's high-salaried workers were almost entirely

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1 A.R.P.A. 1932. I.O.R. 15/2/297.

2 Adviser to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1846/SF, 8.2.1938.

3 P.A. to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 895-6/18, 16.4.1937.

foreigners, and the low-salaried were predominantly natives. The former occupied skilled jobs, whereas the latter were employed in manual capacities. Among the natives there was quite a significant number of school-leavers. As the Company had not yet provided training programmes for the benefit of its local employees, it was criticized for being partial to the foreigners. The country's educational system was also severely attacked for failing to provide the appropriate training essential for skilled jobs.

The number of schools, Girls' as well as Boys', had risen during the year to ten, the teachers to 42, and the students to 1,113.<sup>1</sup> The number of school-leavers had also grown, and the disappointment felt by parents at the failure of their children to secure suitable employment became correspondingly greater. By the end of 1938 public pressure for the removal of the Lebanese Inspector, held responsible by the public for the blemishes of the school system, had become so persistent that in March 1939 both he and his wife were removed, having worked in Bahrain for nearly a decade.<sup>2</sup>

#### Reorganisation of Education under British Directorship 1939-45

After the Inspector's departure from Bahrain, the Administration invited Mr. C.R.L. Adrian-Vallance, then of the Iraqi Department of Education, to advise on the future development of education in Bahrain. His visit, which lasted from 12th to 22nd June 1939, introduced him to the schools there and provided an opportunity to confer with the Adviser over various questions. Shortly after the visit was over Vallance wrote to him:

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1 A.R.P.A. 1938. I.O.R. 15/2/298.

2 A.R.P.A. 1939. I.O.R. 15/2/298.

" ... the immense danger to the Gulf of its present educational state of affairs and the splendid opportunity which now exists of doing, at quite modest cost, a job of work which would turn the anti-British flank in the Middle East, and go a long way towards isolating the Gulf from the extremely dangerous influences of the Arab States ... especially from those of Iraq."<sup>1</sup>

He then explained how, to the Arab mind, the words 'politics', 'progress' and 'education', purported the same thing. Absence of higher education in Bahrain, forced the local boys to search for it elsewhere. He believed that Egypt was sufficiently far away from Bahrain and travel expenses were high enough to discourage parents from sending their boys to that place. Syria and Lebanon were objectionable on political grounds, he wrote. To illustrate his point, he cited Lord Lloyd:

" ... he (i.e. Lloyd) was satisfied that the American University of Beirut was one of the chief sources of anti-British propaganda in the Middle East."<sup>2</sup>

He then quoted Iraq which he blamed for exposing the minds of Arab youths studying there to "pan-Arab and anti-British propaganda", and added:

"Iraq was for centuries ... a centre of trouble. She is still today a country of assassination, violence, treachery, vengeance, unrest and corruption of all kinds ...  
... What is so well known about Iraq is that educationally, and therefore politically, she now has her eyes upon the whole of Arabia south of Basra, especially upon Kuwait, Bahrain, the Hadhramout, the Yemen, and Saudi Arabia."<sup>3</sup>

Iraqi schools were places for agitation and to them Vallance attributed the organisation of the political demonstrations, Palestine protests, and the destruction of British and Jewish property in Iraq. The sending of the boys to the above countries was, he believed, 'suicidal'. His advice to Belgrave was:

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1 Despatch from Adrian-Vallance to C. Belgrave. I.O.R. 15/1/373, para. 4, 26.6.1939.

2 Ibid., para. 6.

3 Ibid., paras. 7 & 8.

"Put up at Bahrain, a Higher College, a sort of Lower University, under British direction, ..., a partly British staff ... call it the Gulf College ..., and take into it all the more intelligent Gulf boys who have got as far as their local schools can take them, and are asking for more ... " <sup>1</sup>

Finance for the new College was, according to Vallance, supposed to come from the Oil revenues of Bahrain and also donations from the Oil Company there. The British Council was expected to assist by defraying the cost of teachers of English. The Rulers of the Gulf States were to have been induced to send their sons to Bahrain instead of Iraq or Syria, and ibn Saud, who 'held strong views about the contaminating influences of Baghdad', was to have been persuaded to follow suit.

Vallance cited two examples from his Gulf visit which illustrated the British failure to take the initiative there. He mentioned how, when on a visit to the principal Government School in Manamah, the boys chanted the school song which turned out to be the national anthem of Syria. His other main criticism was the absence of a local history for use in schools, about which he stated:

"At neither place (i.e. Kuwait and Bahrain) had anyone made it his business to provide the schools with a local history, or a History of the Gulf, with the result that while Gulf boys know nothing whatever about their own long history, or about our 150 years' protection of their shores and their liberties, they know (from Damascus history-books) all about the struggles for freedom of the various oppressed and ill-used Arab States." <sup>2</sup>

Belgrave, who appreciated Vallance's views and proposals for education in Bahrain, described their political implications to the Agent as follows:

"The scheme appears to me to have great possibilities. It would be useful for Bahrain and I believe valuable politically. The Bahrain Government would satisfy the public demand for higher education and would ensure a supply of educated men uncontaminated by foreign influence and there would no longer be the need to send young men to Beyrout, which is expensive, or to Iraq or India, ... " <sup>3</sup>

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1 Ibid., para. 11.

2 Ibid., para. 13.

3 Belgrave to H. Weightman, P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/373, 20.7.1939.

More importantly, Vallance's plan was also welcomed by T.C. Fowle, the then Resident, who took an interest in the local boys' ignorance of the 'history of their own State', i.e. Anglo-Bahraini relations, and spoke of his support for writing such a history.<sup>1</sup> Below is how he described the plan to the India Office:

"... distinctly attractive, and would have an excellent political effect from our point of view. In general, therefore, it has my support."<sup>2</sup>

In November 1939, the Government of Bahrain engaged the services of Adrian-Vallance, first British Director for Education in Bahrain, with a view to reorganising or, perhaps better, reorienting education there. His contract obliged him to teach advanced English and to assume responsibility for the State Education System.<sup>3</sup> The British Council was supposed to pay £500 annually towards his salary of £800 per annum, with the Government of Bahrain providing the remaining £300.<sup>4</sup>

Once in office, Vallance submitted to Shaikh Hamad a formal report on the State of Education in Bahrain, based on his observations during visits to schools. It contained some of the points he had raised earlier in the despatch to the Adviser, in addition to a number of deficiencies noted while inspecting schools, such as: irregular attendance, premature leaving,<sup>5</sup> overcrowded classes, lack of sufficient text-books, antiquated methods of teaching, students' lack of a sound grounding, neglect of village-schools and students' poor health, etc. ...<sup>6</sup>

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- 1 Col. T.C. Fowle, P.R., to H. Weightman. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/356, 15.8.1939.
  - 2 Fowle to R.T. Peel, India Office. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/354, 15.8.1939.
  - 3 A.R.P.A. 1939, *op. cit.*
  - 4 R.T. Peel to the Secretary-General, The British Council. I.O.R. 15.1.373, No. P.Z. 6658/39, 1.11.1939.
  - 5 During 1935-36 over 150 boys from Manamah and Moharraq abandoned their schools preferring to take up manual jobs with the Oil Company which was expanding its operations and was in need of extra workers to do construction work. As their employment was temporary, the Administration expressed concern over the boys' fate once the work had been completed and they were no longer needed. See Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1303/9A, 7.2.1937.
  - 6 Report on Government Education in Bahrain with Proposals for Reform. I.O.R. 15/1/373, 1.9.1939.

Vallance also noted and commented upon the complete absence in schools of any 'patriotic influence' by which he meant that the boys' loyalty was towards the Arab World instead of their own islands. Commenting upon the writing of a local history, he wrote:

"It should be written in such a way as to impress its youthful readers with a strong consciousness of the fact that the Bahrainis are a separate, independent and sovereign people, able to hold their own."<sup>1</sup>

He also wanted to see the development of a 'strong consciousness of national independence', and expressed his dislike of 'a slavish imitation of the methods and institutions of other countries', imported into Bahrain, he said, by the Syrian teachers. Aiming to supplant the 'dependent attitude' of the boys by an 'independent outlook', he recommended:

"... that firm instructions should be given by Your Highness that the new Inspector shall do his utmost to stamp out in the schools this wholly undesirable tendency to look to and to lean upon neighbouring States, in matters which are the concern of Bahrain alone."<sup>2</sup>

In a letter to the Agent in Bahrain, Colonel Prior, who had succeeded T.C. Fowle<sup>3</sup> as Resident in September 1939, attempted to assess some of Vallance's ideas for reorganising education in that place. He concurred with him in encouraging the boys to join Technical Education since most of them were destined to work with the Oil Company. But Prior expressed reservations about the relevance of some of Vallance's remarks, especially:

"I am very sceptical of the possibilities of inculcating patriotism and 'Reverence for the flag' by lessons in school but having never received such instruction myself perhaps I do not appreciate their finer points. Vallance's acquaintance with Iraq is too short to remember how in the nineteen twenties all the Britishers on the Iraq pay roll were far more Iraqi than the Iraqis themselves and full of

1 Ibid., p. 19.

2 Ibid., p. 27.

3 From the start Col. Fowle was enthusiastic about Vallance's plan for the writing of a modern history of Bahrain and after leaving the Residency he joined the British Council where he was in a position to enlist the Council's support should extra funds be needed. See letter from Peel to Prior. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. P.Z. 318/39, 8.12.1939.

zeal in teaching them that they were 'on an absolute equality' with other nations. The only harvest of this seed was a fine crop of Xenophobia, and the sack for most of the sowers as soon as the Iraqis came into power."<sup>1</sup>

Prior correctly saw no use in teaching English to the young boys at a stage when their grasp of Arabic was not yet adequate. More importantly, he saw Vallance's appointment as Director of Education as disadvantageous since it increased the European team on the Administration in Bahrain. He drew attention to his recommendations cautioning of the great expenditure their implementation would entail, far beyond what had been hitherto anticipated by officials in Bahrain.<sup>2</sup>

Subsequently, the Agent wrote to the Adviser warning of the high cost of Vallance's recommendations to the Administration, especially the one for an Inspector of Education and a European doctor, to be devoted exclusively to the School-health service. Moreover, while questioning Vallance's suggestion to introduce a 'Hebrew teacher', the Agent enquired:

"Is it incumbent on Bahrain to provide a special teacher to enable Jews to learn their national tongue? ...

No one would for a moment object to any attempt to instil feelings of personal loyalty in the children towards their Ruler; but to suggest that Bahrain should be taught that it is 'on an absolute equality with other nations' and that the Bahrainis are 'sovereign people able to hold their own as regards antiquity and race integrity with any nation in the world' can only lead to misunderstanding and unhappiness for everyone in the future. I do not believe that patriotism can be taught; nationalism can be, and you have only to look around the Near and Middle East to see its dismal results ... "<sup>3</sup>

The Agent also counselled caution over setting up an English class for the Police, knowing only too well that a great number of the men tended to leave the Force and seek employment with the Oil Company or become motor drivers. Teaching them English, he wrote, "will only serve to focus their gaze on the rosy goal".<sup>4</sup>

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1 Prior to H. Weightman, P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/831, 2.12.1939.

2 Ibid.

3 Weightman to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. C/807-1.b/5, 6.12.1939.

4 Ibid.

During 1938, many policemen, on completion of their first four years' contract with the Force, refused to re-enlist because they had secured employment elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Vallance's activities as Director of Education included the writing of a weekly column in The Bahrain Newspaper, devoted exclusively to educational affairs. The idea was initiated entirely by him and the aim was to acquaint the public with the problems of education, to invite their views on how to cope with them, and also to prevent the spread of erroneous information about education.

In the February 5th issue (1940) of the aforesaid paper, the Department of Education published an article which examined the complaint made in late 1938 that the Oil Company's well-paid posts went mostly to foreigners. Vallance supported the Company's point of view that foreigners possessed the necessary training and skills for high posts, and that very few Bahrainis attained high standards of training to qualify for those posts. Nevertheless, as Director of Education, he assured the people of Government intention to see that Bahrainis were treated fairly in matters of employment. He went on to say that the Government had already asked the Company to give priority to a Bahraini over a foreigner if both were equally qualified for the same job and that the Company had agreed to this.

The article also underlined the importance of technical training to foreign firms operating in Bahrain, and urged the boys to take it up since there was nothing demeaning about it. Recently the Department of Education issued instructions to all teachers to inform their students "that manual work is just as noble and just as dignified as any other kind of work".<sup>2</sup>

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1 Adviser's No. 1846/S.F., op. cit.

2 The Bahrain Newspaper, 15.12.1940. I.O.R. 15/2/208. Note that the paper was edited by Abdullah al-Zayed to whom further reference is made in the Chapter on the 1940s.

Six months after he had taken over as Director of Education, Vallance submitted his first progress report in May 1940. It contained an account of the changes introduced so far, viz. teachers' working hours, salaries, grades, annual increments, and compulsory participation by all teachers in the Government Provident Fund Scheme.<sup>1</sup> Also mentioned was the opening in 1940 of Manamah College, al-Kulliyah, which provided secondary level instruction in Science, Algebra, Geometry, etc., the highest form of education then attainable in Bahrain.<sup>2</sup> Two years later it was renamed: Manamah Boys' Secondary School. It's introduction transformed the school system into three stages each involving three years of schooling at elementary, Intermediate and Secondary levels.<sup>3</sup> A significant change was the use of an Arabic text-book as a first reading book for elementary students, instead of the Qur'ān as was the case earlier.<sup>4</sup>

Vallance also drew attention to the inadequacy of school health services, with emphasis on village schools which were deprived of dispensaries and doctors who barely visited the villages once a week. To make up for the shortage of health-staff, the Department worked out a plan with the American Mission Hospital whereby six students were to receive training in nursing, compounding and X-ray work for a period of two years. During 1940, a new State Medical Officer (S.M.O.), Dr. Snow, was appointed to office and one of his earliest pre-occupations was with school health. He paid regular visits to schools and extended medical supervision to them all over Bahrain.<sup>5</sup>

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- 1 C.R.L. Adrian-Vallance, Director of Education, Report on Progress in Education, December 1939 - May 1940. I.O.R. 15/1/373. Referred to hereafter as Progress Report.
  - 2 Belgrave's Annual Report on Education for 1942. I.O.R. 15/2/299.
  - 3 H. Weightman to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/418-4/16, 15.5.1940.
  - 4 Progress Report.
  - 5 Dr. R.H.B. Snow succeeded Dr. Ian Davenport Jones as S.M.O. on 24th April 1940. The latter resigned the post on 6.11.1939 to join the Royal Army Medical Corps in Egypt. For some time, Dr. M.M. McDowall, Lady Medical Officer, officiated as S.M.O. Vide A.R.P.A. 1939 and 1940. I.O.R. 15/2/298, 299 respectively.

Lack of trained Shi<sup>C</sup>ah headmasters for village schools was another problem that the Department had to cope with. The schools at Sitrah and Sūq al-Khamis had no headmasters, and the Department sought to train a number of competent Shi<sup>C</sup>ah teachers to take over the running of the schools.

The Department also started evening classes for members of the Ruling Family in April 1940. Eighteen Shaikhs were given instruction in Arabic, Arithmetic and English by Vallance, the Education Office Secretary, and the headmaster of the Manamah School.<sup>1</sup> An experiment was conducted at Budayya<sup>C</sup> School in which local boys and their parents were asked to take part. The aim was to persuade them to spend more time on learning reading, writing and arithmetic instead of spending the whole day receiving religious instruction by two local Mullas, traditional teachers, who formed the entire staff of the School. Two efficient teachers were sent from Manamah to Budayya<sup>C</sup> School, one was made headmaster there, and the other who arrived shortly after the first, was asked to teach text-books prescribed by the Department. The Mullas were restricted to the teaching of religion and prayers only. The experiment was described as highly successful and in appreciation of the new system the students volunteered to build two new classrooms to be added to the existing structure. The number of boys in the School subsequently rose from 18 to 74.<sup>2</sup>

A grave and chronic problem which had affected the Department's work since its creation was the dearth of trained local teachers. The problem was particularly acute at the secondary level. Four Lebanese teachers who had worked with Vallance in Iraq were approached with the aim of inducing them to join the Department in Bahrain, but they all refused. In the circumstances, the Administration applied to the Palestine Government

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1 Progress Report.

2 Ibid.

through whose good office eight qualified Palestinian teachers were recruited for work in Bahrain as from October 1940.<sup>1</sup>

Vallance's plan for reorganization of education also involved Bahrainization of both administrative and academic posts at schools. This was in line with his express aim of reorienting the outlook of the boys from one of dependence upon the Arab countries to that of independence from them. He believed the Syrians were to a large extent responsible for the indoctrination of the boys in pan-Arabism. By making it known that the ultimate object of the Department of Education was to appoint only Bahrainis as headmasters and assistants in all the schools, Vallance hoped to curtail what he called "the undesirable ascendancy of Syrian masters over Bahraini masters".<sup>2</sup>

The changes effected by Vallance in the field of education in Bahrain were lauded as 'an excellent beginning'<sup>3</sup>, nevertheless, he resigned in July 1941 having served as Director of Education for two academic years. His enthusiasm for a local history for use in schools, a suggestion highlighted in his earlier report, had never materialized. He was succeeded in October of the same year by F.J. Wakelin, formerly of the British Council. Wakelin's appointment coupled with that of Mrs. C. Belgrave, who became Director of Female Education also in 1941, put two more posts in British hands.

#### The Development of Technical Education

In 1348 (1929-30) Expenditure on Education was budgetted at Rs. 90,000, of which Rs. 12,000 was allocated for the development of Technical

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1 Adviser to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 56-9A, 3.2.1941.

2 Progress Report.

3 Mr. H. Weightman to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/435-4/17, 26.5.1940.

Education, and the expansion of the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah schools.<sup>1</sup> Carpentry Schools were the forerunners of Technical Education in Bahrain. Thereafter it developed gradually to include basic engineering and welding in 1938,<sup>2</sup> and a year later the Technical School in Manamah was extended to accommodate a greater number of applicants.<sup>3</sup>

Late in 1939, the Government of Bahrain invited Mr. G.E. Hutchings, Principal of the Baghdad Technical School, to advise on the expansion of Technical Education there. After studying Bahrain's needs, he submitted a report in March 1940. His first plan, which took into consideration Bahrain's aspiration to become the educational centre of the Gulf, turned out to be too dear for Bahrain to afford. Commenting on the same the Agent wrote:

"I do not think that Bahrain can possibly absorb as many as 50 trained technical students a year. If this report were followed literally, the State would be involved in non-recurring expenditure of close on Rs. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  Lakhs and recurring expenditure not very far short of Rs. 50,000 annually."<sup>4</sup>

The number of students who registered for the Technical School in 1939 was a mere 17 with three teachers to instruct them.<sup>5</sup> During the year, the Oil Company employed eight graduates of the school, and the Department of Education engaged another five ex-graduates as travelling carpenters to do repair work at schools. This served as an incentive for more students to apply for Technical training, not to mention the press campaign of 1940 which was equally successful in attracting more students.

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1 Belgrave to C.G. Prior, P.A. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044, No. 160, 29th Muharram, 1348.

2 A.R.P.A. 1938, op. cit.

3 Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 2369/9A, 3.2.1940.

4 Weightman to Prior. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/348-4/16, 23.4.1940.

5 No. 2369/9A, op. cit.

Work on a new Technical School began in 1940, and while it was being built, the Agent proposed the engagement of an efficient American Principal to run it.<sup>1</sup> This proposal was not acceptable to the Resident for the following reasons:

"The atmosphere of Bahrain has already become far too Americanized, and if we start introducing them into the Bahrain Administration there will be nothing left but to invite them to assume a Mandate over Bahrain."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Hutchings was eventually engaged as Principal of the new school, opened in September 1941.<sup>3</sup> He was now in a position to implement his plan, lately revised and reduced to more manageable proportions. The acquisition of equipment and staff for the school, during the War, was the most difficult part of his job. Nevertheless, the new syllabus was expanded to include drawing, English and mathematics. In early 1942 he travelled to India where he purchased equipment worth Rs. 25,000.<sup>4</sup>

Training in the new school was not restricted to Bahrainis only. There were students from Kuwait and in 1942 five, who were financed by the Kuwait Oil Company, successfully completed their technical training in Bahrain.<sup>5</sup> Despite the improvements, the number of students at the school fell from 50 in January 1944 to 36 in December of the same year. The drop was occasioned by:

"... the favourable condition of employment offered by the British Military Services and by public and commercial undertakings ...

Only 25 boys offered themselves as candidates for admission to the school when the new classes were opened in October with vacancies for over 50."<sup>6</sup>

- 1 Weightman to Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. C/536-4/16, 28.6.1940.
- 2 Prior to Weightman. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. 480-S, 9.7.1940.
- 3 Belgrave to Mr. E.B. Wakefield, P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 81-9A, 31.1.1942.
- 4 Annual Report by Belgrave for 1942. I.O.R. 15/2/299.
- 5 A.R.P.A. 1942. I.O.R. 15/2/299.
- 6 Adviser to Major T. Hickinbotham. I.O.R. 15/2/300, No. 427-9A, 8.2.1945.

In 1945 Technical education was further expanded to embrace training in elementary electricity and weaving. On 19th May of the same year, Mr. Hutchings' agreement with the Department of Education expired. He relinquished his post having served for four years in War-time Bahrain. He was succeeded by Mr. Said Tabbāra who took over as Principal of the Technical School from 20th May 1945.<sup>1</sup>

#### Educational Affairs Before the End of the War

Government efforts to improve education continued throughout the War-period and the public, aware of the benefits to the country, appreciated them. Commenting upon the same the Agent wrote:

"The demand for a good education for their children by Bahrain parents is due to the fact that they have now come to realize that Boys when properly educated obtain more remunerative posts and that girls who have received a good education find the contracting of a suitable marriage less difficult than their ignorant sisters ..."<sup>2</sup>

During 1943, the Administration experienced much difficulty in recruiting teachers for work in Bahrain.<sup>3</sup> A year later, the problem was solved when the Residency allowed the engagement of Egyptian teachers for Bahrain.<sup>4</sup> Egypt was the only Arab country which had a surplus of qualified secondary school teachers. For the first time, thirteen Egyptian masters joined the Department of Education in Bahrain in 1944.<sup>5</sup> They were employed on terms identical to those agreed with Kuwait whereby the Egyptian Government subsidized half their salaries.<sup>6</sup> The lending of

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1 A.R.P.A. 1945. I.O.R. 15/2/301.

2 A.R.P.A. 1943. I.O.R. 15/2/299.

3 Belgrave to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 240/9A, 3.2.1944.

4 Telegram from the Resident to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. 1270, 30.5.1944.

5 No. 427-9A, op. cit.

6 Telegram from the Agent to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. 466, 18.5.1944.

Egyptian teachers to Bahrain inaugurated a period of co-operation which has continued to the present times. Besides, 1944 also saw the sending of nine Bahraini students to Cairo for further education.<sup>1</sup> A year later another three graduates of the Technical School were despatched for the same purpose.<sup>2</sup>

In 1944, the Oil Company in Bahrain decided to set up four Scholarships for Bahrainis. Two of these were assigned for the Technical School at the rate of Rs. 1,000/- per term each, and another two for the Secondary School at the rate of Rs. 960/- per term each. The candidates were selected on the basis of their scholastic attainment, financial need, character and general potentiality.<sup>3</sup>

In 1945 Mr. Wakelin, the Director of Education since October 1941, failed to return to Bahrain from a leave which had started in late June of that year. Mr. K.M. Willey was deputed by the British Council to replace him. He served from 30th June until 8th August, when he fell ill and gave up his post. Thereafter, the Directorate of Education reverted to a Bahraini, Ahmad al-<sup>c</sup>Umrān.<sup>4</sup> He officiated for the Director and assumed responsibility for a Department whose budget estimate for 1364 (1945-46) exceeded four Lakhs of rupees. The Department now controlled 15 schools, 127 teachers and 2,619 students, who in their entirety formed the core of both Boys' and Girls' Education in Bahrain in 1945. The policy of Bahrainization of posts, started during Vallance's time, was kept up under al-<sup>c</sup>Umrān, and despite increased dependence upon Arab capabilities, self-sufficiency, especially at Primary level of Education, continued to be the chief aim of the Directorate throughout the rest of the 1940s.

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1 No. 427-9A, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A. 1945, op. cit.

3 Letter from W.P. Anderson, BAPCO's Local Representative, to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. C/PA-147, 28.6.1944.

4 Note that just before his appointment as Officiating Director in August 1945, Mr. al-<sup>c</sup>Umrān was Secretary of the Moharraq Municipality.

To recapitulate, Sunni education relied for its early development on donations from the Sunni Community of Bahrain, and on State subsidies from 1923 onwards. Until 1928, Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Arabs were denied equal rights in matters of education, and when the first School was built for Shi<sup>c</sup>ah boys in May of that year, there already existed four Sunni Boys' Schools, plus one for girls, which were in receipt of subsidies from the State.<sup>1</sup> This was the case, despite the institution of the policy of reforms since 1923, whose raison d'être was to ensure equal treatment of both sects of the population.

Centralization was achieved appropriately in 1932 when both Sunni and Shi<sup>c</sup>ah boys' schools were integrated into a unified system of Primary Education. In its formative years, education in Bahrain relied mainly on the efforts of Shaikh Abdullah, the public, the Education Committees, and in the field, on the toil of a number of expatriate Arab teachers and headmasters, prominent amongst whom were: Hafiz Wahbah, <sup>c</sup>Uthman and <sup>c</sup>Omar al-Hawrani, Faiq Adham, etc., not least <sup>c</sup>Uthman's wife who started classes for female education. Direct British involvement began with the appointment of Adrian Vallance in November 1939, as the first British Director of Education in Bahrain. That appointment came as a result of (a) public disapproval of the School system in the late 1930s, (b) British concern about the spread of nationalism, which having hit Egypt, Syria and Iraq, was beginning to influence youths in Bahrain.

Vallance's plan for re-organization aimed at general improvement of the educational services, and also at tempering the rising tide of Arabism which had penetrated the class-rooms in Bahrain, and which he imputed to Arab teachers and text-books. His assessment of the impact of the Syrians on the pan-Arab leanings of the boys, contained an element of exaggeration. The spread of communications, the media, the clubs as well

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1 A.R.P.A. 1928, op. cit.

as schools, and an enhanced interest in education, were all conducive to the shaping of the thinking of the boys. The political awareness of the people was on the increase especially in the late 1930s when popular demands were made for reforms. It was only natural for the Arabs of Bahrain to get involved in the issues of the Arab World with which they shared language, history, geographical proximity, and religion.

Less than three years after Vallance had departed from Bahrain, the Administration was left with no other choice but to employ Egyptians for teaching there. Without their co-operation, secondary education could have faced serious difficulties.

Chapter Seven

Agriculture, Oil, Trade and Finances of Bahrain, 1920-45

Agriculture

Agriculture has been one of the traditional pursuits of the Baharnah Arabs since earliest times. The main island had in the early twentieth century, over twenty square miles of date-groves covering its northern parts. These provided dates, date-juice, material for use in the construction of local huts and houses, and a host of cottage industries which relied on them: mat-plaiting, basket weaving, folk-medicine and so on. Vegetables, fruit and lucerne - used as fodder for donkeys - were also grown in patches of land assigned for them within the date-gardens.

Until recently the existence of numerous natural springs on the islands and offshore, supplied water both for drinking and for irrigating the date-plantations either by natural flow or by locally made lifts.<sup>1</sup> Water from the springs, had, in fact, originated in mainland Arabia.<sup>2</sup> Increased local consumption, and perhaps greater pumping of water in

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1 P.A. to the Manager of the British Cotton Growing Association. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 946, 2.8.1931.

2 On "The Water Supply of Bahrain", the Geographical Journal wrote in 1928: "The Water must ... have its origins on either the Persian or the Arabian mainland. For geological reasons the former is most unlikely, and an assumption of an Arabian source has the support of the copious springs at Qatif and Hasa oasis, where the rainfall is considerably less than at Bahrain. The ultimate origin of this water must be sought in the highlands of Nejd, which is the nearest locality with a sufficient rainfall." J.R.G.S., Vol. LXXI (1928), Appendix I, p. 463. In 1942, Max Steineke, a geologist working for California Arabian Standard Oil Company wrote: "The sources of the water from zones A, B, and C (designated on a map attached to his report) are evidently from the Hadhramaut interior of Arabia, and the Syrian desert. However, it is possible that some of the water from the deeper zones might be coming from Iran, Iraq, etc. However, for the present discussion it is reasonable to assume that the sources of the water are from the interior of Saudi Arabia." "Water Resources of Bahrain Island", dated Bahrain July 15, 1942. I.O.R. 15.2.207.

al-Hasa led to a sharp drop in the levels of water in Bahrain in recent years.

In 1924 arrangements were made, under Major Daly, for the boring of artesian wells in the chief towns, and a year later two experimental wells were sunk in Manamah and in Moharraq. By 1926, fourteen wells had been bored, seven in each of the two chief towns.<sup>1</sup> Owing to excessive use of water, oil company experts urged the authorities to take conservation measures and in 1941 the Bahrain Government prohibited the sinking of wells without official permission, and ordered the use of control valves on existing ones.<sup>2</sup>

In examining agriculture and the degree of attention it received from the Government of Bahrain, it is convenient to make a distinction between (a) agricultural activities themselves, and (b) problems associated with the leasing of the date-gardens. These will be treated separately.

#### Attempts to Improve Agriculture

The recession of the early 1930s did great damage to the Bahraini economy especially the pearl trade. In its search for alternative sources of income the Administration in Bahrain turned its attention to agriculture, whose condition was described by the Agent in 1930 in the following terms:

"At present the Island is entirely dependent on the pearl trade for a living, and if agriculture was properly developed it would prove a valuable second string, but until some opportunity is given to the shamefully rack-rented peasantry to enjoy the fruits of improvements made in their holdings, progress will be difficult."<sup>3</sup>

During 1930, the Agent stated in a letter to the Adviser:

"... had a bold agrarian policy been undertaken, some 10,000 persons might have been settled on the land. The appointment of an agricultural expert cannot be any longer delayed ..."<sup>4</sup>

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1 A.R.P.A., 1926, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A., 1941, op. cit.

3 A.R.P.A., 1930, op. cit.

4 C.G. Prior, P.A., to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 27-C, 24.3.1930.

To this the Adviser replied:

"I entirely agree that agriculture on a fairly large scale would be a most valuable improvement, especially as a substitute to diving which is an uncertain quantity. The only difficulty would be to obtain people to take it up. No Arabs (i.e. Sunnis) go in for agriculture in Bahrain. The agriculturalists are the Baharna and a number of imported Hasawis. The Arabs here, as a whole, are extremely lazy, except for diving they do no manual labour, all the coolies ... masons, painters and carpenters are foreigners. If a sort of allotment system on a large scale was started I think it would be very popular with the Baharna who would certainly co-operate, but the Khalifahs would not encourage such schemes and the Arabs would not be interested, they might even be actively against it if their possible tenants left them to work independently, as they certainly would."<sup>1</sup>

During 1930 the Government of Bahrain did engage the services of an Iraqi agriculturist, Said Abdul Nour, to advise on methods of cultivation and on cotton growing. He was an employee of the experimental farm at Rustum, near Baghdad, a branch of the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture. During the year the Government of Bahrain, responding to Major Holmes' advice, ordered boring on the plain at <sup>C</sup>Ali in search of water. After a few abortive attempts, water was finally discovered at 300 feet below the ground, but it was found to contain a high quantity of sulphur. As the soil there was good for cultivation, the agriculturist used it for his experiments. Meantime, he was consulted by owners of date-gardens and cultivators on various matters and in addition to giving lectures at schools he took the boys to <sup>C</sup>Ali for practical lessons in the preparation of the ground for cultivation and the sowing of seeds, etc. He also supervised Senaian Garden, described by the Adviser as one of Shaikh Hamad's finest gardens with over 2,000 date trees. Besides, he introduced the manuring of date-trees as practised in Iraq, though the locals viewed the outcome of the process with misgiving. The sinking of artesian wells for irrigation purposes encouraged certain members of the

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1 Belgrave to Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. C-50, 18.4.1930.

Al Khalifah family and a few merchants to increase their date-groves and to experiment with new crops. The interest in expansion was also occasioned partly by a drop in local produce and a corresponding rise in import of dates into Bahrain.<sup>1</sup>

In 1931 the agriculturist conducted an experiment on cotton growing for which cotton seeds were obtained from the British Cotton Growing Association in Baghdad.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Battūta, the famous 14th century traveller, had recorded the growing of cotton in Bahrain:

"We then travelled from Siraf to the city of al-Bahrain, a fine large city with gardens, trees, and streams. Water is easy to get at there = one digs with one's hands (in the sand) and there it is. The city has groves of date palms, pomegranates, and citrons, and cotton is grown there."<sup>3</sup>

The experiment was successful and specimens of cotton grown in Bahrain were despatched to the Association in Baghdad whose experts vouched for its excellence. About one ton of cotton was reported by the Adviser to have been produced from three acres of land belonging to Abdul Aziz al-Qusaibi.<sup>4</sup> Cotton as a crop was not, however, lucrative because:

"Until cotton can be grown on a larger scale it will not be very profitable, and local landowners have been unwilling to

1 Belgrave: Agriculture - 1349 (1930-31). I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044.

2 The quantity and value of raw cotton imported into Bahrain during the years 1927 to 1931 were as follows:

1927	400 bales	valued at Rs. 35,670
1928	949 bales	valued at Rs. 82,000
1929	1,227 bales	valued at Rs. 75,390
1930	434 bales	valued at Rs. 25,890
1931	284 bales	valued at Rs. 11,700

Source: Director of Customs to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. PA/SF/18/293, 16.11.1931.

3 The Travels of Ibn Battūta (A.D. 1325-1354). Translated by H.A.R. Gibb (1962), Vol. II, p. 409.

4 Belgrave to Mr. A. Eastwood of the British Cotton Growing Association, Baghdad. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, no number, 12.11.1931.

embark on a crop which shows such a poor return at present world prices. The Government cannot now spare the funds for encouraging them or providing the ginning machinery that is required."<sup>1</sup>

In August 1932 the Iraqi agriculturist left Bahrain after his post had been abolished by the Government owing to lack of funds.<sup>2</sup> In 1933 orange trees, planted earlier, produced good fruit. Also tried during the year was the 'mesquite' seeds, a quick growing tree suitable for firewood, but Bahrain's oil industry provided a new source of energy obviating the need for wood or coal. The firm of A. and M. Yateem in partnership with an Indian agriculturist, experimented with the growing of new European vegetables, not previously tried in Bahrain. This experiment failed as the land on which they were planted was laid open to strong winds which abound in Bahrain<sup>3</sup>, but every year some merchants experimented with European vegetables and fruit. Prior to the 1930s, apart from dates, vegetables and lucerne, nothing else was grown. In 1934 the Adviser estimated the area of Bahrain at 138,000 acres,  $\frac{1}{12}$  th of which, i.e. roughly 11,000 acres, was suitable for cultivation, though the area actually cultivated amounted to only  $\frac{1}{20}$  th of the entire area, i.e. 6,000 acres roughly. Cultivation was dependent on irrigation, but lack of water limited agricultural expansion.<sup>4</sup>

In 1935 the firm of Yateem tried to grow tobacco but with little or no success.<sup>5</sup> As far as the Government of Bahrain was concerned nothing

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1 A.R.P.A., 1931, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A., 1932, op. cit. For a record of annual State allocations for agriculture see table on Annual Budget Estimates provided in Chapter Seven.

3 A.R.P.A., 1933, op. cit.

4 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 916-23, 3.1.1934.

5 A.R.P.A., 1935, op. cit.

much had been done since the closure of the Department of Agriculture in the second half of 1932, owing to financial stringency. In 1936 the re-opening of the Department was discussed<sup>1</sup>, and a year later the Government decided to obtain the services of an Indian agricultural Advisor.<sup>2</sup> He arrived in March 1938, and stayed in Bahrain until mid-May of that year "surveying the possibilities of agriculture". After some delay he eventually submitted his report in August 1939, more than a year after he had left Bahrain, and which the Agent described as "almost entirely valueless".<sup>3</sup>

In 1939 Captain A.C. Byard was appointed Assistant to the Adviser and was put in charge of the Government's newly created experimental garden at Budayya<sup>c</sup> where green vegetables, potatoes, wheat, barley, sugar cane and lucerne were grown with positive results. During that year some gardens situated on the south-east coast were said to have been affected by date disease.<sup>4</sup> The following year Captain Byard left Bahrain, and responsibility for the running of the Government garden reverted to the Public Works Department.<sup>5</sup> An Egyptian expert, Husain Effendi, was engaged in 1941 to supervise the experimental garden and to advise landowners on cultivation. Also, a Committee was formed under Shaikh Ibrahim bin Shaikh Mohammad Al Khalifah to deal with agricultural affairs.<sup>6</sup>

During cold weather vegetables like beet, celery, spinach, cabbage, lettuce, turnip, cauliflower, onion, carrot, parsley were grown

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1 A.R.P.A., 1936, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A., 1937, op. cit.

3 A.R.P.A., 1938, op. cit. The author was unable to locate the above report in the relevant files.

4 A.R.P.A., 1939, op. cit.

5 A.R.P.A., 1940, op. cit.

6 A.R.P.A., 1941, op. cit.

successfully in Bahrain. In the summer cucumber, okra, sweet potatoes, marrows, Indian corn, pumpkins, egg-plant, melons, were found to be more successful. Despite government encouragement for expansion in the growing of vegetables, local demand for European varieties remained very limited and their cultivation was not very profitable.<sup>1</sup>

Shortages of cereals during the Second World War led Shaikh Salman to encourage the growing of wheat.<sup>2</sup> Previous experiments carried out by individuals had proved successful but only during the rainy season or in those areas where they could be regularly irrigated.<sup>3</sup> In 1942 an area of land was sown with Indian and Canadian wheat in the experimental garden at Budayya<sup>c</sup>, and also at Umm Na<sup>c</sup>sān and on the coast near Jasrah. Wheat planted in the latter two places was envisaged to grow entirely relying on rainfall whose annual average there was estimated at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Rainfall during the year was less than expected, and strong winds carried sand over the beds covering the growing wheat, and the experiment there ended in failure. Only the Canadian wheat grown at Budayya<sup>c</sup> was successful and the two bags sown there produced a crop of fourteen bags. Its successful growth was attributed to regular irrigation and supervision by the Egyptian agriculturist and his men. Nevertheless, wheat was not a lucrative crop for Bahrain because irrigation entailed the presence of a large work force and it had to be grown on land normally assigned for lucerne and vegetables, both of which were more profitable to produce than wheat.<sup>4</sup> In 1945 the Egyptian adviser left Bahrain and no successor was appointed.

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1 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 1661/42, 10.9.1942.

2 A.R.P.A., 1942, op. cit.

3 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 1125/42, 18.6.1942.

4 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 1305/42, 15.6.1943.

### The Leasing of Date-Gardens

Most of the date-gardens in Bahrain were owned by the Ruling Family and the system by which these were leased out to the Baharnah tenants was the cause of much complaint as the Agent's Report of 1923 reveals:

"Much oppression continued to take the form of compulsory leasing of date-gardens - belonging to the (junior Shaikhs) - to the Shiah farmers at rates which could not possibly be remunerative to the latter and the terms of which they inevitably failed to fulfill whereupon they were subjected to various forms of punishment. The more powerful Shaikhs were in the habit of letting whole estates containing many gardens to a Shiah who would be appointed 'Wazir' over the locality. The individual would in turn sublet the gardens to his own advantage. In as much as he had the ear of the Shaikh and the official position of Wazir such official was responsible for a great amount of oppression. A number of cases of the confiscation of the property of Shiahs occurred on the flimsiest pretexts. Practically all the gardens now owned by Easa Alkhalifah family have been so acquired during Shaikh Easa's rule from the original owners ..."<sup>1</sup>

In 1925 Major Daly made two suggestions towards easing the problem. He proposed that either the Al Khalifah owners of gardens hired their cultivators directly and collected the proceeds, or that the State provided a group of experts to assess and determine the annual rental of a garden on the spot. Both systems were said to have been currently in operation in Iraq.<sup>2</sup>

The system of leasing remained 'unsatisfactory' and it was a cause for discontent in the early 1930s. In 1930 more date-trees were damaged by locusts and the annual yield fell significantly. In an attempt to redress complaints made by the tenants of gardens, the Government formed a committee of Sunnis and Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs which inspected the gardens and made certain recommendations. Accordingly a proportion of the annual rent was deducted in cases where the tenant's complaint was

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1 A.R.P.A., 1923, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A., 1925, op. cit.

considered legitimate by the Committee. The landlords resented government action arguing that:

"tenants should take the good years with the bad years; if the crop had been extra heavy they would not have paid higher rent."<sup>1</sup>

There were, it appears, more cultivators wanting to lease gardens than there were gardens available for lease and the livelihood of a cultivator depended upon securing the tenancy of a garden. On the day of the bidding the tenants competed against each other and the highest bidder acquired the lease. This in itself was sufficient to ensure inflated rentals for owners, some of whom sent their own men to stimulate higher bidding. Moreover, the conditions of the leases did not provide for the fluctuations in either the price of dates or the annual yield. This was an added risk for the tenant on top of problems associated with locusts and date disease. Frequently tenants would lease a garden for more than it was really worth hoping that if they were unable to meet the full rents, the landlords would relinquish part of the amount due to them. The annual payments were made partly in cash and partly in kind. After the Baharnah protest of February 1922, the Government extended the lease of gardens to two years. If a tenant defaulted on the payment of rent, and was allowed to lease the same garden for another two years, his outstanding debts were added to the new lease.<sup>2</sup>

In 1931-32 the date crop was slightly better than the previous year, owing to absence of storms, disease and locusts, but the yield fell short of meeting local demand and more dates were imported from Hasa and Iraq, to the value of approximately 300,000 rupees. Many complaints about tenants defaulting on payments were made by landlords who were unwilling to grant any remissions and they took their tenants to the

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1 Belgrave to P.A.: Agriculture 1349 (1930-1), op. cit.

2 Ibid.

Court. Some tenants had their houses confiscated by order of the Court and others had their belongings auctioned in settlement of their debts.<sup>1</sup>

In 1932-33 over 7,000 young date trees were imported from Saudi Arabia and in this year there were less cases of default referred to the Courts, partly because the leases had been reduced and also because of landlords realizing that the tenants had no possible means of paying debts, and there was little to be gained from prosecution. Some landlords started hiring paid labour - mostly Hasawis - to work their gardens instead of leasing them. With a few exceptions, landlords were unwilling to spend money on their gardens.<sup>2</sup>

Cases of failure to settle rents in full abounded in the summer of 1934 creating serious unrest among the Baharnah community. As co-judge with Shaikh Salman on the Bahrain Court, the Adviser was on leave and Shaikh Salman alone adjudicated cases of default on rents issuing harsh verdicts against those concerned. The matter caused great dissatisfaction among the Baharnah whose leaders approached the Government of Bahrain over the sentences passed. This and other related issues are discussed in Chapter Eight.

To recapitulate, the attempts to improve agriculture during the years 1930-45, as the above survey has shown, were limited both in purpose and in scope. They suffered from inadequate funds, lack of a considered plan and the expertise to implement it. With the discovery of oil the earlier enthusiasm for expansion in agriculture gradually waned. The recession of the 1930s reduced the price of dates and dealt a serious blow to cultivators and to the owners of the date-gardens alike. The oil industry rescued both the diver and the cultivator who found alternative employment with better wages. Over the years, the

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1 Belgrave: Agriculture 1350 (1931-2). I.O.R. 15/2/195.

2 Belgrave: Agriculture 1351 (1932-3). I.O.R. 15/2/195.

development of the oil industry induced a rise in the value of the land occasioned by greater construction plans by firms and also by individuals. With the date-plantation no longer an economic activity, many owners of gardens availed themselves of the rise in the value of the land and divided their gardens into small plots and sold them at considerable profit.

Agrarian reform, in effect, turned out to be a series of disconnected experiments on cotton growing, which was not new to the islands, vegetables and wheat. These were carried out under the guidance of an agriculturist assisted by a committee about whose activities little is mentioned in the records. The traditional cultivator, who was better acquainted with date-cultivation, was happier to get on with his customary work which he had been doing for centuries, than to explore the growing of new crops and varieties. His chief complaints had to do more with a greedy system of land tenure and renting than with an unproductive soil. That system, in effect, reduced him to what the Agent collectively called "shamefully rack-rented peasantry", and reforms did not alter the conditions under which he continued to suffer despite the fact that these deficiencies were repeatedly reported to the Government of India by British officials in the area.

### The Oil Industry of Bahrain

British interest in Middle Eastern Oil began well before the start of the First World War, and with the formation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (A.P.O.C.) in 1909, and the Turkish Petroleum Company (T.P.C.) in 1912, that interest was firmly established. Oil was found in Persia in 1908, the Abadan refinery was built in 1912 and two years later the British Admiralty made arrangements with the A.P.O.C. whereby supplies of Persian fuel were provided to the British fleet.

After the First World War, Britain and France had to try to reconcile their oil-interests with those of the United States and in 1923 a new agreement was signed whereby certain U.S. Oil Companies acquired 23.75% stake in T.P.C. This agreement gradually brought U.S. Oil Companies into a new era of oil-explorations in the Middle East. T.P.C. struck oil in Kirkuk in 1927 and in 1929 it was renamed Iraq Petroleum Company (I.P.C.).<sup>1</sup>

The earliest known contact between the Shaikh of Bahrain and the British Government over oil took place in 1914 and in May of that year Shaikh Isa bin Ali - Ruler of Bahrain - undertook not to grant oil concession to any person or group without prior consultation with the British Government.<sup>2</sup>

On 6th May 1923 Major Frank Holmes - a New Zealander representing the British-owned Eastern and General Syndicate Limited - obtained the first oil concession from Ibn Saud for the province of al-Hasa. This was followed in May 1924 by a similar arrangement with the Shaikh of Kuwait, this time for the Neutral Zone.<sup>3</sup> Holmes took Bahrain as his headquarters

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account see, S.H. Longrigg: Oil in the Middle East. Its Discovery and Development (1968). Also see, R.W. Ferrier: The History of the British Petroleum Company, Vol. I, Cambridge, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> Translation of a letter dated 18th Jamadi II, 1332 from Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifah, Chief of Bahrain, to Major A.P. Trevor, P.A. Bahrain, in Aitchison's: A Collection of Treaties ..., Vol. XI, No. XVI, p. 239, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Longrigg, op. cit., pp. 98-100.

and was soon introduced to Shaikh Hamad, the Deputy Ruler, through two Bahraini merchants, Ali and Mohammad Yateem. Although Holmes's chief interest lay in oil, he was first to draw the attention of Shaikh Hamad to artesian wells as a way of searching for sweet water. During late 1924, he signed a contract with the Shaikh whereby the Syndicate undertook to drill 12 to 16 artesian wells on the main island.<sup>1</sup> In November 1925 water was found and such was the Shaikh's satisfaction with the discovery that:

"As a reward to the Syndicate ... the Shaikh granted an oil concession agreement which he signed on December 2, 1925."<sup>2</sup>

That concession, however, was covered by Shaikh Isa's contractual commitments to the British Government. As the Syndicate was not an oil company, Holmes tried to resell the Bahrain concession to British Oil companies. When approached by him these companies showed little interest in the deal because their geologists doubted the existence of oil in Bahrain.<sup>3</sup> In November 1927, the Syndicate sold the option to the U.S.-owned Eastern Gulf Oil Company, a subsidiary of the Gulf Oil Corporation and a shareholder in T.P.C. Shortly after the sale was completed, Eastern embarked upon plans for survey and development. At that stage Company officials became aware of the restrictions imposed by the Red Line Agreement of 31st July 1928, to which the Company was committed. The Agreement required from its signatories an undertaking not to seek oil rights independent of the T.P.C. in an area which included all of Arabia except Kuwait.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly the Company decided to honour its obligations by selling the option to the Standard Oil Company of California, which was not a signatory of the above Agreement. Standard

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1 Daly to Under-Secretary to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 242/2/3, 24.11.1924.

2 T.E. Ward: Negotiations for Oil Concessions in Bahrain, El-Hasa (Saudi Arabia), The Neutral Zone, Qatar, and Kuwait (1965), p. 25.

3 Ibid., pp. 27-28.

4 C. Tugendhat: Oil: The Biggest Business (1968), pp. 84-85.

then applied to the Colonial Office seeking approval for the transfer of the Bahrain concession to them. As the British Government controlled Bahrain's foreign relations, the Colonial Office set forth certain conditions which were not acceptable to the American Company and the matter was eventually referred to the U.S. State Department.<sup>1</sup>

Prolonged negotiations followed between the two sides and the situation was resolved by an agreement which gave Britain a great measure of control over the Company's Bahrain operations, including a condition to incorporate the new company under British laws.<sup>2</sup> That Company, a subsidiary of Standard Oil, was formed under the name: The Bahrain Petroleum Company Limited (B.A.P.C.O.), and in response to a suggestion from T.E. Ward, Attorney-in-Fact of the Eastern and General Syndicate, it was registered in Canada on January 11th, 1929.<sup>3</sup>

Drilling operations started in Bahrain in October 1931, and by 31st May of the following year oil was struck in commercial quantities at Jabal ad-Dukhān (Well No. 1), at a depth of 2,000 feet.<sup>4</sup> The significance of the Bahrain discovery was thus described by Ward:

"The finding of oil in Bahrain marked a vital change in the outlook for oil over the entire Persian Gulf areas. It stimulated other activities particularly in the mainland areas. The oil producing zones of Bahrain found in the discovery well proved to be dissimilar to those of Iran and Iraq ...

The Bahrain Oil discovery led directly to the oil developments of Saudi Arabia, the Neutral Zone, Qatar and Kuwait, and the discovery sustained the conclusions of the Gulf Company geologists that the possibility of finding oil in commercial quantities in Kuwait was very much brighter."<sup>5</sup>

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- 1 H.F. Liebesny, International Relations of Arabia: The Dependent Areas, in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. I (1947), pp. 157-60.
  - 2 R.F. Mikesell and H.B. Chenery, *Arabian Oil - America's Stake in the Middle East* (1949), pp. 49-50.
  - 3 Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
  - 4 R.M. Burrell and K. McLachlan, *The Political Geography of the Persian Gulf in: The Persian Gulf States ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
  - 5 Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

The Company's drilling operations were initially carried out chiefly by American personnel assisted by a number of Iraqis who operated the rig and a number of Sikh Indians who were in charge of the Company's Power House.<sup>1</sup> The American influence in Bahrain manifested itself first in the form of technical know-how and later on via American manufactured goods which began to appear in the shops of the Manamah bazaar. To this effect the Agency Report for 1932 contains this interesting commentary which shows the continuing residuum of a desire by local British officials in the Gulf to exclude external influences, this time American:

"... there is little doubt that the Company are beginning to exert a considerable local influence. This will undoubtedly increase with their operations and their experience of Bahrain, and combined with the Arabian Mission they represent a most unfortunate intrusion of foreign influence into Bahrain."<sup>2</sup>

During 1934 oil tanks were constructed on Sitrah Island and a three mile submarine pipeline which extended from the tanks to the deep sea moorings was laid. On the 7th of June of the same year, approximately 3,300 tons of Bahraini crude were shipped aboard the tankship El Segundo, thereby inaugurating Bahrain's entry into the age of oil-exports.<sup>3</sup> On 29th December 1934, Shaikh Hamad signed the Mining Lease of the Bahrain Oil Concession, which replaced the earlier one obtained by Holmes in December 1925. The Lease was for 55 years commencing from January 1935. Royalty was determined at the rate of 3 rupees, 8 annas per ton of crude oil (i.e. 14 cents per barrel, See, Arabian Oil - America's Stake in the Middle East, op. cit., p. 69) with a minimum annual payment to the Government of Bahrain of not less than 75,000 rupees, raised later on to 150,000. The Lease entitled the Company to both Customs and tax-relief.<sup>4</sup>

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1 A.R.P.A. 1931, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A. 1932, op. cit.

3 A.R.P.A. 1934, op. cit.

4 Longrigg, op. cit., p. 103.

At first lack of overseas marketing facilities posed a problem for Standard, encouraging it to consider in late 1935 the construction of a refinery in Bahrain. Subsequently in July 1936 the Company entered into an agreement with Texas Oil Company which gave it access to the marketing facilities of Texas in return for a 50% stake in B.A.P.C.O. The new partnership resulted in the creation of a subsidiary company, Caltex, whose refined products were sold to India, the Far East and the Middle East.<sup>1</sup>

According to Ward, Caltex owed its success, worldwide, to its Bahrain operations:

"Beginning with Bahrain what is now known as the Caltex-Group of Companies, has grown into a worldwide overseas organization and has become one of the most efficiently managed major operations with production not only from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia but also from Indonesia. Caltex executives have carried Bahrain experience around the world."<sup>2</sup>

Work on the Bahrain refinery began in early 1936, and by December 1937 it was complete. For the first time production of crude oil exceeded the one million tons during 1937.<sup>3</sup> A new supplementary concession was concluded between Bahrain and the Company on 19th June 1940, whereby the exclusive area was extended from the original 100,000 acres to cover all the lands of Bahrain, including the outlying islands and territorial waters.<sup>4</sup> In 1942 facilities for receiving up to 35,000 barrels of Saudi crude daily were installed at the Zallaq terminal in Bahrain, and a pipeline was laid to carry crude from there to the refinery. During the year 4,429,000 barrels of Saudi crude were imported into Bahrain.<sup>5</sup>

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1 F.I. Qubain, *The Impact of Petroleum Industry on Iraq and Bahrain*, pp. 308-9.

2 Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

3 A.R.P.A. 1937, *op. cit.* For oil production levels see table appended to this section.

4 Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

5 A.R.P.A. 1942, *op. cit.*

There was a sharp increase in the Company's work force in 1944, owing to:

" ... a very large construction programme ... undertaken to provide facilities for the production of aviation spirit and to increase the quantities of other products vital to the successful prosecution of the War."<sup>1</sup>

In 1945 a new 34 mile pipeline, about 24 miles of which were submerged, was laid to carry crude direct from the Saudi fields to the refinery in Bahrain. During the year 15,649,272 barrels of Saudi crude were transported to Bahrain.<sup>2</sup> In 1950 the royalty rate was raised to Rs. 10/- per ton, and in December 1952 a profit sharing agreement on the basis of 50-50, similar to that signed with Saudi Arabia in December 1950, was concluded with Bahrain and the concession was extended so as to last until 29th December, 2024.<sup>3</sup>

#### B.A.P.C.O. and Its Bahraini Employees

During the second half of 1938 the people of Bahrain agitated for educational, judicial and administrative reforms and local employees of B.A.P.C.O. took the opportunity to publicize their grievances against the Company. The Authorities blamed the protests upon a Youth Movement, some of whose members were employees of B.A.P.C.O., and on 5th November 1938 arrested some of the Movement's adherents accusing them of instigating the trouble.<sup>4</sup> The following day, the Movement called for a strike and the local employees of B.A.P.C.O. responded, bringing the Company's operations to a partial halt for two days, i.e. 6-7th November.

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1 A.R.P.A. 1944, op. cit. For the Company's work force, local and foreign, see table provided at the end of this section.

2 A.R.P.A. 1945, op. cit.

3 Ward, op. cit., p. 138.

4 Belgrave, Causes and Objects of Recent Agitation, 22.11.1938. I.O.R. 15/2/176.

The number of jobless persons during the year increased considerably, and the Oil Company, by now the largest employer in the country, had recently completed major construction work, thereby shedding a large number of workers employed to carry out manual labour. Accordingly the local work force of the Company was reduced from 3,350 in 1937 to 1,569 in 1938.<sup>1</sup> The reduction in the number of Bahrainis employed by the Company, together with complaints about wages and working conditions sparked off the protests. Lack of communication between the two sides of the dispute made things that much worse. In a cable to the Agent in Bahrain, the Resident wrote of his regret to discover that neither the Government of Bahrain nor the Company had envisaged the need to appoint a person authorised to represent the workers in industrial disputes.<sup>2</sup> In the absence of recognised workers' representatives, their complaints were communicated to the Government by four senior Bahrainis who mediated on the workers' behalf and the Government approved their action. The workers' grievances were as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- (1) That the number of foreign employees of the Company exceeded that of local inhabitants.
- (2) That Asians (i.e. Indians) received higher wages than Bahrainis employed for similar jobs. The Bahraini worker received 10 annas daily, whereas his Asian work-mate was paid Rs. 2/-. At the distillation plant in the refinery the Company had replaced Indians with Bahrainis and instead of paying them Rs. 5/- daily, the previous daily wage of the Indians, the Bahrainis were offered only two rupees.

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1 For total numbers of Bahraini and non-Bahraini employees of B.A.P.C.O., see table appended to this section.

2 Telegram from the Resident to the Agent, Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 358, 16.11.1938.

3 Translation of a letter addressed to the Adviser by Yusuf Fakhroo, Mansour al-Uraiyedh, Saiyed Sa'id, Mohsin bin Ahmad al-Tajir. I.O.R. 15/2/176, 29th Ramadan 1357 (22.11.1938).

- (3) Foreign employees were housed in stone-built quarters whereas Bahrainis were provided with local huts which did not promise such good shelter against dust and cold.
- (4) Foreign employees were entitled to free transport from where they lived to the oil camp and vice versa, national employees had to pay for the same.
- (5) Foreign employees were entitled to sick-pay, and Bahrainis did not have similar rights.

The workers demanded the formation of a representative body to defend their interests especially, they wrote, when two equally qualified persons apply for a job, one Bahraini and the other non-Bahraini, the former ought to be given preference over the latter. Besides, they wanted their representatives to negotiate with the Company for better wages and housing for Bahrainis, free transport, compensation for those of them disabled while serving the Company, annual paid leave of 20 days, the introduction of training courses and evening classes, a scheme for Provident Fund, and the erection of two mosques for the local workers.<sup>1</sup>

In early December 1938 a meeting was held in which the above grievances were examined. It was attended by the Agent and the Adviser as representatives of the Bahrain Administration, and by Company officials, viz. Mr. J.S. Black, Chief Local Representative of B.A.P.C.O. in Bahrain, and Messrs. M.H. Lipp and F.A. Davies, joint managers. The discussions centred upon the following matters:<sup>2</sup>

Housing: As regards the demand from Bahrainis to be housed in the Company's married quarters, Company officials argued that Bahrainis were unwilling to take up residence with their families in the Oil camp from the start,

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1 Ibid.

2 H. Weightman to T.C. Fowle. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. C/753 - 1.6/5, 10.12.1938.

preferring to stay in their home towns. Had the Company built greater numbers of houses, it was felt, they would have lain vacant. Company officials now agreed to erect stone-built houses for bachelors working in the refinery or in the field, instead of the local huts in which they were then housed.<sup>1</sup>

Wages: Company officials believed that Indians were more efficient than Bahrainis, and they were unwilling to increase the wages of the 'semi-skilled' Bahrainis. They argued that the Company was a commercial concern and that the local managers had to satisfy the Directors and to safeguard the interests of the shareholders. They opposed the raising of the ten annas limit, the daily wage of Bahrainis and others engaged by the Company to do manual work. This wage was the common rate for a coolie's working day in Manamah. They argued that should the Company increase the rate, the labour market in Manamah would be disturbed. They also rejected the Bahrainis' demand for free transport on account of the high cost to the Company, whose policy it was not to encourage labour to live far from the scene of operations.

Compensation for Accidents and Sick-Pay: Company officials dismissed the claim that Bahrainis received no compensation for sustaining injury on duty as baseless allegations. On the contrary, Bahrainis, they argued, were entitled to rights similar to those enjoyed by foreigners. Moreover, they had new arrangements which they said would entitle classes II and III of the Company's local employees to medical treatment at the new Bahrain Government Hospital and at the Mission Hospital. The extent of injury sustained and compensation for accidents would then be determined by

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1 Note that by 1938 <sup>c</sup>Awāli, the centre of the oil industry in Bahrain, had its own hospital, school, commissary, club, swimming pool, sports ground, and living quarters for some 110 married and 200 unmarried foreign staff (Longrigg, op. cit., p. 103). In 1940 the Company undertook to build twenty-six stone houses at <sup>c</sup>Awāli and at Rafā<sup>c</sup> Camp to house its Bahraini workers. In 1944 the existing facilities were extended to accommodate the large work force imported to carry out construction work at the refinery. See A.R.P.A., 1940, 1944, op. cit.

doctors other than those of the Company Hospital. This measure, while aiming to benefit the workers, was also calculated to save the Company doctors from the accusation that they tended to minimize injuries sustained in accident.

Excessive Employment of Foreigners: Company officials denied the charge that the Company employed more foreigners than Bahrainis. Children born in Bahrain of Persian parents were, they argued, Bahrain subjects and the Company was not prepared to regard them otherwise. They admitted that the Company had in its employ many Persians born in Bahrain and that it was not the policy of the Company to reduce their numbers on account of their being foreigners. The local Bahraini workers regarded the native born Persians as foreigners and did not wish to include them in the native statistics. Company officials also spoke of evidence pointing to a drop in the number of Persians and Indians employed by the Company. They mentioned that a great number of Najdis and Hasawis posed as Bahrainis, and that to stop such a deception the Company had of late required its job applicants to produce official certificates to prove that they were Bahraini subjects.

Paid Leave and Provident Fund: According to the officials Bahrainis were entitled to six paid-holidays every year, though not all of them were eligible for Friday off with pay. New plans for coolie labour to get short annual leave with full pay, and a scheme for a Provident Fund, were awaiting the approval of the Company's New York Office, they said. Finally, they welcomed any reasonable complaint which the local workers wished to put to the Company and added that the majority of the Company's employees were satisfied with the Company whose popularity among the working classes of Bahrain had not been affected by the recent agitations.

The Bahrain Administration's view was voiced by the Agent who desired to see the largest possible section of the people of Bahrain benefitting from the new prosperity generated by the oil industry. It was also decided

that the Government of Bahrain should shortly appoint a representative to mediate in industrial disputes between the Company and its local workers. And to dissipate misinformation about the Company's treatment of Bahrainis, Company officials undertook to invite a number of leading Bahrainis to visit the Company's offices.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1939, the Government of Bahrain named Shaikh Ali bin Ahmad Al Khalifah - the Amir of Rafaa<sup>c</sup> who also derived an allowance from the Civil List - for the above job.<sup>2</sup> His duties were defined as a go-between, between the Company and its labourers, and to communicate any general grievance that they might have and wish to raise with the Company. He was also required to report such matters to the Adviser first. Shaikh Ali was chosen on the basis of his membership of the Ruling Family, his previous experience in public matters, and the fact that he lived in Rafaa<sup>c</sup> which was close to <sup>c</sup>Awali.<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after his appointment Shaikh Ali was provided with a memorandum which contained adequate information about conditions of employment with the Bahrain Petroleum Company. According to this memorandum the wage of unskilled workmen had been raised recently to 12 annas a day for the initial month of employment. Thereafter if the Company decided to retain a worker's services his wage would be increased to 14 annas a day.<sup>4</sup>

#### How the Oil Industry affected Bahrain

Bahrain's finances were in a very bad shape in the couple of years or so which preceded the export of Oil in 1934. The pearl trade of

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1 Weightman's No. C/753-1.6/5, op. cit.

2 Letter of appointment from Belgrave to Shaikh Ali bin Ahmad AlKhalifah. I.O.R. 15/2/846, 22.1.1939.

3 Weightman to Belgrave. I.O.R. 15/2/846, No. C/87-1.6/5, 11.2.1939.

4 Memorandum on Conditions of Employment with B.A.P.C.O. I.O.R. 15/2/846.

Bahrain was in steady decline, unemployment was on the increase among the working population and the country's trade was affected by the recession of the early 1930s. Oil came at just the right time as Longrigg aptly noted:

"No community or government, indeed, has been more suddenly and timely rescued from economic disaster than those of Bahrain in 1932."<sup>1</sup>

Both the Ruler and the Government of Bahrain began to receive oil-royalties from 1935 onwards. Theoretically, one third of the royalties was assigned for the Ruler and members of his family, the other two thirds went to the Government of Bahrain out of which salaries of the civil servants were paid, public works and services were financed, and an annual amount was deposited in the State's reserve fund.<sup>2</sup> These and other issues of relevance to the State's income are analyzed in detail in the next section of the present Chapter, suffice us to mention here that the Ruler and his family actually received a much higher proportion of the State's income.

Royalties, wages, plus the Company's local purchases and contracts stimulated the flow of cash in the country on a hitherto unprecedented scale. The Company's disbursements in Bahrain in 1938 amounted to 1,313,900 lakhs of rupees, and kept growing thereafter until they reached 3,212,000 in 1945.<sup>3</sup> Merchants and shopkeepers profited from the circulation of oil money, and imports of goods for Bahrain and its transit trade with the mainland recorded enormous increases. After 1935 the oil industry established itself as the mainstay of the economy. Both the Ruler and members of his family now controlled greater cash than the pearlmen or the merchants.

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1 Oil in the Middle East ..., op.cit., p. 103.

2 Col. Loch to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/604-4/1, 12.12.1935. The royalties paid annually to the Government of Bahrain are shown in a separate table appended to this section of the study.

3 Qubain ..., Table 32, op. cit., p. 330.

The Company's contribution to the welfare of Bahrain included material support for education, medical services, Public Health and anti-malaria campaigns. The construction of a network of modern roads, causeways and bridges allowed greater movement of persons and goods within Bahrain. Over the years sea and air travel to Bahrain increased and this raised the level of communication with the rest of the world. The people of Bahrain also realized they were part of the wider world when on October 19th, 1940, the Italians dropped bombs on the refinery, many of which failed to explode, and those that did caused little damage. This generated a certain amount of anti-Italian feeling in Bahrain and on the 13th November of that year the Reverend Father Irzio Luigi Magliacani, who had recently opened the Roman Catholic Sacred Heart School at Bahrain, was deported because of fear for his personal safety.<sup>1</sup>

At home the Oil industry brought about major economic and political changes. For the first time, the unemployed divers and cultivators found alternative employment with the Company. As years went by a professional class of workers - both Sunni and Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Arabs - with common interests emerged. Both their sharing of employment with the Oil Company, and the amalgamation earlier in 1932 of Sunni-Shi<sup>C</sup>ah schools under a unified system of education, helped to promote greater co-operation, trust and toleration between the two groups.

The expansion in the Oil industry was accompanied by a parallel growth in external influences. The number of Asians and Europeans, whether working for B.A.P.C.O. or for other businesses which emerged as a result of the oil wealth, grew so that the country's housing facilities could no longer satisfy the demand for accommodation. Rents soared above the established norms and only those with ready cash, i.e. the

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<sup>1</sup> A.R.P.A. 1940, op. cit.

Rulers and a few merchants, benefitted from the situation by developing the lands which they owned into new houses and villas.

Some Western influence in Bahrain was reflected in changes in modes of dress, food, drink and particularly in the consumption of alcohol by local Arabs. True, these changes became more conspicuous after the arrival of the oil industry. Nevertheless, Bahrain was open to foreign influence long before oil was discovered. It was an important centre for the Gulf's trade, it had an organized Administration and, above all, a Customs House, reformed as early as 1923. These facilities had attracted Arab, Indian, Persian and European merchants much earlier, though oil proved to be the greatest attraction of all.

Oil Production and Royalties 1934-45

Year	Daily Average (U.S. Barrels)	Total Annual Production of Crude Oil (U.S. Barrels)	Royalties Received Annually by the Government of Bahrain in Lakhs of Rupees
1934	1,000	285,072	-
1935	3,000	1,264,807	6,18,192
1936	12,000	4,644,636	17,83,600
1937	21,000	7,762,264	17,06,347 (34,00,000) <sup>(a)</sup>
1938	22,000	8,297,998	35,02,184
1939	20,000	7,588,544	31,74,832
1940	19,000	7,073,919	30,91,989
1941	18,614	6,794,157	28,47,200
1942	17,000	6,240,627	26,78,462
1943	18,004	6,571,609	13,29,978 (26,60,000) <sup>(a)</sup>
1944	18,344	6,713,795	28,64,453
1945	20,024	7,308,938	15,65,925 (31,00,000) <sup>(a)</sup>

Source: Administration Reports of the Political Agency, Bahrain

- (a) Royalty figures in respect of the years 1937, 1943, 1945 are for the first half of the year only, i.e. January-June. Figures for the second half of the year were not available at the time of the compilation of the Administration Reports for those years. Normally, figures for the second half of the year tended to be slightly higher than for the first half. To obtain a reasonable estimate for the full year the figure shown for half of the year can be doubled and this is shown in brackets.

Company Employees from 1933-1945

(Data extracted from Administration Reports of the Political Agency,  
Bahrain.)

	British Subjects		Americans	Canadians	Others	Non-Bahrainis	Bahrainis
	Britons	Indians				Total	Total
1933	32		19	-	113	164	151
1934	58		24	-	149	231	348
1935	26	61	49	-	244	380	1283
1936	157	323	153	-	658	1291	3747
1937	308	472	126	-	688	1594	3350
1938	224	422	90	-	286	1022	1596
1939	192	374	67	-	399	1032	1878
1940	143	352	55	19	346	915	1837
1941	134	270	34	24	254	716	1291
1942	119	237	29	29 <sup>1</sup>	-	414	1624
1943	114	220	32	23	359	748	2096
1944	150	707	770	50	1350	3027	6389
1945	292	681	261	82	792	2108	3580

<sup>1</sup> Canadians plus others.

## The Trade and Finances of Bahrain

### Bahrain Government Income and Budgetary Affairs

This section is concerned with the country's revenues from foreign trade, the annual income from the Customs Service, the nature of the annual budgets and what effect oil-revenues had on the progress of Bahrain. Tables giving total Customs revenue, import/export trade of Bahrain, the value of cargo transhipped at Bahrain for the Arabian mainland, plus the chief items of Expenditure in annual budget estimates are all provided at the end of this section.

Bahrain's income from the Customs Service was its chief source of revenue before it started receiving royalties from oil in 1935. The reorganisation of the Customs under a British Director was discussed with Shaikh Isa in 1903, when Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, visited Bahrain; but the Shaikh viewed the offer as threatening his independence and therefore refused to proceed with it.<sup>1</sup> Meantime, Shaikh Isa continued to lease the Customs to a Hindu firm (See Chapter Three).

In 1920 Bahrain's pearl-trade was slack resulting in a drop in the country's cash returns and in people's buying power. The opening in June of that year of the Eastern Bank Limited however stimulated Bahrain's trade with India and Europe. Only Indians and Europeans, who were acquainted with banking operations in their countries of origin, initially benefitted from the banking services. Many local inhabitants opposed it on the basis of religion, and some merchants saw it as a threat to their own money-lending operations. Gradually, local Arabs, having realized the ease with which the import of goods from Europe and elsewhere was possible, began to take advantage of the Bank's foreign and

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1 Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I., No. 295-S, op. cit.

domestic services.<sup>1</sup>

During 1920 Shaikh Isa charged the full rate of customary duty, i.e. 5%, on goods consigned to Najd, Hasa and Qatif instead of the former 2%. At the request of his subjects, Bin Saud protested against this rise and the matter was referred to the Government of India whose orders were communicated by the Resident to the Shaikh:

"The Government of India have directed me to write to Your Excellency and convey their orders which are that this practice is not in accordance with the existing international law, and to inform you, on behalf of Government, that in future you are to take only 2% on goods consigned to the neighbouring places on the mainland landed and reshipped at Bahrain, and that you are not to take any duty on goods which are transferred from ships to dhows straight off and which proceed direct to mainland ports.

In any case it is understood that the goods on which the 2% duty will be charged are those which are consigned to specified merchants residing on the mainland via Bahrain through their agents residing in Bahrain, such goods being reshipped from Bahrain to any of the ports on the mainland within 20 days of the date of landing at Bahrain. Full duty will be charged on such goods if they remain in your island longer than the above mentioned period (20 days)."<sup>2</sup>

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Five, the pearl-trade of Bahrain was bad in 1921, and this affected the country's imports and created cases of bankruptcy among traders. During the latter part of 1922 and throughout 1923 the market improved. In 1923 the administration of the Customs was entrusted to Mr. Bower (see Chapter Three) shortly after the

1 During Captain Loch's term of office as P.A. Bahrain 1916-18, a scheme for a British Bank was repeatedly opposed by the Shaikh and by the Sunni Qadi. They were partly influenced in their attitude by Yusuf Kanoo who viewed the opening of a bank as a threat to his own financial operations. Loch cautioned Kanoo against "obstructing the Government's considered schemes". Commenting upon Kanoo's operations Dickson wrote in 1920: "Big merchants were accustomed to lend him their money in Bombay at the beginning of winter, on the promise that he would repay the amount at the commencement of the pearl season in Bahrain. The sums sometimes amounted to 18 Lakhs (of rupees). A bank in Bahrain meant that these merchants would be able to transfer their money at a low rate of exchange and so would no longer give their money to Yusuf. It was naturally to Yusuf Kanoo's interest to keep out the bank. See Dickson's Note ... para. 7, op. cit.

2 Colonel Trevor to Shaikh Isa. I.O.R. 15/2/123, No. 303, 14.6.1920.

retirement of Shaikh Isa. The new Director terminated what was then described as: "the horrible state of accounts under the late Director and evidence of considerable embezzlement".<sup>1</sup> Due to Bower's efforts, Bahrain's revenues improved markedly, and imports for 1923 were reported to be worth £2,454,571 and exports £860,589. Two thirds of the imports were transhipped to the mainland.<sup>2</sup> Bahrain's Customs Tariffs were as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- (1) Customs Duty: All imports into Bahrain were charged 5% ad valorem import tax, with the exception of certain imports shown as 'Exemptions'.
- (2) R.E. Export Duty: Goods which were marked R.E. before arrival and which were re-exported after arrival at the port within 20 days to mainland ports were charged at 2% ad valorem only. If the period of 20 days was exceeded the full 5% import duty was levied.
- (3) Transshipment at Sea: Cargo transhipped at sea was free of charge.
- (4) Tobacco Tax: There was a municipal tax of 2% on tobacco and cigarettes.
- (5) Contraband: The following imports were forbidden:
  - (a) Arms and ammunition
  - (b) Liquor; except for personal consumption by Europeans and Americans
  - (c) Obscene literature and pictures
  - (d) Artificial and cultured pearls.

In December 1923, Major Daly and Mr. Bower together produced the first monthly budget for Bahrain. It demonstrated to the Government of India the underlying soundness of Bahrain's finances and its ability to fund the projected reforms. The budget estimated monthly receipts at

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1 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/123, No. 42/8/4, 18.10.1923. From 1919 to mid-1923 the Customs was farmed by the Hindu firm of Mr. Gangaram Tikamdas. Before that Seth Rao Sahib Tirathdas Maharaj, headman of the Hindu Community in Bahrain, was Director of Customs until 1919, the year he died in Karachi. See A.R.P.A. 1919, 1920, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A. 1923, op. cit.

3 Colonel Barrett, P.A., to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/1313, No. 291, 27.3.1929.

Rs. 87,000 and expenditure at Rs. 67,150.<sup>1</sup>

On the 14th January 1924, Mr. de Grenier (see Chapter Three) took over as Director of Customs shortly after his predecessor's period of loan to the Government of Bahrain had expired.<sup>2</sup> During the year the Agent drew up Bahrain's first annual budget for the Arabic year starting 1st Moharram 1343 (3rd August 1924-25).<sup>3</sup> It anticipated receipts of Rs. 15,23,000 chiefly from the Customs,<sup>4</sup> but also from the Courts, contributions by the municipalities towards upkeep of the Police Force, rents of Government lands, and quarantine receipts, together with a small surplus deriving from the previous year. The chief headings of expenditure were:

Manamah and Moharraq Water Supply Scheme	Rs. 3,00,000
Civil List (i.e. Payments to the Ruling Family)	3,73,800
Upkeep of State Levy Corps	1,20,000
Upkeep of State Police and Pay of Amirs	74,000
State Contribution to Municipalities <sup>5</sup>	60,000
Education (Grants in aid to Schools)	48,000
Public Works	36,000
Estimated Surplus to be devoted to the completion of Water Supply Scheme, and to Manamah Electric Power Scheme	2,46,000

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- 1 Monthly Budget, Government of Bahrain, attached to a letter from the Agent to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1039, No. 208/C/9/2, 17.12.1923.
  - 2 Mr. de Grenier served as Director of Customs until 20th March 1943. See A.R.P.A. 1943, op. cit.
  - 3 For 1343 Budget see Colonel F.B. Prideaux's letter to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044, No. 426-S, 27.7.1924.
  - 4 Customs revenue came from various sources, the 5% Customs duty being the most important source. Other income for the Customs derived from supervision fees, sales of forms, weight certificates, amendment fees, certificate fees, Khanchia (i.e. warehouse dues or demurrage), Hammāli (i.e. portorage), pier fees, royalty charges, taxes on motor cars and divers' licenses, pearling licenses and boat registration fees. See State Budget for 1343. Ibid.
  - 5 The reference is to Manamah Municipality created in 1920 and to Moharraq Municipality whose creation was forecast for 1924, but was delayed until 1927, the year in which it was established under the Presidency of Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa. However, since 1921 an unofficial municipal committee existed in that place. See A.R.P.A. 1921-7, op. cit.

1924-25 were bad years for the pearl-trade of Bahrain for the reasons mentioned in Chapter Five. The disaster that struck local boats during the 1925 season left a large number of seamen jobless for the rest of the year, causing the Agent to voice his concern:

"The Deputy Ruler may well be advised to consider the possibility of the introduction of some industry. Some years ago the weaving of canvas for boat sails was a fairly prosperous industry amongst the Baharnah, but it practically died out owing to the severe oppression to which the Baharnah were subjected during the late years of Shaikh Isa's rule, when members of the ruling family indiscriminately taxed every form of indigenous industry."<sup>1</sup>

No new budget was produced for the year 1344 (1925-26) owing to Daly's absence from Bahrain during May-November 1925. In budgetting for the year, the Assistant Political Agent followed the guidance of the previous year's budget. During 1925 the Administration decided to engage the services of a financial adviser, an appointment for which Charles Belgrave applied and was interviewed and chosen for the post by Colonel F.B. Prideaux, the then Resident.<sup>2</sup> Prideaux specified the following reasons for the engagement of a financial adviser for Bahrain:

"The revenues of the State are greater than the Chief and his Arab advisers can judiciously spend. It is recognised that the income is likely to expand and that the growing community of Europeans, Americans, and educated Arabs, Persians and Indians are entitled to expect their condition of life to be improved."<sup>3</sup>

Total revenue from the Customs rose from less than nine lakhs of rupees in 1344 (1925-26) to over nine and a half lakhs in 1345, and

1 A.R.P.A., 1925, op.cit.

2 Prideaux to the Secretary, Political Department, India Office. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044, No. P. 3190, 15.9.1925. Prideaux described Belgrave as follows: "An officer has been found who seems in every way suitable. He is Mr. Charles Belgrave, Administrative Officer (Cadet) on leave from Tanganyika Territory, East Africa ... I have interviewed Mr. Belgrave. He is aged 31. He can speak Arabic, Swahili and French. During the War he served in Egypt in both military and civil capacities." Ibid.

3 Prideaux to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044, No. 378-S, October 1925.

exceeded ten and a half lakhs in 1346 (See Table provided). Bahrain's trade for 1926 revealed the popularity of aluminium and enamel ware, and also earthenware imported from Europe. The import of motor cars was said to have continued during the year when there were 140 cars in Bahrain, some private, some taxis and four lorries. The majority of these were Fords, and the tendency was to import the more expensive high power type.<sup>1</sup> Earlier in 1925, a system of licensing for new drivers had been introduced.<sup>2</sup>

During 1346 (1927-28) Bahrain's import figures grew by four and a half lakhs of rupees. The improvement was attributed to a good pearling season. Also during the year the price of sugar fell by 20% and coffee by 30%. The drop was caused by competition between beet sugar and Java sugar, and by an abnormally good global coffee crop. Local consumption of oil during the year increased as a result of the 50% increase in the import of Anglo-Persian Oil Company's oil, with the Company's Agent allowing credit facilities to his customers for the first time.<sup>3</sup>

Manamah's prosperous trade was beginning to cause resentment among Moharraq shopkeepers who alleged that the disembarkation of passenger steamers and dhow-cargo in Manamah port was an added advantage.<sup>4</sup>

In his commentary on the State budget for the year, i.e. 1346, the Adviser drew attention to the allowances of the Ruling Family, i.e. the Civil List, which amounted to Rs. 9,90,000 while the actual total revenue of the State for the year was Rs. 12,40,055. He wrote:

1 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/296, 23.2.1927.

2 A.R.P.A. 1925, op. cit.

3 A.R.P.A. 1927, op. cit. From 1934-39, Khan Sahib Yusuf bin Ahmad Kanoo was the local Agent of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. See Administration Reports of the Political Agency for those years.

4 Belgrave to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/296, No. 594/9A, 5th Sha<sup>c</sup>ban 1346. Steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company and the German Hansa Line called bi-weekly at Manamah Port.

"About one half of the total estimated revenue is paid over yearly to the Ruling Family through the Civil List and various annual allowances ... etc. ... This amount does not include salaries which are paid to various Shaikhs, in addition to their allowances, who occupy positions in the Government such as Magistrates, Presidents of Courts, Amirs, etc. These payments are included under other headings, Protection, Judicial, etc."<sup>1</sup>

The second largest item of recurrent expenditure was State Protection (defined below) which consumed 17% of the total revenue in 1346. For the first time during the year the State allocated two lakhs of rupees as the start of a Reserve Fund deposited at 4% interest in Bombay.<sup>2</sup>

The actual total expenditure for 1347 (1928-29) amounted to Rs. 11,82,214, which included one lakh deposited in the Reserve Fund invested in Bombay. In certain cases actual expenditure outstripped the budget estimates. Allowances to the Ruling Family were budgetted at Rs. 4,59,064 but the actual expenditure was Rs. 5,04,489; there was an increase of Rs. 45,425 over the budget estimate. In addition, some members of Al Khalifah derived salaries from the posts which they held in the State. An additional sum of about Rs. 16,000 was paid to H.E. Shaikh Hamad for additional building to his houses in Moharraq and Sakhir, and also for purchase of new equipment for the fish market. The existing market was the private property of the Shaikh, and as it was in a bad sanitary condition, the State offered assistance in the interest of public health. The total amount paid to the Ruling Family during 1347 was Rs. 5,14,569.

The Judicial and Waqf Department's expenditure was budgetted at Rs. 25,500 and the actual expenditure was Rs. 29,190. The State was still paying the expenses of this department, and this was expected to continue until such time as the proceeds were sufficient to cover expenses. Waqfs cost the State Rs. 4,500 during the year. The Sunni Waqfs were under the control of the three Sunni Qadis, assisted by two

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1 Belgrave: Notes on Expenditure under budget headings for 1346.  
I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044.

2 Ibid.

clerks and one Al Khalifah Shaikh. The Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Waqfs were, until November 1928, entrusted to Sayed Adnan the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qadi, thereafter following his death they were handed over, first, to his executor temporarily, and then to a Committee consisting of six members (See Chapter Four).

Judicial expenditure during the year amounted to Rs. 24,690, spent on the pay of Magistrates, Qadis, clerks, and other members of the following Courts:

The Bahrain Court  
 The Bahrain Small Court  
 The Sunni Shara<sup>C</sup> Court  
 The Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Shara<sup>C</sup> Court  
 Majlis al-Tijarah  
 The Diving Court  
 The Small Joint Court

During the year 1347, 1064 new cases were investigated by the Bahrain Court and 282 cases by the Bahrain Small Court, in addition to a large number of old cases. The Majlis al-Tijarah consisted of twenty members local and foreign merchants, under the Presidency of Shaikh Humud bin Subah Al Khalifah. The Diving Court consisted of three merchants, renowned in the pearl-trade: Abdur Rahman Zaiyani, Hajji Abd<sup>C</sup>Ali bin Rajab, and Hajji Ali bin Sagur, with one paid member Khalifah bu Ghais. The Diving Court functioned only during the off-season and held its weekly session in the Bahrain Government Court House in Manamah.

State Protection included the Indian Police, Arab Police, two Amirs and Naturs, i.e. Watchmen, upkeep of the prison, and cost of deportations. The Indian Police was commanded by two officers, one British, the other Indian, in addition to 95 other ranks. The Arab Police consisted of one superintendent and 41 other ranks. The Naturs totalled 128. The Indian and Arab Police were provided with lodgings, uniforms and rations by the State. The Naturs were salaried employees, engaged on a temporary basis,

since many among their ranks were divers who were given leave during the diving season and were replaced by others while they were absent.

During 1346 (1927-28) expenditure on Education amounted to Rs. 32,119, and the Resident wanted this raised on account of the growing income of the State and also because education was becoming a "dominant factor" in Bahrain. In 1347 expenditure on education increased to Rs. 57,883, owing to the rise in the number of boys and girls attending the schools and to the sending of eight students, three from the Ruling Family and five sons of leading merchants, to Beirut at the expense of the State (See Chapter Six).<sup>1</sup>

One lakh of rupees was earmarked for the Electricity Scheme in the Budget estimates for 1347, and another two lakhs were allotted for the construction of Manamah-Moharraq Sea-Road; both items appeared under Special Projects. But the actual expenditure for 1347, makes no mention of either of the two projects.

Trade prospects during 1348 (1929-30) looked gloomy due to the disturbed conditions on the mainland, the exclusion of Persians from Bahrain except for those with proper passports, and the dull state of the Paris pearl market. During the year both the State's revenue and expenditure were budgetted at Rs. 16,32,576. The State's cash assets were shown to be healthy at the beginning of the year:

Fixed deposits - Bombay - excluding Reserve	Rs.	2,00,000
Cash in Consolidated Fund - Bahrain		1,10,238
Cash in Lloyd's Bank - Bombay		35,259
Cash in current account with Eastern Bank - Bombay		2,04,981
Reserve - also on fixed deposit in Bombay		3,00,000

Rs. 3,00,000 were allotted for the electrification of Manamah, and Rs. 75,000 for Manamah-Moharraq Sea-Road. Owing to the expansion in education its share of expenditure was increased to Rs. 90,000.

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1 Notes on Expenditure 1347. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044.

Allowances on the Civil List also increased as a result of additional grant to Shaikh Isa, and the restoration of the allowances to certain members of Al Khalifah hitherto in exile.

The revenue for the year showed Recoverable Loans totalling Rs. 27,098 from previous years. These loans were extended by Shaikh Hamad to the tribal elements, to relatives and to a few merchants. Rs. 15,000 was loaned to Mohammad bin Subāh, headman of the Ben Ali tribe, at the start of the pearling season, Rs. 6,000 to Abdul Latif ad-Dosari, and Rs. 4,000 to Ahmad bin Khalifah al-Ghatam, a relative of the Shaikh.<sup>1</sup>

1349 (1930-31) was according to the Adviser "a very disastrous one financially, the revenue of the State has decreased to an alarming extent". During the year work was carried out on the Manamah-Moharraq Sea-Road, and on the building of the quarantine station. Also, the balance of the cost of the Electric Scheme was paid.<sup>2</sup> The deficit in revenue forced the State to draw Rs. 1,70,000 from its investments in Bombay. The total balance of the State's funds at the end of 1348 was Rs. 3,40,365 with an additional Rs. 3,00,000 in reserve. At the end of 1349 the deficit in revenue exceeded the estimated sum by over three lacs of rupees, which the Adviser attributed to "the present worldwide trade

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1 State Budget for 1348. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044. In March 1933, Yusuf Kanoo mortgaged his <sup>c</sup>Amarah (building) in Manamah to the Eastern Bank Ltd. on account of a loan of Rs. 75,000. (See the Bank's letter of 19th July 1934. I.O.R. 15/2/241). Thereafter, his financial position deteriorated further, and Shaikh Hamad assisted him by extending to him a loan of Rs. 20,000 in 1934, and again by buying a house from him in 1940 at Rs. 80,000, more than its worth, and by offering him further two loans of Rs. 20,000 in 1940, and Rs. 10,000 in 1941. (See Belgrave to Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/241, No. C/1131, 23.6.1941.) Other loans by the Ruler were offered to Abdullah al-Zāyed: Rs. 4,000, and two Lakhs to Qusaibi, both during 1358 (1939-40) (See His Highness' Expenditure during 1358. I.O.R. 15/2/197).

2 The Electric Power Station in Manamah was opened by Shaikh Hamad on the 12th May 1930, and electricity was extended to Moharraq in 1931. A.R.P.A. 1930-31, op. cit.

depression".<sup>1</sup>

That depression continued to affect Bahrain's trade and finances in the following year 1350 (1931-32). The Customs revenue fell to Rs. 5,09,000 owing to the fall in commodity prices, and to the bad pearl trade, and also the decline in the prices of dates.<sup>2</sup> While budgetting for the year, the Adviser needed an extra one lakh in revenue to cover the normal recurrent expenditure, and to obtain this he proposed the raising of the Khanchia,<sup>3</sup> to one anna per maund on all bag cargo, his justification for the increase being:

"It is unfortunate that it should be necessary to increase taxation but at the same time it is a well known fact that Bahrain is more lightly taxed than any other State in the Gulf. With the exception of the Customs duty and a local house tax in Manamah and Muharraq which is collected by the Municipalities, there are no local taxes whatever."<sup>4</sup>

Total expenditure for 1350 was reduced to Rs. 8,32,516, sufficient to cover normal recurrent expenditure. All existing State-financed construction work was halted. As a result, unemployment among the country's working population increased. The allocations on the Civil List were reduced by 10% with the Shaikh's approval, and no extra allowances were allowed that year to the Ruling Family. Nevertheless, the Civil List still amounted to nearly half the State's total expenditure. Total allocations for Government Departments were also

- 1 Annual Report for 1349. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1044, No. 105/S.F., 5 Safar 1350. Two very large bankruptcies took place in 1930 one of which was that of Khan Bahadur Mohammad Sharif Awazi who, as a result, fled to Persia leaving debts of over three lakhs, two lakhs being due to the Hansa Line whose agent he was. (A.R.P.A. 1930, op. cit.) He was charged with fraudulent bankruptcy including cheating the Customs Department for over four years. Owing to his abscondment, the charges against him were abandoned, but his possessions in Bahrain and his British titles were subjected to forfeiture. See Prior to Biscoe. I.O.R. 15/2/102, No. C-23, 14.3.1931.
- 2 A.R.P.A. 1931, op. cit.
- 3 Fee collected on imported goods whose owners desired to store them in the Customs Warehouse for a period of ten days, excluding holidays. For a further ten days, the importer had to pay another Khanchia fee, and so on.
- 4 Belgrave: Budget for 1350, attached to No. 105/S.F., op. cit.

reduced by about Rs. 12,000 compared with the previous year. This was done by reducing the number of Government employees. Expenditure was cut by Rs. 10,000 in the wake of the Government decision not to send back the students to the A.U.B., and by another Rs. 9,000 when it was decided not to send the Hospital Boat to the pearl banks throughout the main diving season. Cuts in public expenditure also affected the Municipalities, the Electric Supply Scheme, Agriculture, etc. The total cuts in recurrent expenditure, compared to the Budget of 1349, amounted to almost two lakhs of rupees, Rs. 74,000 of which represented the cut in the Civil List. Commenting upon the Recoverable Loans owed to the State, the Adviser remarked: "It is in my opinion very doubtful whether this sum (Rs. 17,016) will be repaid".<sup>1</sup>

There was however some consolation to be gained from the Agency Report for 1931 which offered the following optimistic note:

"Bad though the state of trade is in Bahrain there is some comfort to be found in the reflection that our neighbours are worse off, for Qatif and Qatar are to all intents and purposes ruined. A cause of the comparative prosperity of Bahrain is to be found in the fact that Gulf capitalists have steadily been moving their capital over and establishing their headquarters here for some years past. This is true both of the Arab and Persian Coasts, and is a great tribute to the Administration of Bahrain. There is little doubt that its good order, security, bank, wireless and shipping facilities act as lodestones, and both Nejd and Persian merchants and Shaikhs have been moving their valuables to its gilt-edged shores."<sup>2</sup>

On 6th May 1932, the Government of Bahrain raised the duty on luxuries from 5 to 7½% and to 10% from 31st December of the year. The duty on liquor and tobacco was also increased to 15%.<sup>3</sup>

Commenting upon the State's finances at the close of 1351 (1932-33) the Adviser wrote: "... the financial position of the State causes me very grave concern; both the new Budget (1352) and the figures for the

1 Ibid.

2 A.R.P.A. 1931, op. cit.

3 A.R.P.A. 1932, op. cit.

last year reveal a very disastrous condition of affairs".<sup>1</sup>

He went on to compare the finances of Bahrain during the years 1350 and 1351. The actual revenue during 1351 dropped from what it was in 1350 by Rs. 1,20,074. The drop was largely in the Customs receipts due mainly to dwindling imports, and to the diminishing buying power of the people of Bahrain. Expenditure in 1351 exceeded revenue by Rs. 93,672. Although actual expenditure in 1351 was less than the amount forecast in the Budget, yet the revenue fell short of the budgetted amount by Rs. 1,05,302. By the end of 1351 there was a deficit of Rs. 69,132.

The Reserve Fund which stood at three lakhs of rupees at the start of 1351, shrank to two and a half lakhs towards the end of the year. For the first time in his budget estimates for 1352, the Adviser showed a deficit in revenue over expenditure which he covered from the Reserve Fund. In 1351 budget revenue was estimated at Rs. 7,89,600 though the actual revenue amounted to Rs. 6,84,298 only. Customs receipts for the year were less than the estimate by one lakh of rupees. The drop was attributed to "the deplorable condition of the pearl industry", falling imports and the likelihood of Bahrain losing its re-export (R.E.) trade. Hence the revenue from the Customs was estimated in 1352 (1933-34) at Rs. 5,50,000, i.e. one and a half lakhs reduction over that of 1351. Estimated total expenditure for 1352 was also reduced by 72,100 rupees over the estimate for the previous year. As regards the Civil List, the Shaikhs were made to realize that a cut in its allocations was inevitable. That cut, originally suggested at 5-6%, eventually amounted to 2½% only, i.e. Rs. 6,000 out of a total allocation to the Civil List of Rs. 3,86,000. Even then it cost the State more than half the total expenditure for the year. The Adviser warned:

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1 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/196, No. 17/SF, 29.4.1933.

" ... it is my considered opinion that the finances of Bahrain will never be on a satisfactory footing unless the Civil List is made to correspond, to a certain extent, to the actual revenue, increasing and decreasing according to the income of the State. The proportion was laid down when the State was comparatively wealthy, unfortunately since then the revenue has diminished by half, but a reference to the comparison of revenue and Civil List, which I enclose shows that the fluctuations of the revenue have not proportionally affected the Civil List ...

If this State finds itself in serious financial difficulties it will depend upon the Government of India for monetary assistance ... .. If the Government of India comes to the conclusion that the Civil List requires readjusting it will be necessary for it to express this opinion very definitely to the Ruler himself."<sup>1</sup>

He provided the following comparison:

	<u>Total Revenue</u>	<u>Civil List</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1345	Rs. 11,91,810	4,50,094	45.3
1346	12,40,056	4,62,599	37.3
1347 <sup>2</sup>	12,15,694	5,04,489	41.5
1348	11,34,131	5,08,434	44.8
1349	8,17,716	4,91,995	60.1
1350	7,96,601	4,34,700	54.5
1351	6,84,298	4,13,844	60.5

The Adviser's assessment above shocked the Government of India who replied to the Resident:

"The Government of India cannot view such a state of affairs with equanimity. They realise that Mr. Belgrave's position as a paid servant of the State precludes him from exercising any real pressure on the Shaikh in the matter of his Civil List. They consider it essential that unless figures for the first part of the present financial year, when available show a probability that the budget will balance the extremely serious nature of the financial position of his State should be explained to the Shaikh in unequivocal terms and a substantial reduction effected in his Civil List ..."<sup>3</sup>

1 Ibid.

2 In 1347 Shaikh Isa's monthly stipend was increased from Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000. The above figures represent actual expenditures, not the estimates shown in the Annual Budgets supplemented to this section.

3 F.S.G.I. to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/196, No. F. 261-N/33, 24.10.1933.

The actual revenue of the State in 1352 (1933-34) was slightly higher than the previous year. There was an increase of Rs. 8,000 in Customs receipts due to the introduction of higher Customs tariff in May 1932, plus rents from government land, oil concession from B.A.P.C.O., and the payment of the rent of Moharraq aerodrome. The total expenditure during the year was less than the expenditure in 1351 by about Rs. 47,000. There was a saving of Rs. 24,600 in the Civil List owing to the death of His Excellency Shaikh Sir Isa bin Ali which occurred on 9th December 1932, and also to the death of certain persons included on the list. The cost of State protection increased owing to the fact that during the year the police force was reinforced and new uniforms and equipment were purchased. Actual expenditure outstripped revenue by Rs. 4,000.<sup>1</sup>

Customs revenue improved by about half a lakh of rupees in 1353 (1934-35) over the previous year due, mainly, to large imports of Japanese rice and the general expansion in trade following the establishment of B.A.P.C.O.<sup>2</sup> Also during the year eight instalments of Rs. 5,769, i.e. totalling Rs. 46,152 were received from B.A.P.C.O. in accordance with the Supplementary Agreement signed earlier. Five instalments which totalled Rs. 28,845 were paid in 1352. The total payment by the Company in 1353 amounted to Rs. 75,000, of which Rs. 50,000 was recoverable from future royalties. Also received from the Company was Rs. 20,000 from the minimum royalty clause of the Supplementary Agreement. Revenue also included two instalments paid during the year by the Imperial Airways for the lease of the Manamah aerodrome for a period of 18 months. The decline in interest rate reduced income on Reserve Funds from Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 5,000.

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1 Belgrave: Notes on Revenue and Expenditure 1352. I.O.R. 15/2/195.

2 A.R.P.A. 1934, op. cit.

During the year three pieces of land were sold to the British Government, two in Manamah (Jufair)<sup>1</sup> and one in Moharraq. The deal fetched Rs. 1,96,031. Out of this sum Rs. 33,352 was paid into the Privy Purse, and the payment was not included in the report on expenditure. The purchase of land from private owners cost the State Rs. 45,012 and in addition to this Rs. 7,000 was paid to Shaikh Mohammad bin Isa who had a claim to all the open land in the neighbourhood of Jufair. The net government receipt from the whole transaction was Rs. 1,10,367. In addition to the financial arrangements a large amount of government land was given to the previous occupants.<sup>2</sup>

Early in 1935 the people agitated over the high rate of unemployment. Shaikh Hamad's solution to the problem envisaged the resumption of the construction of the Manamah-Moharraq Sea Road which had been stopped due to the recession. Since then the State's financial position had improved mainly as a result of the oil money and this was likely to increase in the future. During the year, the State had Rs. 3,00,000 in reserves. The completion of the work on the Road was expected to cost the State a further 80,000 rupees.<sup>3</sup> The receipt of over one lakh from the sale of land to the British Government enabled the Administration to spend Rs. 30,000 on the resumption of work on the Manamah-Moharraq Road, thus providing work for the unemployed.<sup>4</sup>

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1 In April 1935 the British Naval Stations at Henjam and Basidu were transferred to Bahrain. The construction of the buildings of the naval base at Jufair was carried out by the Government of Bahrain at cost price. The work consisted of a pier 1800 feet long and 10 feet wide. Other buildings included an Officers' club, canteen, quarters for the clerk in charge, etc. See Belgrave's Report for 1935, No. 1221-9A, op. cit. Also, A.R.P.A. 1935, op. cit.

2 Belgrave, Report on the Revenue for 1353. I.O.R. 15/2/195.

3 Belgrave to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/196, No. 706/13 L.D., 7.2.1935.

4 Belgrave to P.A.: State Budget for 1354. I.O.R. 15/2/195, No. 326/S.F., 30.6.1935.

During March-April 1935, talks were held between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain which brought on a reduction of the transit duty on cargo for the mainland from 2 to 1.75% ad valorem.<sup>1</sup> In his annual report for 1353 Belgrave described the financial position of Bahrain as 'distinctly better' than what it was at the start of the year. State revenue improved by about half a lakh over 1352. The 1351, 1352, 1353 budgets showed a deficit, but 1354 (1935-36) commenced with the State owning a reserve fund of two lakhs and a balance from the previous year of Rs. 1,38,000.<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of 1935, the austerity measures which had been adopted earlier were abolished and full payments were restored to Civil servants and to the Civil List, at the Agent's request. The total to be restored was roughly estimated at Rs. 55,000 a year.<sup>3</sup> The actual revenue for 1354 exceeded the previous year's by Rs. 4,55,000. The net amount of royalties received by the State after deducting Rs. 50,000, the final instalment of a loan extended by the Company in 1934, was Rs. 5,68,192. Of the Rs. 13,42,000 collected during 1354, Rs. 5,68,192 was from royalty on oil, the remaining Rs. 7,24,000 from other sources, chiefly Customs receipts. Expenditure for the year recorded an increase of Rs. 2,10,000 over 1353. Increase in expenditure included Rs. 1,89,000, one-third of the oil-royalty paid to the Ruler, and Rs. 14,000, the cost of restoring the cuts in Civil servants' pay and in the Civil List three months before the end of the year. Other increases in expenditure occurred in State protection, and in the medical and educational services.<sup>4</sup>

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1 A.R.P.A. 1935, op. cit.

2 No. 326/S.F., op. cit.

3 Colonel Loch to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/604-4/1, 12.12.1935.

4 Belgrave: Notes on Revenue and Expenditure 1354. I.O.R. 15/2/197.

On 30th January 1936, the Adviser communicated with the Agent about two of Shaikh Hamad's younger sons who were married and were paid allowances of Rs. 350 each per month from his share in the oil revenue, and he wished to add their names to the Civil List instead.<sup>1</sup> To this the Agent replied:

"The intention underlying my letter No. C/607-4/1 of 17th June 1934, which was written with the approval of the Honourable the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, was that no further increase should be made to the Civil List, which already formed too high a proportion of the expenditure of the State. In the circumstances any new allowance of this sort should, I think, be met from the one-third of the oil royalties."<sup>2</sup>

Customs revenue increased in 1355 (1936-37), over the previous year, by more than Rs. 1,80,000. The oil industry stimulated the country's trade which recorded a notable improvement. B.A.P.C.O.'s local employees reached 3747, the highest figure since the Company started its operations in Bahrain. The earnings which the employees received were spent in the local bazaars. The influx of Europeans and relatively highly paid Asians created a market for highly priced luxury articles. The State's income from liquor alone amounted to Rs. 14,841 during the year. The actual revenue during 1355 surpassed the budget estimate by seven lakhs owing to unanticipatedly higher receipts from the oil-royalties and from Customs. The recurrent expenditure for the year which included, mainly, Administration, Protection and the Civil List, amounted to Rs. 9,22,000 slightly less than the amount forecast in the budget. Expenditure also included 56,000 rupees spent on the new Customs House, 88,000 rupees on completing the Manamah-Moharraq Road, 15,000 rupees on road construction including the new Manamah-Budayya<sup>c</sup> Road, and 49,000 rupees on building shops on government land in the main bazaar. Government subsidies to the

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1 Belgrave to Loch. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. 1163-2A, 30.1.1936.

2 Loch to Belgrave. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/77-41, 16.2.1936.

Municipalities were restored to the original rate of 2,000 rupees monthly. This amount had been reduced at the time of the cuts in public expenditure in 1350 to 1,000 rupees per month.<sup>1</sup>

In his budget estimates for 1356 (1937-38) the Adviser made a very important point when he noted that: "the income from the oil royalty has now superseded customs receipts as the chief source of revenue". In fact, oil royalties exceeded Customs receipts since 1936. He anticipated a steady growth in oil revenue and in Customs' receipts. Accordingly, he budgetted total revenue for the year at 22,10,000 rupees, and noted: "this is about eight lakhs more than the most prosperous year in the history of Bahrain's finances when the pearl industry was flourishing before the years of depression".<sup>2</sup>

The largest item of expenditure was the Civil List and the Ruler's one third of the total oil revenue estimated at 9,20,000 rupees. Expenditure on Government Departments, Protection, Medical Services, Public Works was increased slightly over the previous year because of projected increases in the Government staff. Rs. 3,23,000 were allocated for Special Projects which included 1,00,000 for the new hospital;<sup>3</sup> 1,00,000 for the proposed new palace for the Shaikh; 50,000 for the Manamah-Moharraq bridge; 35,000 Court House; 32,000 fire engine; 6,000 Water Cart. At the end of 1355 the Reserve Fund was increased from two to four lakhs. At the beginning of 1356 the State had a balance of 4,79,000 rupees, in addition to the four lakhs in the Reserve Fund. Out of that balance 4,11,752 rupees were invested in British War Loan at  $3\frac{1}{2}$ % interest, thereby increasing the Reserve Fund to about 8,12,000 rupees.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Belgrave to P.A., Budget for 1356 and Notes on Revenue and Expenditure 1355. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. 435/S.F., 31.5.1937.

2 Ibid.

3 Note that the medical services were provided chiefly by the American Mission Hospital and by the Victoria Memorial Hospital before the opening of the new Government Hospital in 1940.

4 Ibid.

The 1356 budget estimates drew critical remarks from the Agent who pointed out three main defects: (a) a considerable increase of expenditure over the estimated figures, (b) a tendency to depart freely from budgetted figures in the matter of expenditure, (c) lack of distinction between recurring and non-recurring expenditure.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Resident agreed to most of the Agent's above views, he nevertheless drew his attention to:

"... the main facts from our point of view about the budget are: (a) that the financial position is very satisfactory, and (b) that the Reserve is being increased. As you know, the income of the State is increasing rapidly and the Shaikh being what he is it is certain that the money which comes in will be spent freely. I think all that is necessary on our part is to see that the money is spent on useful objects and not wasted, and that the Reserve is steadily increased. Beyond this I do not think we need interfere in details."<sup>2</sup>

In November 1937, the Agent sent a note to the Adviser entitled: "Formation of a Reserve Fund for Bahrain". In it he made specific suggestions for increasing Bahrain's Reserves over a number of years, and the saving of funds for the future. He wrote:

"It is clear enough that heavy non-recurring expenditure must be contemplated in the next few years. There is much to do in improving Public Health (Sanitation, Hospitals, etc.) Agriculture, Communications and Education. Not only is it right to spend freely on such services, but circumstances will drive the Bahrain Government to do so. There will be pressure both from outside and from within, and the safe course, which no doubt coincides with inclination, is to forestall criticism or agitation."<sup>3</sup>

Belgrave concurred in the Agent's views and assured him that the Reserve was being increased steadily. In 1937 the Reserve Fund stood at 18 lakhs of rupees, deposited at  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$  interest, of which five lakhs were in fixed deposits and the remainder in British War Loan and other Government stocks at  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ . In addition to this there was a sum of 10 Lakhs in the Consolidated Fund.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Captain Hickinbotham to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/485-4/1, 26.6.1937.

2 T.C. Fowle to Hickinbotham. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. 567-S, 2.8.1937.

3 H. Weightman: Formation of a Reserve Fund for Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/197.

4 Belgrave to Weightman. I.O.R. 15/2/197, no number, 22.11.1937.

1357 budget (1938-39) estimated Revenue and Expenditure at Rs. 42,02,000. For the first time Bahrain's annual revenue was forecast at over forty-two lakhs, as a result of the rise in oil-royalties. Rs. 12,00,000 were allocated to the Reserve Fund. The chief headings under Public Works included 1,30,000 for the construction of the new palace, and 80,000 for the new hospital. The total estimate for Public Works and repairs to roads and buildings was computed at 5,68,000 lakhs.<sup>1</sup> In drawing up the new budget the Adviser took into his consideration the Agent's earlier suggestions, especially the one for building up the reserves. Having examined the budget, the Agent wrote to the Resident:

"In examining the Budget now presented in the light of my Note of 22nd November 1937 in regard to the formation of a Reserve Fund, I find that the programme postulated for that Fund has been fully provided for."<sup>2</sup>

1357 was described by the Agent as most satisfactory financially, because the actual receipts exceeded the anticipated revenue, enabling the State to increase its Reserve by a further 19 lakhs, considerably more than was expected. Allowances to the Ruling Family increased greatly because the total revenue from oil was greater than expected, and as has been noted earlier one third of the oil revenue was paid directly to the Privy Purse. Expenditure on Public Protection was increased as a result of an addition to the strength of the Police made at the time of the agitation, and also the purchase of new equipment. Savings were also made in Public Health, chiefly because the hospital was not finished before the end of the year, and in Public Works because of temporary postponement of the plan for a new Palace for the Shaikh. By the end of the year Revenue exceeded estimates by roughly six lakhs and expenditure (excluding the Reserve) exceeded estimates by one lakh,

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1 Government of Bahrain Budget for 1357. I.O.R. 15/2/197.

2 Weightman to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/323-4/1, 19.5.1938.

and the State's invested Revenue amounted to Rs. 40 lakhs.<sup>1</sup>

The Customs revenue dropped from 11,58,547 lakhs in 1938 to 10,56,532 in 1939. This was largely because of a decline in receipts from transit duty on shipments to the mainland from 2,19,942 rupees in 1938 to 1,03,650 in 1939. This was because of the opening of a port at Rās Tannūra and the direct shipment there of equipment to the California Arabia Standard Oil Company.<sup>2</sup>

Total expenditure in 1358 (1939-40) exceeded estimates. The actual expenditure was 36,75,000 rupees whereas the estimate was 31,41,000. The excess was attributed mainly to the donation of four lakhs of rupees by Shaikh Hamad to the British Government as a contribution to the cost of the War. Besides, there was a huge consignment of rice, purchased by the State as a special war time measure, half of which was sold to the public during the year, and the rest valued at Rs. 1,36,000, was in State custody.<sup>3</sup> Expenditure on Public Protection exceeded estimates by Rs. 41,000. The oil royalty surpassed the estimated sum and, as a result, the Ruler's share was more than what was originally provided in the budget for the year. In spite of increased expenditure, it was possible to augment the Reserve Fund by a further ten lakhs of rupees. Allowances to the Ruling Family totalled 15,16,662 out of which 10,78,427 was the Ruler's one-third share, and 4,38,235 was the payment to the Civil List. The cost of public works was estimated at Rs. 7,70,600 but the actual expenditure amounted to 6,35,300 rupees. Rs. 59,000 were paid in 1358 towards the cost of the Manamah-Moharraq Swing Bridge, whose contract price was 3,82,000 rupees. In the budget estimates, only three lakhs were allocated for the Bridge. Expenditure on the Hospital

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1 Weightman to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/456-4/1, 26.7.1939.

2 A.R.P.A. 1939, op. cit.

3 For control and supply of foodstuffs during the Second World War see Chapter Eight.

buildings amounted to Rs. 2,35,000. The extension of the Manamah pier cost the State 1,01,588 rupees. Besides, there were various other smaller items carried out under Public Works.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1359 budget (1940-41) revenue was forecast at 45,07,000 rupees, but the actual revenue amounted to 49,01,499, an excess of Rs. four lakhs approximately over the estimated amount. The actual revenue in 1358 was 45,78,765 rupees, Rs. 3,22,734 less than 1359. The State revenue was increased during 1359 by receipts of Rs. 5,61,972, being the payment made by the Bahrain Petroleum Company on signing the oil concession over the additional area and the price derived by the Government from the sale of rice bought in 1358. Customs revenue dropped by more than one and a half lakhs in 1359 in comparison with 1358, and oil royalties were 82,843 less than 1358, due to shortage of tankers during the War. During the year over 16½ lakhs of rupees were added to the Reserve Fund and invested in War Loan. The actual total expenditure for 1359, excluding the amount paid in the Reserve Fund, amounted to 29,14,372 lakhs. The Civil List and the Ruler's one third of the oil revenue amounted to about 50% of the total expenditure. Rs. 6,21,000 were allotted during the year for Special Public Works, whereas the actual expenditure was Rs. 3,18,000. The reduction was occasioned by the fact that the Manamah-Moharraq bridge, due for completion during the year, was not yet finished. The women's hospital was completed and opened on 25th May 1940, and the men's hospital was opened a few months later. The total cost of the men's hospital including electric, water and sanitary installations amounted to 1,32,000 rupees. The nurses' lodgings and the Lady Medical Officer's flat and Matron's flat cost approximately 86,000 rupees. The two hospitals provided beds for 100 patients and possibly more in case of emergency. The building of the Technical School

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<sup>1</sup> Belgrave: Note on Expenditure 1358. I.O.R. 15/2/197.

Workshop, which was still in progress, cost the State 13,000 rupees.<sup>1</sup>

In March 1940, the Adviser communicated with the Agent over the allowances of the Shaikh's two sons, Du<sup>c</sup>aij and Ahmad. The Shaikh wanted to have their names added to the Civil List instead of drawing their salaries from his one-third of oil royalties. This arrangement, which excluded the two sons from the Civil List, was made in 1358 (1939-40) when Shaikh Hamad's revenue exceeded 13 lakhs, sufficient to meet any extras in the allowances of the Ruling Family.<sup>2</sup>

In April of the same year, the Agent informed the Resident of Shaikh Hamad's objection to the payment of his sons' allowances from his share of the oil royalties, and added:

"At the time when the agreement was negotiated that he should retain one-third of the oil money and pass two-thirds to the State I am pretty certain that no one anticipated that royalties would reach their present total. I think I am right in saying that Bahrain was expected to produce somewhere round 10,000 barrels of crude oil daily whereas it has averaged about double in the last three years and will probably continue at a rate between 18,000 and 20,000 for many years to come. My own feeling is that sooner or later we ought to get the Shaikh, whoever he may be, to reduce his own share to one-fifth ...  
... we do not want this one-third and two-thirds proportion to continue for ever, partly because it is wrong in principle for us to connive at waste and partly because there will sooner or later be trouble about it in Bahrain."<sup>3</sup>

Early in 1941 Shaikh Hamad asked for an increase in his allowance justifying his demand by his growing expenditure. Below is how the Adviser reported the matter to the Agent:

"... when oil revenue began to come in there was a discussion with the Political Agent, Colonel Loch, at which Shaikh Hamad and the Senior Shaikhs and myself were present where it was agreed that one third of the future oil royalty should be paid to the Ruler's Privy Purse, in addition to the Civil List. It was also agreed that the Civil List should not be increased. This arrangement has been in force till now and in the beginning Shaikh Hamad was satisfied with the amount which he received.

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1 Belgrave: Revenue and Expenditure 1359. I.O.R. 15/2/198.

2 Belgrave to Weightman. I.O.R. 15/2/197, 25.3.1940.

3 Weightman to Colonel Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/285-4/1, 6.4. 1940.

Shaikh Hamad now appears to believe that the arrangement which was made was that he should have one third, the family should have the other third and the rest would be spent on the State. The senior Shaikhs suggest that if he had two more lakhs he would not ask for the whole of the second third."<sup>1</sup>

The matter was referred to the Resident and in early April 1941 he wrote to the Shaikh reminding him that his income in 1351 (1932-33), before the advent of oil royalties, was 1,65,000 rupees and that they kept growing since then until they reached 12,93,000 in 1359, i.e. an increase of more than seven times. He added:

"As you are aware in India Rulers restrict themselves and their families to 10% of the country's income whereas in this State Your Highness and the AlKhalifah together receive 33 per cent of the total revenue.

Last year Your Highness and the Family received the huge sum of Rs. 18,54,634 from the State ... While you have grown rich your subjects have grown poor, and owing to the decay of the pearl trade most of the Bahrain merchants have been ruined. I am aware that Your Highness is not responsible for the ruin, but when they see a family already very wealthy crying out for more and more money their discontent will increase until it becomes dangerous ... I trust that the reserve of one third will not be touched in any way, but left intact so that it may hold the ship of the State firm in the hour of need."<sup>2</sup>

Earlier, during March of the same year, the Resident cabled the Government of India to tell them that he had only lately discovered that the whole of the Bahrain State reserve shown in rupees in the annual budgets was actually held in sterling and that it amounted to over 66 lakhs. Also the Shaikh's private fortune of 12 lakhs was in sterling deposits, and that reserve in a currency which was subject to exchange rate depreciation was undesirable. He went on to say that the Shaikh would expect the Government of India, at whose insistence the Reserves had been built up, to make up for any losses that might occur as a result.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 See Translation of the Shaikh's letter dated 13th Safar 1360, attached to Belgrave's communication to Major Alban, P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/198, 7.2.1941.
  - 2 Colonel Prior to His Highness Shaikh Sir Hamad bin Isa AlKhalifah. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 183-S, 10.4.1941.
  - 3 Telegram from Prior to the Government of India. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. T/113, 23.3.1941.

Shortly afterwards the Adviser wrote to the Reserve Bank of India requesting the transfer of the Reserve Fund from England, and its investment in Government of India securities, preferably, those that were exempt from taxation.<sup>1</sup>

The revenue for 1360 (1941-42) was estimated at about 10 lakhs less than 1359. Royalty from oil was estimated at 25½ lakhs, and receipts from Customs at about two lakhs less than the previous year. The reason for this cautious budgetting was, according to the Adviser, (a) the reduction in the activities of the California Arabian Standard Oil Company, (b) increased import trade of Kuwait, and (c) the rise of unemployment in Bahrain, factors which would adversely affect the import trade of Bahrain. The Civil List plus the Ruler's one third of the oil royalty was forecast at 12,90,000 rupees. Expenditure on Public Health was increased over 1359 on account of special anti-malaria measures, quarantine services, and the likelihood of hospitals now having to operate at full capacity.<sup>2</sup> The estimate for Public Protection was also increased on account of the newly created Special Police for the protection of the refinery and oil fields. In fact, this Force was established, as mentioned earlier, after the Italian air-raid on the refinery on 19th October 1940.<sup>3</sup> Over six lakhs of rupees were allocated

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- 1 Belgrave to the Reserve Bank of India. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 784/W.L., 10.5.1941.
  - 2 The A.R.P.A. for 1942 mentions facilities for the R.A.F. at the new State Hospital, viz. "With the approval of His Highness the Shaikh of Bahrain accommodation for R.A.F. and other Service personnel was prepared in the State Hospital, and the new facilities were completed by October 1st (1942). The R.A.F., who paid for the construction of a new ward, also supplied an R.A.F. Medical Officer and four nursing sisters." See A.R.P.A. 1942, op. cit.
  - 3 The Special Police Force were recruited and trained by the Bahrain Government, and they were under the command of the Defence Officer, responsible for the Protection of the refinery and other oil installations. They were paid for by the Bahrain Government. See Belgrave's Annual Report to the Agent, No. 56-9A, op. cit. In 1941 the Adviser's account of this force read: "This force consists of 150 N.C.O.s and men. The services of the Iraqi N.C.O.s were dispensed with soon after the Iraq rebellion. A number of British N.C.O.s from the Indian Police were obtained from India." See Belgrave's Annual Report to the Agent, No. 81-9.A, op. cit.

for the Reserve Fund. The non-recurrent expenditure on Public Works for the year included completion of the surgery building in the Hospital, the Manamah-Moharraq Swing Bridge which was opened by Shaikh Hamad on 18th December 1941 and the new Technical School. In brief, priority was given to what the Adviser called the building up of the reserve.<sup>1</sup>

When Shaikh Hamad's death occurred on 20th February 1942, his eldest son Shaikh Salman became Ruler.<sup>2</sup> He continued to receive one third of the oil royalty in the same manner as his father before him.<sup>3</sup>

During 1943 the Government of India demanded clarifications in respect of variations in the figures affecting the budgets for 1360, 1361 and 1362.<sup>4</sup> In reply the Adviser submitted the following comparison and notes:<sup>5</sup>

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- 1 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 619-21, 17.4.1941.
  - 2 Salman acceded to the Rulership of Bahrain by the will of his father who died at the age of about seventy. On April 6th, 1942 a public Durbar was held at the Palace in Manamah during which Colonel W.R. Hay, the then Resident, presented to Shaikh Salman a Kharita from H.E. the Viceroy which marked the Government of India's formal recognition of his succession. A.R.P.A. 1942, op. cit.
  - 3 Agent to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/187, 11.2.1943.
  - 4 Hickinbotham to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/1363, 15.10.1943.
  - 5 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/1990-21, 21.10.1943.

REVENUE

	<u>1360</u>	<u>1361</u>	<u>1362</u>
Oil Royalty	25,50,000	26,00,000	26,00,000
Customs	6,75,000	7,00,000	6,10,000
Interest of Reserve	2,35,000	2,62,000	2,50,000
Other Receipts and Taxes	1,04,000	1,38,000	1,97,000
Suspense Account (Proceeds from Sales of Foodstuffs)			7,73,000
	<u>35,64,000</u>	<u>37,00,000</u>	<u>44,30,000</u>

EXPENDITURE

Ruling Family	12,90,000	12,92,000	12,91,000
Administration	3,38,800	3,34,000	4,01,000
Public Health	2,52,200	2,64,000	3,18,000
Public Protection	4,15,000	4,00,000	5,28,000
Education	1,32,300	2,40,000	2,60,000
Public Works	3,86,300	69,000	90,000
Municipalities	60,400	61,000	51,000
Unforeseen, Agriculture, etc.	80,000	60,000	67,000
To Reserve Fund	6,09,000	9,80,000	6,16,000
Poor Relief	-	-	35,000
Suspense Account (For Purchase of Food Supplies)			7,73,000
	<u>35,64,000</u>	<u>37,00,000</u>	<u>44,30,000</u>

He explained the variations in Customs revenue on account of uncertain trade due to war conditions, and to the reduction almost by half of receipts from pearling licenses and their suspension in 1362. As regards interest on Reserve the estimate for 1361 included the interest due on the Reserve plus interest for six months - in the second

half of 1361 - on Rs. 9,80,000 which should have been added to the Reserve in 1361, but was instead set aside for the purchase of foodstuffs.

Also on the revenue side 55,000 rupees were expected to accrue to the State from hospital fees in 1362, and 30,000 from Bridge tolls in 1361, in addition to smaller receipts from various other sources.

On the expenditure side, pensions were paid to non-members of the Ruling Family during 1360 and 1361 which were added to the Civil List. The cost of Administration in 1360 was about 25,000 rupees less than the budgetted amount. This increase in cost was taken into consideration in the allotment for Administration in 1361. During 1362 the amount was increased as a result of War Allowances, higher cost of transport fares, stationery, etc., and the maintenance of the Food Department, lately started under the Customs Department.

Expenditure on Public Health was expected to cost more and therefore the estimate for 1362 was increased by 54,000 to cover the rise in the cost of food, drugs, etc. In 1361 the actual amount spent on Public Protection was 4,31,000 rupees. The extra expenditure was due to the rise in the price of foodstuffs for the State forces and to the higher cost of uniforms and equipment. In 1362 the allocations contained 65,000 rupees for new equipment.

The allocations for Education were 1,32,000 in 1360, and the actual expenditure was 1,57,000. In 1361, the allocation was increased with a view to the purchase of tools and equipment for the Technical School at 35,000 rupees, furniture and equipment for Boys and Girls' Schools at 18,000. The allotment for 1362 was increased owing to transfer to a larger Secondary School, and a larger hostel, expansions made to certain village schools, war allowances for the staff, and the enhanced cost of text-books and materials used in the Schools.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Ibid.

The revenue for 1363 (1944-45) was estimated at 40 lakhs, the actual revenue in 1362 amounted to 47 lakhs. The expenditure for 1363 was estimated at 35,30,000 lakhs, and the actual expenditure in 1362 was 33,29,000. A surplus of 4,70,000 was expected in the revenue for 1363 which was destined to be added to the Reserve Fund. Oil royalty for the year was budgetted at 26.25 lakhs, and revenue from the Customs at 8.50 lakhs. Lately, the income from the Reserve Fund occupied the third largest source of revenue for the State amounting to 2.75 lakhs. Although Customs receipts were estimated at 8.50 lakhs in 1362, the actual receipts amounted to about 14 lakhs.

In preparing the budget for 1362, the Adviser anticipated a serious drop in Bahrain's revenue from the Customs owing to the prevailing War conditions, which brought about shipping difficulties and trade restrictions. Contrary to his expectations, Customs revenue increased during the year as a result of the rise in the prices of the imported commodities, and also the enhanced volume of food supplies imported via Bahrain for other Gulf States. Revenue also included interest from the Reserve Fund of 91,41,000 lakhs at 3%. Besides there were smaller receipts from the medical services, Land registration fees, judicial fees, etc. There was a Suspense Account of Rs. 7,73,000 in the budget for 1362 which was the value of the food supplies held by the Government at the end of the year.

The expenditure in 1363 was forecast at over 35 lakhs, the actual expenditure in 1362 was 33 lakhs. The allowances to the Ruling Family absorbed 13 lakhs which again constituted more than one third of the total estimated expenditure. In previous years large sums were spent abroad on the purchase of building materials, motor vehicles, and of the entire super-structure and machinery for opening the Manamah-Moharraq Bridge, also called Shaikh Hamad's Bridge. Expenditure in the 1363 budget was expected to be utilized almost entirely locally.

Rs. 4,50,000 were allocated for expenditure on Government Departments, and this represented an increase of half a lakh over the actual expenditure in 1362. There was an increase in the cost of running the Food Control Department and in the war allowances introduced for the benefit of Government employees in the second half of 1362, and in wages and annual increments which contributed to the greater cost of the Administration. The allotment for Education was increased by one lakh over 1362. Defence and Protection cost the State about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs, and was even likely to cost more. In 1362 the State sustained a loss of 56,500 rupees over the sale of food supplies to the public at cost price.<sup>1</sup>

The 1363 budget elicited a number of remarks from Major T. Hickinbotham, P.A., who was critical of the Adviser's unduly cautious budget estimates. He told the Resident that the revenue figures were implausibly underestimated. He believed that expenditure was exaggerated by the inclusion of projects in the budget which would never be carried out owing to shortage of material during the War, and to the difficulty in finding trained personnel for Government appointments. To quote but a few items to which the Agent alluded, the actuals, he wrote, for the previous year 1362 under Customs receipts amounted to Rs. 13,96,500, while the Adviser's estimate was for Rs. 6,10,000. In the new budget, i.e. 1363, the Adviser estimated 8,60,000 rupees in Customs revenue, apparently expecting a decrease on last year's actuals of 5,36,500 rupees. The import duty was levied on the value of the goods imported and not on the quantity, and the Agent expected a further rise in prices. The Adviser budgetted revenue at 38% less than the actual for previous year and this, he wrote, was unnecessarily cautious.

He agreed with the Adviser in that there was a general rise in

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<sup>1</sup> Belgrave: Budget 1363. I.O.R. 15/2/198.

expenditure owing to War allowances and other causes owing to the unsettled state of the world in general.<sup>1</sup>

During December 1944, the Secretary to the Government of India wrote about the Government's satisfaction with the "successful manner" in which the affairs of Bahrain had been handled during the year and added:

"They would, however, invite attention to the fact that the allowances of the Ruling family absorb a proportion of the total revenues of the State which is higher than is generally considered appropriate ... the Government of India trust that you (i.e. the Resident) will lose no opportunity of impressing upon His Highness the desirability and importance of reducing his personal expenditure and the scale of allowances of his family as soon as this becomes possible."<sup>2</sup>

The Resident believed that the time was not right for suggesting any reductions in the Privy Purse, lest it gave rise to requests for more funds. In a letter to the Government he wrote:

"It must be remembered that the Royal Family in Bahrain now receive almost exactly the same amounts they drew in 1941, although the cost of living has trebled, and, since their financial position has obviously greatly deteriorated they would consider it most inequitable to be asked at this stage to exist on smaller stipends.

I would also deprecate analogies being drawn from Indian States and applied to the Persian Gulf, where they have little relevance. Colonel Barrett ... stated in 1927 or 1928 when the late Shaikh Hamad was making one of his periodical demands for money, that the AlKhalifah considered that the revenues of the State belonged to them, and that any portion they surrendered for the use of the administration must be regarded as an act of grace. This position still exists in Kuwait, with which the Bahrain Family could appropriately compare themselves, and also in Saudi Arabia to whom, and not to an Indian State, their eyes would naturally turn. It is impossible to move very far in advance of public opinion in these States, and so far as I know the handsome allowances paid to the AlKhalifah are regarded rather as a tribute to our administrative ability than an oppression which should be alleviated! In fact, if I were to attempt to reduce the allowances now, there is not the slightest doubt that I should be accused of starving the Ruling Family, and that widespread indignation would be aroused.

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1 Hickinbotham to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/525, 23.3.1944.

2 W.E. Richardson to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. D/18261-ME/44, 21.12.1944.

... in an Indian State the main source of income is land revenue, which is levied at an exceptionally high rate, and it is only reasonable that the Royal Family should content themselves with 10 or 15 per cent of it. In Bahrain, however, the position is entirely different. There is no land revenue or zakat, and the main source of revenue contributed by the public is a very light customs duty. As is well known, their wealth arises from their mineral possessions, and in ensuring that only one third of this falls into the hands of the Royal Family, I feel that a very great deal has already been achieved. In actual fact there is no shortage of money whatever in Bahrain and the real problem is not as it formerly was, how to save money, but the happier one of spending it wisely."<sup>1</sup>

Receipts for the year 1364 (1945-46) were estimated at 48 lakhs and expenditure at 38 lakhs. There was a surplus in revenue of ten lakhs of rupees, allocated to the Reserve Fund. Royalty from oil was estimated at 27 lakhs, and Customs receipts at 15,60,000 rupees. Interest on State Reserve Fund was expected to reach 3,20,000 rupees. Estimates of lesser receipts included: medical 45,000, Land revenue 31,000, Education 19,000, Vehicle Taxes 25,000, Passport 10,000, Judicial fees 20,000, Bridge Tolls 20,000.

On the expenditure side allowances to the Ruling Family, which comprised one third of the oil-royalty plus the Civil List, amounted to 13,20,000, State Departments 3,03,000, Education 4,19,000, Public Health 4,72,000. The latter two items were increased by about one lakh each over 1363 estimates. Expenditure on Defence and Protection amounted to 8,00,000. Public Works allocation was 1,95,000 and the Municipalities 87,000 rupees.<sup>2</sup>

The budget attracted criticism from the Agent who wrote that the Adviser's chief objective was to save a certain sum on money regardless of the needs of the State and the requirements of "forward planning to meet post war conditions". He wrote:

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- 1 Sir G. Prior to the Secretary to the Government of India. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 172-S, 6.2.1945.
  - 2 Belgrave: Note on the 1364 Budget. I.O.R. 15/2/198.

"What stands out above everything else is the extra-ordinary fact that the State has succeeded in saving no less than Rs. 13,92,000 during the 5th year of the World War and this in spite of very considerable increases in expenditure. Almost as astounding is the Adviser's forecast for a saving of Rs. 10,00,000 on the working of the present year ...

I feel strongly that the policy of saving at the expense of well-being of the population and the material progress of the State which has been followed in the last three Bahrain Government budgets is neither reasonable nor correct. It is true that owing to war conditions materials for building and other purposes have not been available, but unfortunately it is equally true that there is a tendency to cloak inertia with the excuse that progress is impossible owing to war conditions. Not only can progress be made at the present time but plans can be thought out for post-war expansion and estimates can be worked out for improvements which will be profitable to the people ... .. Unfortunately I see no sign of any desire on the part of the Bahrain Government to improve living and working conditions in the country rather they incline more and more to the unhealthy accumulation of a large reserve."<sup>1</sup>

In his recommendations the Agent emphasized the need for employing a qualified European Engineer for the Public Works Department, aided by adequate staff to plan the chief towns Manamah and Moharraq, to improve the narrow thoroughfares, to carry out repairs to the roads and to provide a water borne sewage system. He even advocated the replacement of the "antiquated and inadequate" power plant by a more powerful one to meet the increasing demand for electric current. He concluded:

"Bahrain must be prepared to meet possible competition from neighbouring ports especially the new Saudi Arabian port of Ras Tannura. The best and only way to this is for the Customs Department to make this (Manamah) port more attractive than others by providing better and cheaper facilities and a more efficient and less officious administration than possible competitors ... "<sup>2</sup>

Owing to the selection of Bahrain to become a centre for air travel and the anticipated increase in these services, he recommended the construction of a modern hotel to be built jointly by the State and the British Overseas Airways Corporation.

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1 Hickinbotham to Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/393, 21.3.1945.

2 Ibid.

Shortly afterwards, the Resident communicated with the Government of India urging the adoption of a less conservative financial policy in Bahrain. Contrary to earlier belief, oil was expected to last longer, and Bahrain's financial reserves already exceeded the 100 lakhs, he wrote. His final recommendation to the Government was for her to request the Adviser to initiate a more forward policy. To this effect he noted:

" ... it has become clear to me that the attitude of the Financial Adviser, Mr. Belgrave, to any new proposal is unduly cautious. He is still, to my mind, guided by his recollection of his early years in Bahrain when the most rigid economy was essential and he has failed to adapt himself to the era of abounding prosperity in which he now finds himself. I was surprised to find, for example, that when the last heavy rains occurred in Bahrain all the roads of the Capital became impassable, and still more surprised to see in his own annual report that persons had died of starvation in a State with near a half a million pounds in the bank."<sup>1</sup>

After the reorganization of the Customs in 1923, Bahrain's finances were planned in a co-ordinated manner for the first time in the country's modern history. Bahrain's import-export trade expanded as a result, and the annual receipts from the Customs, which were the chief source of revenue for the State before the arrival of oil, improved considerably. From about nine lakhs of rupees collected in 1344 (1925-26), Customs receipts increased to more than ten and a half lakhs in 1347 (1928-29). The only time when revenue dropped was during the recession of the early 1930s, and particularly in 1931 when receipts fell to five lakhs of rupees, the lowest income recorded throughout the period of this study.

The world economic recession adversely affected Bahrain's general trade and left the country's economy in a bad condition. Job opportunities were reduced sharply giving rise to high unemployment among the country's labour population. With revenue falling short of expenditure for a number of years, the country had to offset its deficits by drawing

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1 Prior to Secretary to the Government of India. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 395-S, 20.4.1945.

from the Reserve Fund which by the end of 1351 (1932-33) had shrunk to two and a half lakhs. Even then the cost of the Civil List amounted to about half or more of the State's total annual expenditure. The pearl-trade of Bahrain never recovered from the impact of the slump, and the diving industry's fortunes deteriorated year after year as a result of the spread of the cultured Japanese pearls and falling sales and markets. As a result many bankruptcies occurred among pearl-ers and merchants. Agriculture presented an area of some hope which if developed adequately could have proved beneficial to Bahrain, but neither the public nor the private sectors were prepared to undertake sustained development projects, and investment in this area was much less than was required. As soon as oil was discovered in 1932, agriculture was quickly relegated to a subordinate position.

From 1935 the State began to receive royalties from the new industry and in 1936 these amounted to nearly 18 lakhs of rupees while receipts from the Customs were just over eight lakhs for that year. Within two years of oil exploration therefore revenue from petroleum was twice as much as receipts from the traditional source of State revenues. The equation whereby the Ruling Family was permitted to receive directly one-third of the royalties had unforeseen results for the State. As the royalties increased over the years, the allocations to the Civil List grew accordingly, not to mention the fact that some members of the Ruling Family also received salaries from their posts in the State. In reality their share of oil-wealth went much beyond what was originally intended. In this way the industry provided them with financial power which had previously been the domain of the pearl-ers and merchants and this further strengthened the political dominance of the Ruling Family.

Oil-money undoubtedly injected new life into the Bahraini economy. It also raised the hopes of the ordinary people and gave rise to frustrations when those hopes were not realized and the new wealth poured

into the coffers of the Rulers. True the industry provided employment to Bahrainis, but the majority of the ordinary people, including the cultivators, remained outside the new wealth. The events of 1938 which culminated in the call for reforms were but one expression of that latent feeling of resentment.

Unduly pessimistic forecasts about the future of oil were made in 1938, in consequence of which a yet more cautious budgetting policy was put into practice with the aim of building up Bahrain's Reserves to ensure its future needs. The prediction was, however, erroneous and royalties multiplied from over six lakhs in 1935 to thirty-one lakhs in 1945. The State's financial reserves grew from four lakhs at the end of 1935 (1936-37) to over one hundred lakhs by 1945. In 1937 (1938-39) alone, twelve lakhs of rupees were allocated to the Reserve Fund out of an estimated annual revenue of forty-two lakhs. When the War ended and the target of one hundred lakhs in the Reserve Fund was achieved a less conservative and more dynamic policy with regard to expenditure was approved by the Government of India aiming to provide for the requirements of the post-war development.

It should be noted, however, that much of the later prosperity of Bahrain was founded upon the principles of annual budgets and accounts which were introduced in the early 1920s. No other local Arab State took such a step towards modernity at that time. Those reforms helped to create an orderly economic climate and they had begun to stimulate progress in banking, transport and shipping services before the arrival of the oil industry. In this respect too Bahrain was ahead of the other Shaikhdoms of the Gulf and it is not surprising that this helped to enhance its regional importance as a centre for transit trade and, later, for air travel. While oil income quickly became the primary source of state and royal revenue the importance of traditional commerce should not be forgotten.

Total Customs Revenue 1925-45

Year	Value
1344 1925-26	Rs. 8,82,894
1345 1926-27	9,62,041
1346 1927-28	10,58,660
1347 1928-29	10,59,445
1930	7,90,107
1931	5,09,000
1932	6,14,594
1933	5,53,393
1934	6,11,890
1935	6,31,779
1936	8,12,417
1937	10,27,154
1938	11,58,547
1939	10,56,532
1940	8,91,721
1941	8,04,089
1942	9,53,420
1943	13,96,500
1944	21,06,806
1945	25,98,098

Source: Director of Customs Annual Reports

Total Value of Cargo Transhipped at Bahrain for the Mainland  
In Selected Years

Year	Value	Duty Collected
1345 July 1926 - June 1927	33,50,900	67,018
1346 July 1927 - June 1928	36,56,350	73,127
1347 June 1928 - May 1929	37,04,800	74,096
1932	21,03,250	42,065
1933	25,39,000	50,780
1934	24,36,500	48,730
1935	42,22,750	84,455
1936	64,71,640	1,19,350
1937	59,02,180	1,08,561
1938	1,23,81,164	2,19,942
1939	56,75,350	1,03,650
1940	51,46,214	92,919
1941	42,23,214	75,230

Source: Director of Customs Annual Reports

Total Trade of Bahrain 1926-39

Year	Imports	Exports
1926	1,86,04,280	88,08,590
1927	1,90,63,505	84,45,940
1928	2,50,79,350	1,20,47,240
1929	2,67,51,467	1,36,94,448
1930	1,60,37,490	92,62,990
1931	1,04,61,880	66,58,340
1932	1,05,82,710	63,99,560
1933	91,94,300	66,78,100
1934	92,03,930	59,53,920
1935	1,20,93,400	91,67,070
1936	1,78,43,760	1,15,46,090
1937	6,31,200 (Sic.) <sup>(a)</sup>	17,25,720 (Sic.) <sup>(a)</sup>
1938	1,56,53,076	88,23,156
1939	1,66,47,330	81,08,960

Source: Annual Customs Reports plus Agency Reports

Export figures above include estimated value of pearls.

(a) Import/Export figures for 1937 are quoted as provided by the Agency Report for that year, despite their apparent lack of accuracy.

From 1940 onwards the Agency Reports do not show Import/Export figures.



Annual Budget Estimates 1345-64

Main Allotments - Expenditure

Year	Allowances to Ruling Family	Public Protection	Public Health	Education	Municipalities	Agriculture	Public Works	Government Depts.	Reserve Fund	Total Expenditure
1345										
1926-27	4,28,664	2,29,600	4,000	36,000	36,000	-	64,000	1,71,500	-	17,72,926
1346										
1927-28	4,69,344	1,89,470	21,500	46,000	48,000	25,000 <sup>2</sup>	1,00,000	1,45,200	2,00,000	14,85,000
1347										
1928-29	4,59,064	1,72,000	22,000	40,000	56,000	-	12,000 <sup>3</sup>	1,52,500	2,50,000	15,31,000
1348										
1929-30	5,15,000	1,70,500	24,000	90,000	56,000	-	35,000 <sup>4</sup>	1,53,500	1,00,000	16,32,576
1349 <sup>5</sup>										
1930-31										
1350										
1931-32	4,26,000	1,32,000	16,416	50,000	24,000	8,000	9,800	1,44,500	-	8,32,516
1351										
1932-33	3,96,183	1,11,742	23,833	36,667	22,000	2,750	5,500	1,19,625	-	7,89,600
1352										
1933-34	3,80,000	1,20,000	25,000	30,000	24,000	1,200	6,000	1,27,300	-	7,25,500
1353										
1934-35	3,80,000	1,20,000	24,000	30,000	24,000	-	6,000	1,37,000	-	7,26,000
1354										
1935-36	4,35,000 <sup>6</sup>	1,27,250	22,500	33,550	26,400	-	6,500	1,43,800	-	8,00,000
1355										
1936-37	5,17,000	1,40,000	25,000	35,000	50,400	-	6,600	1,58,000	-	9,37,000
1356										
1937-38	9,20,000	1,60,000	50,000	60,000	50,000	50,000	3,23,000	1,99,000	3,55,000	22,10,000

Year	Allowances Public to Ruling Family	Public Protection	Public Health	Education	Municipalities	Agriculture	Public Works	Government Depts.	Reserve Fund	Total Expenditure
1357										
1938-39	14,70,000	2,00,000	1,73,000	1,06,500	50,400	21,300	5,68,000	2,93,680 <sup>7</sup>	12,00,000	42,02,000
1358 <sup>8</sup>										
1939-40	15,16,662	2,93,823	1,36,160	84,677	60,807	16,346	6,35,300	2,31,060	10,00,000	36,75,434
1359										
1940-41	14,40,000	3,37,000	1,98,800	1,30,000	60,400	10,000	6,41,000	3,36,750	13,07,950	45,07,000
1360										
1941-43	12,90,000	4,15,000	2,52,200	1,32,300	60,400	16,000	3,86,300	3,38,800	6,09,000	35,64,000
1361										
1942-43	12,92,000	4,00,000 <sup>9</sup>	2,64,000	2,40,000	61,000	15,000	69,000	3,34,000	9,80,000	37,00,000
1362										
1943-44	12,91,000	5,28,000	3,18,000	2,60,000	51,000	25,000	90,000	4,01,000	6,16,000	44,30,000
1363										
1944-45	13,00,000	6,50,000	3,98,000	3,24,000	55,000	25,000	45,600	4,50,000	4,70,000	40,00,000
1364										
1945-46	13,20,000	8,00,000	4,72,000	4,19,000	87,000	30,000	1,95,000	3,03,000	10,00,000	48,00,000

Source: Government of Bahrain, Annual Reports

- 1 Until 1355 called Medical Services, Medical Department in 1356 and from 1357 Public Health.
- 2 Agriculture plus boring of wells.
- 3 Special Projects, Electricity Rs. 1,00,000 and Manamah-Moharraq Road Rs. 2,00,000 (See Main Text).
- 4 See Main Text for Special Projects from 1348 onwards.
- 5 The author could not locate the 1349 Budget estimates. However, see information provided in main text.
- 6 Civil List Rs. 3,80,000 plus Rs. 55,000 Ruler's one-third share of oil royalty. Hereafter the figures shown are for both Civil List and Privy Purse.
- 7 The estimate includes 9,000 rupees earmarked for the Transport Dept. started in 1937. From 1357 Govt. departments were renamed 'Administrative Services'.
- 8 Based on Actual Figures.
- 9 From 1361 onwards Public Protection was renamed 'Defence and Public Protection'.

Chapter Eight

The Background to the Years 1930-1945

The Administration and Bahrain's Relations with Iran

The rise of Persian nationalist sentiment during the 1920s was accompanied by a revival of the Persian claim to Bahrain. In 1928 the Anglo-Iranian negotiations for a general treaty settlement began and reached a deadlock by 1932, the year during which the Imperial Airways route was transferred from the Persian to the Arabian littoral. (See Introduction.)

In 1929 Tehran alleged that the Persians in Bahrain were subjected to maltreatment by the local authorities. This allegation was in fact rooted in the earlier relations between the two countries, a brief account of which will help clarify the matter. In April 1923, the Persian Majlis passed a bill conferring upon Bahrainis the right to send a representative to that assembly.<sup>1</sup> Three months later, the Persian Vice-Consul at Najaf issued a proclamation calling upon Bahrainis in that place to register their names and obtain Persian passports.<sup>2</sup> These attempts by Tehran were calculated to undermine the authority of the Shaikh of Bahrain, to give substance to their claim, and also to challenge the British position there. In rebutting the Persian pretensions in respect of Bahrain, British officials invariably stressed the independent status of the Shaikh, and argued their case on geographical and ethnic evidence, as the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs did in May 1928 in his reply to the Persian protest over Article VI of the Treaty of Jeddah:

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1 L. Oliphant to U.S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1041, No. E 3974/67/91, 20.4.1923.

2 Telegram from Resident to the British Minister, Tehran. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1041, No. 147/711, 18.7.1923.

"... the islands are not part of Persia, nor are the inhabitants of Persian race."<sup>1</sup>

In March 1928, a couple of months before the League of Nations debated the Anglo-Persian controversy over Bahrain, Shaikh Isa deputed the British Government "to defend Bahrain from outside interference and to rebut the claim of the Persian Government to sovereignty over Bahrain Islands".<sup>2</sup> Also, during the year boys from the Persian School paraded through the streets of Manamah with a band and flags singing their national anthem. The local authorities saw the parade as a provocative act tending to create ill-feeling between Persians and Arabs, and they ordered the headmaster of the Persian School to stop such parades, which he did. However, the Persians reported the matter to Tehran<sup>3</sup> and representations were made to the Resident by the Governor of the Persian Gulf ports in Bushire.<sup>4</sup>

The Persian passport regulations of 1928 required all Bahrainis who settled in Iran or those of them travelling to that place to carry Persian travel documents. It was against this action by the Persian authorities that the Administration in Bahrain retaliated by imposing the need for British visas upon Persians travelling to Bahrain. Early in 1929, several Persians were refused entry into Bahrain on account of their failure to obtain visas.<sup>5</sup> Shortly afterwards the Government of Bahrain issued a proclamation that all persons born in Bahrain of foreign parents would, unless registered at the Agency, be considered as Bahrain subjects.<sup>6</sup>

The Persian community in Bahrain comprised both Sunnis and Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs.

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1 The League of Nations Official Journal, No. 5, May 1928, pp. 605-07.

2 Shaikh Isa to the P.A. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1041, 22nd Ramadan 1346 (15.3.1928).

3 A.R.P.A. 1928, op. cit.

4 Barrett to Sir R. Clive. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1045, 8.11.1929.

5 Telegram from Clive to the F.O. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1041, No. 66, 11.2.1929.

6 Government of Bahrain, Proclamation. I.O.R. 15/2/150, No. 1101/17/1347, 17th Ramadan 1347 (27.2.1929).

The former constituted a smaller group but they were the more influential since their ranks included a number of leading merchants, who enjoyed the trust of the Shaikh and the Administration. The latter were numerically superior but wielded very little influence. There were a few well-known merchants amongst them but the majority were small shopkeepers, owners of tea-houses, manual workers and taxi-drivers. The relations of the Persians with the local Arabs were to a large extent influenced by the religious sect to which they belonged in that the Sunni among them maintained closer links with the Ruler and with the Sunni Arabs of Bahrain, the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah similarly showed sympathy with their Arab co-religionists.

A review of the position of the Persians carried out by the Agent in the wake of the allegations that they were maltreated in Bahrain revealed their 'privileged' status. They had representatives on Majlis al-<sup>c</sup>Urf, the Municipalities, and the Police. They were allowed to acquire property, to have their own schools, to conduct trade and to carry out their religious processions during the month of Moharram. The only real grievance which the Persians had was the passport restrictions which caused disruption to their trade, according to the Agent.<sup>1</sup>

In 1930, Tehran protested against the granting of the oil concession by the Shaikh on the ground that Bahrain being Persian territory neither the Shaikh nor His Majesty's Government had any right to grant such a concession.<sup>2</sup> In 1932 the Persian Government again protested to the British Government against the issue of British Indian postage stamps surcharged 'Bahrain', and repeated their protest at the League of Nations.<sup>3</sup> Also, during the same year the Baharnah of Mohammarah sent two petitions

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1 Prior to Barrett. Note on the Persian Communities at Bahrain. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1045, 4.11.1929.

2 Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs to His Majesty's Minister at Tehran. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1045, No. 11650/710-1214, 23.7.1930.

3 Fowle to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P+S/10/1045, No. 784-S, 17.10.1932.

to the Administration in Bahrain complaining that they were being forced to renounce their nationality, threatened with forcible conscription into the Persian army, and made to wear a foreign head-dress.<sup>1</sup> Their ill-treatment earlier in 1929 had produced a rift between the Persians of Bahrain and the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Arabs there to a point where "... the two communities have little in common now".<sup>2</sup> Following the above petitions both Shaikh Hamad and the Adviser agreed to a number of retaliatory measures which were submitted to the Agent for his consideration. These included the exclusion of the Persians of Bahrain from representation on public bodies, subjection of their schools to the control of the Bahrain Department of Education, and a ban on the wearing of the Pahlavi hats in Bahrain.<sup>3</sup> On being acquainted with these measures, the Resident cast doubt over their outcome adding that "All things that are lawful are not expedient".<sup>4</sup>

On 30th March 1933, the Government of Bahrain reissued the proclamation of February 1929, cited earlier, which defined the status of Persians in Bahrain as:

" ... in every way similar to that of other foreigners such as Iraqis, Nejdīs, Omanis, Syrians and other nationalities. The offspring of such foreigners who are born in Bahrain are treated as Bahrain subjects unless they wish to retain the nationality of their fathers in which case they must be registered at His Britannic Majesty's Political Agency."<sup>5</sup>

In March 1934, the Resident informed the Government of India that the Shaikh's subjects in Iran were being subjected to threats of conscription into the Persian army, their passports were confiscated by

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1 Translation of a letter from Shaikh Ali bin Hasan al-Mousa of Sanābis, to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/486, 3rd Jamadi II, 1351 (3.10.1932).

2 A.R.P.A. 1929, op. cit.

3 Belgrave to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. 579-9A, 8.10.1932.

4 Fowle to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. 842-S, 3.11.1932.

5 Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/150, No. C/92, 17.5.1933.

the Persian authorities and that they were forced to accept Persian nationality. He estimated their numbers at 8,000 resident in the Ahwaz consular district which included Mohammarah. About 2,300 of them owned agricultural property, of the rest 5,700, who did not own property, 1,700 lived in Mohammarah and about 4,000 in Gusbah and adjoining suburbs. The property owners among them were regarded as Persian subjects under the Persian law, and these were not entitled to British protection, but the rest were entitled to it. The Resident mentioned the futility of earlier protests to persuade the Persian Government to alter its policies towards the Bahrainis and that reprisals against that Government had resulted in even harsher measures applied against them. He concluded:

" ... I must point out that the benevolent rule of His Excellency Shaikh Hamad under which Persians flourish in Bahrain, and the brutal treatment which is meted out to His Excellency's subjects in Persia (for the protection of whom His Majesty's Government are partly responsible), form a glaring contrast to which H.E. Shaikh Hamad has not infrequently referred, and which has an adverse effect on our prestige along the Arab littoral."<sup>1</sup>

The ill-treatment of Bahrainis in Persia formed the substance of a subsequent letter of April 1934 from the Government of India to the Under Secretary of State for India. In it, the Government underlined the difficulties they were facing in persuading the Persians to accept the 'separate existence of Bahrain nationality'. Only the signing of a general treaty with Iran, they believed, could bring about such an admission which in the political climate then prevailing was difficult to achieve. Finally, they concurred with the British Minister at Tehran that apart from protests nothing much could be done.<sup>2</sup>

During November of the year, i.e. 1934, the Resident told the

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1 Fowle to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. 2-T, 20.3.1934.

2 F.S.G.I. to U.S.S.I. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. F 101-N/34, 7.4.1934.

Government that the sort of reprisals he favoured for adoption against the Persians of Bahrain were those "that could be turned on and off at will". These he specified as prohibition of ownership of land in Bahrain by Persians, ordering those of them who own land there to acquire Bahrain nationality within a period of two years or else to dispose of their property if they did not wish to become Bahrain subjects. These measures were identical to those adopted earlier by the Persian Government which prohibited foreign nationals from ownership of land in Persia. Should the Persians decide to ease their ill-treatment of Bahrainis, the Administration in Bahrain would then reciprocate in a like manner by slackening the measures adopted against the Persians, he wrote. He admitted that what was happening to Bahrainis in Persia was embarrassing to the British Government and harming the Shaikh. His Majesty's Government could do very little about Bahrainis who owned landed property in Persia by reason of the Persian Nationality Law (P.N.L.). It could act only on behalf of those Bahrainis who were born in Bahrain and did not own property in Persia but were employed there in casual occupations like shopkeepers, coolies, etc.<sup>1</sup>

In August 1935, the India Office wrote to the Foreign Office admitting that nothing effective could be done with regard to Bahrainis who had acquired Persian nationality by virtue of the P.N.L. Nonetheless, they wished to protest in cases of ill-treatment of Bahrainis born in Bahrain and who did not own land in Persia and who were therefore not affected by the P.N.L. This they wanted to do in order "to avoid the appearance of acquiescing in the Persian claim to Bahrain".<sup>2</sup>

Finally, in May 1937, the Government of Bahrain issued two separate notices signed by Shaikh Hamad promulgating the Law Regarding Ownership of

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1 T.C. Fowle to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. 308-C, 17.11.1934.

2 M.J. Clauson, I.O., to H.L. Baggallay, F.O. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. PZ3431/35, 12.8.1935.

Immovable Property by Foreigners, and the Bahrain Nationality Law.

Article One of the Property Law prohibited foreigners "whose governments banned in their respective territories the ownership of immovable property by persons other than their own nationals", from owning such property in Bahrain. This was a clear reference to the Iranian government. In Article Two of the Law, the government of Bahrain pledged to notify foreign governments whose nationals would be affected by the above prohibition. On receipt of such a notification, a foreign national was required to provide the District Court, i.e. the Political Agent's Court, with a list of the immovable property which he owned not later than three months from the date of his notification. The law also stipulated the appointment of assessors both by the government and by the owner so that they jointly assessed the value of the property and reported to the District Court, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The Bahrain Nationality Law consisted of five articles. Article Two specified the persons who under the Law were considered Bahrain nationals, viz. (a) all persons born in Bahrain before or after the issue of the said Law, (b) persons born abroad before or after the issue of the said Law whose fathers or paternal grandfathers were born in Bahrain.

Article Three defined persons who were not to be considered Bahrain nationals, viz. a person born in Bahrain whose father registered him as a foreign subject within two years of his birth, and also a child who on attaining the age of 18 registered himself as a foreign subject.

Article Three dealt with loss of Bahrain nationality by persons who already possessed it, either through acquisition of the nationality of another state or through an order by the Ruler of Bahrain cancelling

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Bahrain Notice: Law Regarding Ownership of Immovable Property in Bahrain by Foreigners. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. 19/1356, 8.5.1937.

their Bahrain nationality. According to Article Four a woman married to a Bahrain national was eligible for Bahrain nationality, and a woman of Bahrain nationality married to a foreigner would have lost it on acquiring the nationality of her husband. Finally, Article Five gave the Ruler the right to grant or cancel Bahrain nationality on certain grounds.<sup>1</sup>

On 1st November 1937, the Iranian government was notified about her nationals in Bahrain to whom the rulings of the Property Law applied. On 16th January 1938, the Adviser issued a proclamation reminding Iranians resident in Bahrain to submit lists of their immovable property to the District Court.<sup>2</sup> Only one Persian national had submitted such a list, the majority did not, believing that the Property Law was a bluff by the Bahrain government to persuade Persians to acquire Bahrain nationality. A major gap in the Law was that it did not provide for penalties for failure to abide by its rulings.

During July 1938, an amendment was made to the Property Law which read:

"If a foreigner to whom the provisions of Article (3) apply fails to submit a list of his property as required by Article (4), the Bahrain Government may apply to the District Court for the valuation of the property with a view to its compulsory acquisition. In this case the District Court shall give notice to the owner of the property, who shall be permitted to appear and shall then determine the valuation of the property ..."<sup>3</sup>

Although Shaikh Hamad set his seal on the Amending Law on 29th September 1938, its publication was delayed for some time.<sup>4</sup> In October

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- 1 Government of Bahrain Notice: Bahrain Nationality Law. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. 20/1356, 8.5.1937.
  - 2 Bahrain Government, Land Department. I.O.R. 15/2/151, Notification No. 957/2, 14th Dhul Qa<sup>c</sup>da 1356 (16.1.1938).
  - 3 H. Weightman to Acting Adviser to the Bahrain Government. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. C/483-1.a/24, 27.7.1938.
  - 4 Government of Bahrain Notice. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. 1357, 4th Sha<sup>c</sup>ban 1357 (29.9.1938).

of the year the Adviser informed the Agent that Persian parents were applying to the Land Department for registration of gifts of immovable property in the name of their children. In this way they were dodging the Law and were retaining the property instead of selling it. Under the Shara<sup>c</sup> Law only parents administered the property of minors and therefore continued to benefit from them as before. According to the Nationality Law a minor born in Bahrain of Persian parents had the option of adopting Bahrain nationality on coming of age. The Adviser suggested that the property of these minors who might in the future become Bahrain or Iranian subjects should be placed under the administration of the Government's Minors Department which was controlled by a Majlis, headed by Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifah.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly afterwards, the Agent communicated with the Adviser reminding him that such practices by Persian parents could not be prevented legally, and drew his attention to:

" ... a child born in Bahrain of Persian parents is from birth a Bahrain subject and there is no question of his adopting Bahrain nationality later on. Under the Nationality Law all that can happen, is that the parent can apply to have the child registered as a foreign subject within two years of the birth; or the child himself can, on reaching the age of 18, register as a foreign subject. Otherwise he is and remains a Bahrain subject."<sup>2</sup>

He disagreed with the Adviser's suggestion for the Minors Department to assume control of the property of the minors of Persian parentage unless, he wrote, all minors' property was subjected to the control of the Minors Department.<sup>3</sup>

The issue of the Nationality and Property Laws normalized the position of the Persians in Bahrain and consolidated the position of the

1 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. 782/29/1357, 1st Ramadan 1357 (25.10.1938).

2 P.A. to Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. C/672-1.a/24, 1.11.1938.

3 Ibid.

Government of Bahrain. Many Persians found that it was in their own interest to apply for Bahrain nationality regardless of the fact that in becoming Bahrain subjects they were acknowledging the separate existence of Bahrain nationality, something their government sought to challenge without success.

### Judicial Affairs

The Legal System of Bahrain, excluding the Agency Courts, consisted of the following Courts in 1930:

(1) The Bahrain Court: (See also Chapter Three) In 1927 Shaikh Salman bin Hamad was appointed Magistrate of this Court. He had to adjudicate cases in the presence of the Adviser, his Co-Magistrate on the Bench. The Court heard civil and criminal cases between Bahrain subjects, ranging from land claims, fish-trap rights, water rights, to disputes involving tenants and owners of date-gardens. Thus was Shaikh Salman's judicial experience formed.

Like Shaikh Hamad earlier, Shaikh Salman had no set of codified laws to guide him in his rulings. In 1924 the Resident furnished the Agent with a copy of "The Sudan Civil Justice Ordinance - 1900", which was based on the Indian Civil Code, and which the Resident recommended for use in Shaikh Hamad's Court before it was re-named the Bahrain Court.<sup>1</sup> The Agent found it useful and having subjected it to certain modifications adapted it for use in the Agency and the Joint Courts, both of which relied on Indian Law. But he also stressed the need for simple civil and criminal codes to be written in Arabic and to be based on the Sudan and the Indian Codes for use by the Shaikh and by all the parties concerned. When this Code was ready it was expected to serve as the basis for the

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1 Trevor to Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/133, No. 224-S, 30.3.1924.

Administration of justice in Bahrain.<sup>1</sup> The way the Shaikhs administered justice in the Courts was the subject of this commentary by the Resident:

"The AlKhalifah are uneducated ... and it would be impossible for them to manage affairs without the support given them by the Political Agent or the Adviser. Both Shaikh Hamad and his son, Salman, ... are excellent in dealing with cases demanding local knowledge, but as they themselves confess they would not pass sentences of death or take action against prominent men without the support of their advisers."<sup>2</sup>

(2) The Lower Bahrain Court: was instituted in September 1927 as a subsidiary Civil Court, whose creation was envisaged to alleviate the growing work of the Bahrain Court. When it was first started, Captain Parke and Shaikh Mohammad bin Jabur Al Khalifah, Amīr of Manamah, dealt with cases referred to the Court. In 1930, Shaikh Mubarak bin Hamad Al Khalifah replaced Shaikh Mohammad bin Jabur as joint-magistrate.

(3) The Shara<sup>C</sup> Court: the Qādis, Sunni as well as Shi<sup>C</sup>ah, were appointed to their posts by the Shaikh. The three Sunni Qādis, mentioned earlier, were still in charge of the Shara<sup>C</sup> Court. They opposed Government interference in the affairs of the Sunni Waqfs in 1927 (See Chapter Four) and their relations with the Shaikh's Administration, thereafter, was far from being cordial. Ja<sup>C</sup>fari (i.e. Shi<sup>C</sup>ah) Shara<sup>C</sup> was conducted by two Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qādis, Shaikh Abdullah bin Mohammad Sāleh and Shaikh Ali bin Hasan al-Musa. All personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc., were disposed of by the Qādis. Criminal justice was exclusively administered by secular Courts.

(4) The Majlis al-<sup>C</sup>Urf: (See also Chapter Three) In 1930 it was presided over by Shaikh Rashid bin Mohammad Al Khalifah, father-in-law of Shaikh Hamad. He replaced Shaikh Humūd bin Subāh who had been relieved from the presidency of the Majlis after his trial in 1929, as mentioned earlier. In addition to the Majlis al-<sup>C</sup>Urf, Shaikh Rashid

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1 Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/133, No. 97/9/6, 16.4.1924.

2 Barrett's No. 385-S, August 1929, op. cit.

also presided over the Diving Court.<sup>1</sup>

It emerges from the above account that the Ruling Family had very close control of the legal system of Bahrain, and together with the Ruler's prerogative to issue laws and decrees, their authority was very great even by local Gulf standards.

During the years 1929-30 the supporters of Shaikh Khalaf bin Ahmad al-<sup>c</sup>Usfour, the influential Shi<sup>c</sup>ah <sup>c</sup>Ālim, agitated for his return from Iraq.<sup>2</sup> He had left the country in April 1927 at the request of the Resident. After Daly had left office in September 1926, Shaikh Hamad's relations with the <sup>c</sup>Ālim, who was an admirer of Daly, deteriorated. The Resident's remarks below, made in February 1927, throw light on the whole affair:

"... Shaikh Hamad pretending that the only cause of trouble was the dislike of the Shias for their Qazi, who was dishonest.

In actual fact they were each suspicious of the other and ready to take up any quarrel or intrigue against the other."<sup>3</sup>

As a result of an oversight by the Office of the High Commissioner in Baghdad, Shaikh Khalaf was allowed to return to Bahrain during 1931. His sudden appearance there caused great alarm to the other Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Qadis who dreaded his influence. The Government of Bahrain allowed him to stay provided he kept himself away from the affairs of the country, failing which he was liable for deportation.<sup>4</sup>

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1 A.R.P.A. 1929, 1930, op. cit.

2 Ibid.

3 Colonel Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 86-S, 27.3.1927. In the same letter the Resident added: "Shaikh Khalaf was one of the biggest supporters of Major Daly, and thus while Shaikh Hamad desired me to pull the chestnut out of the fire for him by getting rid of the Qadi, my doing so would give colour to a theory which has been suggested in places that whatever Major Daly did was wrong and that it is a safe game to play to go against his supporters."  
Ibid.

4 A.R.P.A. 1931, op. cit.

Government interference in the religious affairs of the country which had begun in 1927 continued, when in late January 1932 the Administration issued a proclamation which made executors of wills accountable to the Court, and required them to obtain its permission before dealing with the property of a dead person. The aim was to protect the interests of widows and orphans. The new ruling, however, provoked popular opposition in Moharraq, Hedd, and in Manamah the bazaar was shut from 9th-11th February 1932. The three Sunni Qadis sympathized with the opponents of the proclamation. The Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qadis did not oppose its issue. Great embarrassment was caused to the Government by the whole affair and the proclamation was eventually withdrawn.<sup>1</sup>

#### Baharnah Leadership in the 1930s

The 1930s witnessed the emergence of new urban Baharnah leaders who lived in Manamah but some of whom had links with the villages where they commanded a large following. They included a few wealthy and influential landowners who were widely travelled and better informed in religious and secular matters. They had the unequivocal backing of their followers and were determined to pursue their community's rights. They were partly encouraged by the improvement in the position of the Baharnah owing to the administrative reforms of the 1920s. Unlike the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qadis who were paid functionaries of the State, these leaders were not bound by such ties. Their broader outlook and greater political awareness prepared them for closer co-operation with the leading Sunni men of Bahrain as we shall see later on. Below is a brief account of the Baharnah leaders in the mid 1930s by the Adviser:

"Mansour al-Uraiyedh: A pearl merchant and landowner now one of the richest and most influential Shias in Manama. He has travelled much in India and is sensible and broad-minded with rather advanced ideas ...

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1 A.R.P.A. 1932, op. cit.

Abdul Rasuul bin Rajab: ... illiterate old man who ... has some influence among Manama Baharna, he is head of a Matam.

Abd Ali Alewat: A Manama shopkeeper, notorious as an anti-Government agitator ...

Hajji Mohsin al-Tajir: A Similar type to Alewat but better educated and more intelligent. He is an extensive landowner and a man of wealth ...

Ahmad bin Nasr: The headman of the village of Barbar ...

Abdel Aziz bin Hajar of Buri: The headman of Buri, ... a member of Shi<sup>c</sup>a Waqf Committee, a respectable and influential man ...

Ali bin Abbas of Ali: The leader of one of the two factions which exist in Ali, a strong supporter of Shaikh Khalaf (al-<sup>c</sup>Usfour).

Husain al-Madhoubt of Bilad al-Qadim: The headman of the village of Bilad, a landowner and a comparatively wealthy man ..."<sup>1</sup>

During the summer of 1934 the Adviser was on leave and Shaikh Salman alone adjudicated cases in the Bahrain Court. These cases were filed by Al Khalifah landlords against Baharnah tenants of date-gardens who had defaulted on the payment of rents due to the owners. (See: Agriculture, Chapter Seven.) The annual cash from the yield of some gardens was said to have dropped by 50% over the previous years. The income from the sale of dates alone was insufficient to meet full rents. Besides, the tenants complained of the damage caused by the Shaikh's camels which were allowed free pasturage.<sup>2</sup> It was an old problem about which very little had been done in the past. In September 1923 the Resident described the large herds of stray camels as "an economic evil to Bahrain" and the reason for keeping them was " ... some shadowy sentimental notion of maintaining the fiction that the AlKhalifah are Lords of the Desert".<sup>3</sup> He then made a number of suggestions towards controlling the harm caused by the camels

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1 Belgrave to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. C-129, 28.1.1935.

2 Belgrave to Colonel Loch. I.O.R. 15/2/176, number illegible, 12.11.1934.

3 S.G. Knox to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/83, No. 527-S, 24.9.1923.

but these had been forgotten over the years.<sup>1</sup>

On 14th October 1934, the Adviser returned to Bahrain from leave. He investigated the complaints against the Court and ascertained the authenticity of the following claims:

- (1) That the detainees were exposed to harsh treatment and to protracted and unlawful detention.
- (2) No written record was kept of the evidence furnished by witnesses in the cases.
- (3) In certain cases the Court refused to call upon witnesses asked for by the litigants.
- (4) Sentences passed were not based on any recognised civil or criminal codes.<sup>2</sup>

Also in October, one of the Shaikh's camels was found maimed near the Baharnah village of Saar. Two villagers were detained in connection with the incident and tried by Shaikh Salman but their guilt was not proven. Nevertheless, their detention continued and the village was ordered to pay a collective fine of 200 rupees. One of the detainees was in the service of Shaikh Mohammad bin Abdur Rahman Al Khalifah, who lived in Saar and showed his sympathy to the villagers by becoming a Shi<sup>c</sup>ah. His conversion to Shi<sup>c</sup>ism was announced by Shaikh Khalaf al-U<sup>c</sup>sfour before a large gathering at the Friday mosque at <sup>c</sup>Ali.<sup>3</sup>

When the Adviser returned from leave, the Baharnah leaders discussed their political and administrative grievances with him. During the discussions Mohsin al-Tajir was reported to have said: "if our own Government does not help us we know another one which will". This was interpreted by the Adviser to mean either "the Agency", i.e. the British Government, or "the Persian Government".<sup>4</sup>

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1 Ibid.

2 Belgrave's letter of 12.11.1934, op. cit.

3 Belgrave's No. C-129, op. cit.

4 Ibid.

On 30th December 1934, the Baharnah leaders addressed a petition to Shaikh Hamad which contained their complaints and suggested measures of redress:

- "1- Court cases should be dealt with properly in accordance with law, namely, in every judgement passed in a case the section of proper law applied should be quoted so that the judge passing such judgement will not be accused of injustice and that the person against whom a judgement is passed will be satisfied that justice has been administered in his case and that the judge has been impartial. By means of these, the rights of the individuals will be protected.
- 2- As we form the majority of the inhabitants, it is but just that we should be represented on both Majlises - Baladiyah and <sup>c</sup>Urfi - with a proportionate number.
- 3- We request you to do us justice by restoring our rights on the Board of Education of which we have been deprived for many years and have been considered like foreigners although the foreigners have not been deprived, the fact which is contrary to justice and equity."<sup>1</sup>

On 28th January 1935, the Baharnah leaders held a meeting at Mātam<sup>2</sup> Madan in Manamah. Prior to the meeting <sup>c</sup>Ali bin Mansour of Abū Saibi<sup>c</sup> village, who was a member of the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Waqf Department and brother-in-law of Mohsin al-Tajir, had called upon the villagers to attend the meeting which was intended to discuss, inter alia, the employment of the Baharnah villagers by the Oil Company since many amongst them were jobless. On the day of the meeting a large crowd came from Manamah and the villages including the leaders: Mansour al-<sup>c</sup>Uraiyeedh, Mohsin al-Tajir, <sup>c</sup>Abd <sup>c</sup>Ali al-<sup>c</sup>Ulaiwat, 'Abd-ur Rasoul bin Rajab, and Saiyed Mustafa bin Saiyed Ahmad <sup>c</sup>Alawi, head of the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Waqf Department. During this meeting names of the unemployed parsons were taken down on lists with a view to pressing their case with the Government of Bahrain. According to the Adviser, the meeting also demonstrated the unity of the people and

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1 Translation of a letter dated 23rd Ramadan 1353 (30.12.1934) from eight Baharnah leaders to H.E. Shaikh Sir Hamad bin Isa AlKhalifah, K.C.I.E, C.S.I., Ruler of Bahrain. F.O. 371:18920.

2 A Mātam is a religious Shi<sup>c</sup>ah institution maintained by endowments, and is used as a place of gathering both for religious mourning and for secular occasions. See also definition provided in Chapter One.

their leaders.<sup>1</sup>

On the following day, one month after the presentation of the petition, Shaikh Hamad replied to the eight leaders. Concerning their demand for a standard code for use in the Court, the Shaikh wrote:

"For this purpose we will appoint a committee to examine our previous proclamations and suggest, after consideration and consultation suitable punishments which will be appropriate for all forbidden things. After completing this we will publish our proclamations in a book and this will be the local law. At the same time we will examine some codes which exist in other Moslem countries and we will adopt a criminal and civil code for cases which are not sent to the Shara<sup>c</sup> Courts. But I would remind you that this matter is of great importance and requires hard work and much consideration nor can it be undertaken lightly or completed in a short time."<sup>2</sup>

With regard to their demand for greater representation on the Municipal Councils, Shaikh Hamad asked them to wait until the next elections. And as to their contention that there were more foreigners on Majlis al-Tijarah than their kind, the Shaikh argued that foreigners possessed knowledge of commerce which the Baharnah did not have, and which was essential to the work of both the Agency and the Local Courts. As regards the opening of schools in their villages, the Shaikh promised to open more schools when the State's finances improved.<sup>3</sup>

It was evident that apart from the formation of a Committee to supervise the codification process, nothing much was promised to the Leaders. The Shaikh's real message, as the letter showed, was that he was determined not to bow to political pressures. On the evening of 29th January the leaders: Mansour al-<sup>c</sup>Uraiyyedh, <sup>c</sup>Abd <sup>c</sup>Ali al-<sup>c</sup>Ulaiwat, <sup>c</sup>Abd 'Ali al-Jishi, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Rasoul bin Rajab and Mohsin Al-Tajir met in Matam Bin Rajab to discuss Shaikh Hamad's reply. They asserted their conviction as to the legitimacy of their demands and were unanimous about

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1 Adviser to Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/176, 29.1.1935.

2 Letter from H.E. Shaikh Sir Hamad bin Isa AlKhalifah, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Ruler of Bahrain to the Eight Baharnah Leaders. F.O. 371:18920, 29.1.1935.

3 Ibid.

pursuing their case with the Government of Bahrain. During this gathering both Mohsin al-Tajir and <sup>C</sup>Abd <sup>C</sup>Ali al-<sup>C</sup>Ulaiwāt advocated the adoption of "all measures which will bring force to bear upon the Government".<sup>1</sup>

At their own request, the four Manamah leaders met the Adviser on 30th January, 1935. They complained to him about the Administration's inadequate response to their fair grievances, and threatened to publicize them through their friends in The Times of India. They said it was their support for Shaikh Hamad which ensured the Rulership to him and prevented Shaikh Abdullah from supplanting him. They argued that their community had made sufficient progress in recent times and was, therefore, eligible for a greater share in the affairs of Bahrain. They wanted the Government and the Oil Company to employ greater numbers of Baharnah than they did at that time.<sup>2</sup>

On 31st January, Shaikh Hamad met the four leaders, who put to him a set of new demands. They asked that the Baharnah should be allowed to form the majority of the members on the Committee to draw up the proposed Code. That a census should be conducted; that members of Majlis al-Tijarah should be elected instead of appointed; that a third Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qadi should be appointed; that Ibrahim al-<sup>C</sup>Umiyedh, a nephew of Mansour al-<sup>C</sup>Uraiyedh should be made headmaster of the Manamah Boys' School, and that Abdul Karim<sup>3</sup>, son of the late Haji Salman, should be made head of the Police. The interview terminated with Shaikh Hamad reminding the leaders that as Ruler of Bahrain he was not to be told how to set about his duties, and warning them that he would hold them responsible for any disruptive

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1 Adviser to Agent, 29.1.1935, op. cit.

2 Belgrave to Loch. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. C-130, 4.2.1935.

3 Abdul Karim first received training with Karachi Police in 1936, and again at the Police Training School in Nasik from where he returned in 1940 to become Sub-Inspector of Police in Bahrain. A.R.P.A. 1936, 1940, op. cit.

action that their community might contemplate such as the closure of the Manamah bazaar.<sup>1</sup>

On February 1st, the Agent granted the leaders a brief interview during which he told them that the matter concerned the Ruler alone who was attending to their presentations. He also reminded them that their community's agitations were 'unconstitutional' and therefore merited no support from His Majesty's Government. Like Shaikh Hamad before him, he held them personally responsible for the actions of their followers. The meeting drew to an end when the Agent uttered the Arabic word "markhusīn", i.e. you may leave.<sup>2</sup>

In his exchanges with the Agent, the Adviser admitted that most of the Baharnah demands were sensible except one for 'proportionate representation' on various councils, which he believed to be a 'dangerous' precedent. He concurred in their view that foreigners had more representatives on the Municipal Council than the Baharnah because there were four Persians and only three Baharnah members on that Council. Out of a total of twenty-two members on Majlis al-Tijarah, only three were Baharnah. They had no representation whatsoever on the Education Council, and that other than Suq al-Khamīs and the Manamah Ja<sup>c</sup>fariyah School, which were funded by the Baharnah community, no other State schools were built in their villages.<sup>3</sup>

Reporting the matter to the Resident, the Agent wrote:

"The ill-feeling between the Baharnah and the AlKhalifah has, however, again become acute owing to a series of incidents in the past year: the conversion of one of the AlKhalifah to the Shi<sup>c</sup>i faith, date garden troubles due to the fall in prices which has seriously affected the tenancy system in vogue, a feeling that they are not sufficiently provided with educational facilities, the depredations caused by camels belonging to the Shaikh, alleged unfair judgments by Shaikh Salman bin Hamad in the

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1 Adviser's No. C-130, op. cit.

2 Address by P.A. Bahrain to the Eight Leaders of the Baharnah. F.O. 371: 18920, 1.2.1935.

3 Adviser's No. C-130, op. cit.

Bahrain Court<sup>1</sup> and other smaller matters.

The improvement in their position and the impact of modern ideas in Bahrain has rendered the Baharinah less ready to accept their lot and has given them aspirations, some of which are understandable and reasonable, but has also, unfortunately, caused them to make political demands of an extravagant nature and by intemperate methods.

... ..

Though some of their demands were reasonable, others were extravagant and foolish, and the leaders showed themselves ignorant, boorish and lacking in any sense of proportion ...

I would conclude by saying that I have sympathy with the country Baharinah, and with the ordinary townsman, and I believe that His Excellency Shaikh Sir Hamad is ready to improve their position ... .., but it is quite impossible in a place like Bahrain to tolerate threats of violence or agitation. At the same time the nature of some of the demands which have been submitted and the fact that certain Arabs have been talking of counter-demands show that the disruptive political tendencies of the present times are at work even in Bahrain. It will not be easy for AlKhalifah to maintain their tribal form of rule, but it is in many respects well suited to the Island and measures are gradually being taken to adapt it to the complicated and changing circumstances of the Bahrain of to-day."<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime, the Agent explained to the Shaikhs, Hamad and Abdullah, that the common people all over the world were demanding a share in their own Government, and that the trouble in Bahrain was not confined to the Baharnah. Criticisms had already been voiced by Sunni Arabs of Moharraq with regard to school-standards and the Oil Company's employment policy. (Adviser's No. C-130, op. cit.) He urged the Shaikhs to consider the claims put to them by their subjects. As a result of this advice, Shaikh Hamad agreed to form a Committee to deal with the Code, and to increase the number of the Baharnah representatives on the Manamah Municipality from three to six, i.e. on a par with the Sunni Arabs.<sup>3</sup>

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1 The A.R.P.A. for 1930 contained a commentary which vouches for Shaikh Salman's judicial probity: "Shaikh Salman was Joint Judge in the Bahrain Court. Allegations are occasionally heard against him but the Adviser has a high opinion of his integrity." op. cit.

2 Loch to Fowle. F.O. 371: 18920, No. C/112-1.b/5, 18.2.1935.

3 Loch to Fowle. F.O. 371: 18920, No. C-160, 6.3.1935.

On 9th March 1935 the Administration announced the formation of a committee to supervise the collation of all previous laws issued by the Government. Its members, appointed by the Shaikh, were: Shaikh Salman bin Hamad, Yusuf bin Ahmad Kanoo, Hajji Mansour al-<sup>C</sup>Uraiyedh, who was now in India and whose inclusion in the Committee was calculated to appease the Baharnah. Two more members were to have been added to the same, should this become necessary in the future.<sup>1</sup>

In a major despatch to the Government of India, dated 18th March and entitled: the Baharinah in Bahrain, the Resident discussed the issues raised by them earlier. He began by calling the Baharnah the

"original inhabitants ... are Shi<sup>C</sup>ah, and are looked down on by the AlKhalifah ... who have in the past oppressed them. Since the abdication of the last Shaikh their position has much improved owing to our influence and the tolerance of the present Ruler.

There has never been any attempt at a census of the Baharain population, but it is believed to be some 120,000 or more. Of this the AlKhalifah family number perhaps two hundred. The other elements according to a very rough estimate, which is all that is possible, might be as follows. Arab Sunnis 20% of the total population and foreigners 20% of whom most are Nejdīs and other Arabs, but some of whom are Persian Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs, Baharinah 60%. Whatever amount of guess work there may be in this computation it is agreed that the Baharinah number well over half of the total inhabitants."<sup>2</sup>

He then assured the Government of India that the Baharnah were better treated now than they had ever been in the past and he attributed their new aspirations to the idea of self-government which, he said, prevailed over the countries of the Middle East and India with whom Bahrain had close connections. Commenting upon their demand for reform of the native courts, he observed:

"The Lower Court is presided over by one of the AlKhalifah family, as is the District Court. The Baharinah complain that this being so they do not get justice from these Courts, that in civil cases where Baharinah and (Sunni) Arabs are concerned awards are given against the former, and that in criminal cases much severer punishments are meted out to convicted Baharinah than to Arabs.

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1 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. 1038-6A, 9.3.1935.

2 Resident to F.S.G.I. F.O. 371:18920, No. C-43, 18.3.1935.

Colonel Loch informs me that in his opinion these complaints are not without foundation."<sup>1</sup>

The Adviser's attendance in the Bahrain Court as Co-Judge with the Shaikh was, in the Resident's view, beneficial to ensuring the administration of justice. Nevertheless, he believed the practice was 'definitely undesirable' from administrative and political points of view. Belgrave was already responsible for the financial affairs of Bahrain in addition to commanding the Police Force. Furthermore, he wrote:

"From the political point of view it is undesirable that we should be associated in public opinion with a measure of interference in, and responsibility for, Bahrain internal affairs, as is implied by there being a British official (even though not in our service) as Judge. It is not our business in Bahrain to administer justice for the Bahrain Government, but to induce and teach the latter to administer justice themselves, and it is a reflection on the judicial system of that Government that justice can only be achieved by the placing of a foreigner on the Bench."<sup>2</sup>

The Resident went on to discuss the Baharnah demand for drawing up a Code for use in the Court, and greater representation for them on various Councils. He concluded his letter by proposing to the Government to "have a serious talk with the Shaikh" on the following lines:

"That however well adapted purely autocratic methods may have been to conditions in the past, times have now changed and governments must now depend, to a large extent, on the public opinion of the majority of their subjects. That the majority of His Excellency's subjects are Baharinah ... His Majesty's Government ... wish, however, to bring the following general considerations to the notice of His Excellency. Should the legitimate aspirations of the Baharinah not be fulfilled, (an eventuality which His Majesty's Government naturally do not anticipate) and should trouble occur, His Excellency can hardly look to His Majesty's Government, who ... are about to give self-government to India, for sympathy ...

I think a frank homily on the above lines ... will have a good effect. Shaikh Sir Hamad bin <sup>C</sup>Isa al Khalifah himself is a kindly and tolerant man, ... .., so I gather from what I have seen of him, to appreciate the fact that "it is better to march with the times than to be dragged along in the procession".

It will be observed that the general lines of my suggested message to Shaikh Sir Hamad follow, what I understand to be ... those which the Government of India have adopted as their policy of

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

recent years in India: on the one hand to meet legitimate demands for self-government and on the other to suppress factitious and dangerous agitation ...

I should be glad to be informed ... whether the Government of India approve in general of my views ..."<sup>1</sup>

Replying to the Resident's above letter, the Government of India cautioned:

" ... there is much in the administration of Bahrain that is susceptible of improvement, they consider it desirable to proceed with caution in the matter of giving advice to the Shaikh of Bahrain in the constitutional, as opposed to the purely administrative, sphere."<sup>2</sup>

They voiced concern about miscarriage of justice in the Court and expressed the view "that the ruling family still have much to learn in the matter of judicial probity". For this very reason, they were unwilling, they wrote, to do away with the Adviser's presence on the Bahrain Court, despite his diverse duties. They believed that the introduction of a Civil Code might create needless complications for a "simple community" whose commercial relations with foreigners were conducted by the Agency Courts. They were in favour of the introduction of a simple criminal Code based on the Indian Penal Code, such as the Sudan Code, which they cited as an example. They were also in favour of increased Baharnah representation on various Councils along lines suggested to the Baharnah by the Shaikh. With regard to new schools for Baharnah villages, they recommended the expansion of existing private or mosque schools. They concluded by reiterating their initial cautionary remark:

"Government of India feel that no representations should be addressed to the Shaikh suggesting the introduction of popular institutions of a democratic nature, or carrying the implication that the support of Government to the ruling family will depend on the degree in which the Ruler meets the aspirations of the Baharinah ... .. for the introduction of popular or self-governing institutions."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Ibid.

2 O.K. Caroe, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, to the Resident. F.O. 371: 18920, No. F230-N/35, 6.11.1935.

3 Ibid.

As the above account showed, British involvement in the Administration of Bahrain had not abated, despite the Agent's assertions to the Baharnah leaders in 1934 that their grievances concerned the Ruler alone. British Officials in Bushire and Bahrain were directly involved in the Administration's decision to form a Committee to deal with the Code and in selecting its members. Even Belgrave's exclusion from the membership of the Committee was a calculated step, which would not prevent him from "assisting the Committee with his experience from behind the scenes".<sup>1</sup> The pretension that the matter concerned the Shaikh alone was far from being the case.

During the 1920s, Major Daly interested himself in almost every decision of the Shaikh's Administration, and he believed that what he was doing was right. During the 1930s, British involvement in the affairs of Bahrain did not diminish, but was less direct. The Government of India's attitude to the problems of Bahrain showed little real sense of direction or purpose. The solutions they prescribed to those problems, as suggested in their despatch of 6th November 1935, showed that they were far removed from the problems of the people of Bahrain. Whereas the people were asking for modern schools for their villages, the Government was prescribing the developing of Waqf and mosque schools. Besides, they had little to offer in the way of judicial reforms. They failed to understand the transformations that had taken place since the administrative reforms of the 1920s. There was a big gap between the attitude of the Government representatives and that of the Government itself. Both the Resident and the Agent were in favour of a gradual move towards some form of representative government, to which suggestion the Government was diametrically opposed.

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1 No. C-43, op. cit.

On the other hand the Shaikhs, who almost always acted on British advice, were dissociated from the spirit of the age. Their outlook and approach remained as it was in earlier decades, despite the centralization process, the creation of a bureaucracy and the social and political realities which had emerged as a result. Although reforms were implemented under Shaikh Hamad, he was too slow to grasp their implications.

The Government of India had no fixed long-term policies for Bahrain. They acted and reacted on the spur of the moment. They treated each incident or crisis more or less as it happened. Sometimes they bided their time and at others evaded the serious issues of the country. As a result, domestic pressures built up and they emerged in the shape of joint-demands from both Sunnis and Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs.

#### Agitations for Reforms - 1938

The second half of the 1930s witnessed the emergence of clubs which acted as the focus of various social and cultural activities. These were not new to Bahrain for in 1920 there existed a club in Manamah called Nādi Iqbāl Awāl, some of whose members contributed articles to Rashīd Rida's Almanār. Shortly afterwards al-Nādi al-Adabi was founded in Moharraq. In 1936 the Nādi al-Shabība club was established also in Moharraq and was renamed later on the Bahrain Club. The two most influential clubs of Manamah were the al-Ahli and <sup>c</sup>Uruba, created in 1938 and 1939 respectively. Their founding members, Sunnis as well as Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs, included intellectuals like Abdur Rahman al-Bākīr, Abdul Aziz al-Shamlān, Ibrahim al-<sup>c</sup>Uraiyeḏh, Ibrahim Hasan Kamāl, Ali al-Tajir, Hasan Jawād al-Jish-shi, Taqi Mohammad al-Baharnah, etc.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Ālam al-Kutub, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 506, February 1983.

The spread of schools, cultural clubs, newspapers and radio broadcasts, generated greater social and political awareness. Towards mid-1938 a feeling of resentment against the Administration was brewing beneath the surface. The reason for it was the falling school-standards, inefficient Courts, the rising cost of living<sup>1</sup>, high unemployment, cases of bankruptcy brought about by the decline of the pearl-trade and the shift in the financial base in favour of the Ruling Family.<sup>2</sup> In the absence of legal avenues of communication, grievances were voiced through anonymous articles, and other clandestine ways of communication such as posters and circulars. At this time, i.e. 1938, few people had access to Shaikh Hamad whose health was failing him.

The affairs of Bahrain were now receiving greater publicity from the Arab press than ever before. On 27th July 1938, an Egyptian weekly noted that the British base at Jufair contained both naval and aerodrome facilities built and financed by the Bahrain Government.<sup>3</sup> On September 14th of that year, the same magazine published another article entitled: 'Gloomy Despair in Bahrain', which was signed: "an Arab". Belgrave suspected certain Bahrainis<sup>4</sup> of the authorship of that article which, inter alia, was critical of foreign intervention in the affairs of

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- 1 The A.R.P.A. for 1938 offers this explanation: "The European crisis caused great anxiety in the town. Profiteering began at once and there was a 20-25% increase in the prices of some food-stuffs, notably tea, sugar and coffee". op.cit.
  - 2 To that effect, the Agent wrote: "The centre of wealth has passed from the one time powerful merchants to the AlKhalifah family, bankrupt merchants are aggrieved because they cannot obtain large loans from Government and lavish and wasteful expenditure by some of the Ruling family arouses resentment". P.A. to P.R. I.O.R. 15/3/343, No. C/704-1.b/5, 19.11.1938.
  - 3 Al-Rābitah al-<sup>C</sup>Arabiyah, The Arab Bond, Cairo. I.O.R. 15/1/344, 27.7.1938.
  - 4 These were: "Abdullah al-Zāyed, proprietor of Bahrain Printing Press; Ibrahim al-<sup>C</sup>Uraiyeedh, Petroleum Concessions Limited's (P.C.L.) Interpreter; Hajji Mohammad al-<sup>C</sup>Uraiyeedh, Bahraini merchant; Ali al-Tajir, Mr. Lermite's clerk, P.C.L.; Mohammad Duwaigher, Superintendent Minor Estate's Department; Saiyed Mahmoud <sup>C</sup>Alawi, Adviser's Head Clerk; Mohammad Saleh Chirawi, an employee of BAPCO". Note by the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/176.

Bahrain, and cited the Customs, trade, the Eastern Bank, Education and Justice as areas under foreign control. The article blamed the sad affairs of Bahrain on the Adviser, and urged the people to follow the example of the Arab World in pursuit of their national interests. It concluded by calling upon the people of Bahrain to press for the formation of a legislative Assembly consisting of 20 members, to be presided over by Shaikh Salman and accountable only to Shaikh Hamad, the Ruler.<sup>1</sup>

The call for reforms in the administration of Bahrain was partly motivated by the Reform Movement in Kuwait, and to a lesser extent by that in Dubai, both in 1938.<sup>2</sup> Also at this time, Shaikh Hamad's health was causing serious concern and the question of succession about which no definite decision had yet been made occupied the mind of Shaikh Salman, the Heir Apparent. Shaikh Hamad sought medical treatment in Kashmir, in the company of Dr. R. Holmes, the Agency surgeon. During his absence from Bahrain, 31st July - 13th September 1938, a Regency Council which consisted of Shaikh Abdullah, Shaikh Salman and the Adviser, was entrusted with the affairs of the State.

At this juncture, several meetings were reported to have taken place in support of Shaikh Salman's probable accession to the rulership of Bahrain. Yusuf Fakhroo, a well-known merchant, was gathering support for Shaikh Salman both among leading Sunnis and Shi'ahs.<sup>3</sup> Apparently, Shaikh Salman was keen on securing Baharnah support as his father did during Daly's time in 1921-22, when Shaikh Abdullah, Shaikh Hamad's half-

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1 For a translation of the article of 14.9.1938, see I.O.R. 15/1/343.

2 See R.J. Said, 'The 1938 Reform Movement in Dubai', in al-Abhath, Vol. 23 (1970), pp. 264-318. Also, M.G. Rumaihi's Arabic article, 'The 1938 Reform Movements in Kuwait, Bahrain and Dubai', in Journal of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies, Vol. I, No. 4, October 1975, pp. 29-68.

3 Note by the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/176, op. cit.

brother, stood in opposition to Shaikh Hamad's succession to the rulership. Current reports revealed the likelihood of the uncle challenging his nephew.

During August 1938, Baharnah leaders from Manamah, viz. Saiyed Sa<sup>C</sup>eed Saiyed Khalaf, Saiyed Ahmad <sup>C</sup>Alawi, Mohammad Ali al-Tajir and Mohsin al-Tajir, attended a meeting convened in the house of Hajji Ahmad bin Khamis in Sanābis, and they agreed to raise the following matters with the Government: The formation of a Legislative Committee, Reforms in the Police Force, Reforms in the Bahrain Court, Dismissal of the then Inspector of Education, Dismissal of the two Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qadis, Shaikh Ali bin Hasan, and Shaikh Ali bin Ja<sup>C</sup>far, Acceptance of Shaikh Salman's succession to the rulership. However, Hajji Ahmad bin Khamis, the leading man of Sanābis, himself a villager, was opposed to the removal of the two Qadis on account of their influence among the rural Baharnah.<sup>1</sup>

The Adviser was now on leave and when he returned to Bahrain early in October 1938, he called upon the two Qadis and informed them that they were no longer wanted by their people. They went round the villages where they commanded support of the people and organized a petition in support of their stay in office as Qadis.

There followed two more meetings in Mansour al-<sup>C</sup>Uraiye<sup>C</sup>dh's garden, and again in Mātam Saiyed Ahmad <sup>C</sup>Alawi in Manamah. The leading persons<sup>2</sup> who attended them approved the previous decisions and added two more to them, viz., (1) That the nationals of Bahrain should be given preference

1 Ibid.

2 These were: Mansour al-<sup>C</sup>Uraiye<sup>C</sup>dh, Shaikh Baqir bin Ahmad al-<sup>C</sup>Usfour, Mohsin al-Tajir, <sup>C</sup>Abd <sup>C</sup>Ali al-<sup>C</sup>Ulaiwat, Saiyed Sa<sup>C</sup>eed Saiyed Khalaf, Saiyed Ahmad <sup>C</sup>Alawi, Hajji <sup>C</sup>Ali bin Marhoun, Hajji Ahmad bin Sallūm, Abdur Rasoul bin Rajab, Shaikh <sup>C</sup>Abdullah bin Mohammad Ṣaleh - ex Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qādi - who was reported to have influenced Manamah leaders in their decision to get rid of the two village Qadis whom he held responsible for his dismissal from office in August 1935. Further details about the Qadi are provided under the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Shara<sup>C</sup> Court below.

over foreigners in matters of employment with the Oil Company. (2) That members of the Legislative Committee should consist of three Sunnis and three Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs with Shaikh Salman as its President. The dismissal of the two Qadis was not raised in the latter meetings.<sup>1</sup>

Although no official petition had yet been submitted to the Government of Bahrain either by the Sunnis or Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs, political rallying continued. Sunni merchants like Yusuf Fakhroo, Yusuf Kanoo, Khalil Moayyad, and Abdur Rahman Zaiyani approached the Sunni Qadis asking them to take up the case of reforms with the Government in respect of the Police, the Courts and the imposition of stricter restrictions on the sale of liquors, etc.<sup>2</sup> During October 1938, political literature in the form of hand-written posters which contained messages to the people were found in Manamah and Moharraq and some were pasted in Government Offices. These were attributed to a nascent Youth Movement whose members were identified as junior clerks and students.<sup>3</sup>

While agitations for reforms were in progress, the Government of Bahrain decided to concede to the Baharnah their demand for reform of the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Shara<sup>c</sup> Court, closed since June 1938 after criticisms were levelled by the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah community against the Qadis and the Court clerk. The concession was made in order to appease the Baharnah, and more importantly to win them over to the side of the Government and to foil any attempt by Sunnis and Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs to forge joint demands. The Government Notice of 31st October announced the reorganization of the Shi<sup>c</sup>a Shara<sup>c</sup> Court on the following lines:

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Persons like Ali bin Abdullah Abol, Ibrahim Jodar, Ali bin Khalifah al-Fadhil, Mohammad al-Fadhil, were reported to be the organizers of the Movement. See Adviser's Notes in: I.O.R. 15/2/176.

"The Public are informed that with effect from 8th Ramadan 1357 (1.11.1938) the Shi<sup>c</sup>a Shara<sup>c</sup> Court will be opened. It has been decided that the following persons will be the Qadis:

Shaikh Baqir al-<sup>c</sup>Usfour, Shaikh Ali bin Hasan and Shaikh Mohammad al-<sup>c</sup>Qari. They will be on probation for nine months during which the Government will see if they are capable and just, and if they are, they will be confirmed."<sup>1</sup>

Both Shaikh Ali bin Ja<sup>c</sup>far, the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Qadi and the Court Clerk, whose removal from office was earlier requested by the Manamah leaders, were dismissed. Shaikh Abdul Husain al-Hilli, a qualified Qadi recently obtained from Iraq, was appointed as Appeal Judge on the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Shara<sup>c</sup> Court.<sup>2</sup> These measures were warmly received by the Manamah leaders who conveyed to the Administration their community's satisfaction, but they objected to the conditions imposed upon the Qadis and regarded them as unprecedented interference in religious affairs.<sup>3</sup> They now demanded reform of the Bahrain Court by which they meant the introduction of trained Magistrates and a Code for use in the Court, employment of a greater number of Baharnah in Government and Oil Company posts. They avoided any mention of the Legislative Council, and this was taken by the Adviser to mean that the Baharnah were pacified.<sup>4</sup>

On 5th November 1938 the Government arrested Sa<sup>c</sup>ad Shamlān and Ahmad Chirawi and accused them of fomenting trouble. The following day the Youth Movement ordered BAPCO's Bahraini workers to go on strike. Pickets were posted in Manamah to dissuade workers from reporting to work. The workers obeyed the call and the strike paralyzed the Company's operations. (See also Chapter Seven, under Oil.) Further arrests were made and in Manamah the Movement's supporters assembled in the Friday Mosque and

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1 Government of Bahrain Notice No. 29/57. I.O.R. 15/2/176, 7 Ramadan 1357 (31.10.1938).

2 P.A. to P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. C/680-1.b/5, 5/11.1938.

3 Note from the Adviser to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/176, no number, 3.11.1938.

4 Ibid.

demanded an audience with the P.A. They organized themselves in a large demonstration which proceeded to the bazaar in Manamah and closed the shops there. The Police broke up the demonstration, some casualties were reported, and Ibrahim Kamāl and Khalifah al-Fādhil, the latter was one of the leaders of the Movement, were arrested.<sup>1</sup> Following the arrests, the Government of Bahrain issued a Notice calling upon the people to open their shops and to carry on business as usual, promising them Police protection against: "interference by crowds of irresponsible persons".<sup>2</sup> Meantime, attempts by the demonstrators to persuade either the divers from Moharraq or the Baharnah of Manamah to join in the demonstrations failed to materialize as the Baharnah leaders restrained their followers at the request of the Administration.<sup>3</sup>

On November 8th, peace was finally restored to Manamah and to the Oil Company, but on the following day circulars were distributed by "The National Youth" which contained certain demands: release of those arrested, formation of Councils to oversee reform of Education and Courts and the creation of a Labour Union.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the troubles, the absence of a legal channel of communication between the people and the Government posed a serious problem. Had it existed, it would have provided some form of an outlet for the people's genuine grievances. On 12th November of the year, five merchants, two Sunnis and three Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs, acting as mediators between the people and the Government, submitted a memorandum on behalf of the

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- 1 Ali was convicted of sedition and was jailed for one year in Bahrain. Later on, he was released at the intercession of Ibn Saud and was allowed to stay in Kuwait. See Residency Memorandum, I.O.R. 15/1/344, No. 296-S, 13.5.1941.
  - 2 Government of Bahrain Notice. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. 31/1357, 6.11.1938.
  - 3 P.A. to P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. C/691-1.b/5, 12.11.1938.
  - 4 Translation of a circular signed: The National Youth. I.O.R. 15/2/176, 16th Ramadan 1357 (9.11.1938).

people which contained a number of demands:<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Education: Appointment of a Committee of eight persons, four Sunnis and four Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs, to supervise educational reform.
- 2 Courts: Replacement of present magistrates by a bench of three judges, two from the public, one Sunni, one Shi<sup>c</sup>ah, and a third to be appointed by the Government. Creation of a criminal court whose judge was envisaged to be a qualified national of Iraq.
- 3 Labour Committee: Creation of a recognized body to look after the interests of the Labourers.
- 4 Municipalities: Replacement of foreign employees of the Municipality by nationals of Bahrain.<sup>2</sup>
- 5 Selection of six persons, half Sunnis half Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs, to represent the people.<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after the submission of the above memorandum the tribal groups from Hedd sent a letter to Shaikh Hamad which read:

"We, the undersigned, inform your Highness that we heard that certain demands have been put forward to you but we do not know anything about this nor has it been sent with our approval. We inform you that we do not acknowledge those who put forward these demands as our leaders. We are satisfied with our Ruler and our Government ..."<sup>4</sup>

On December 13th, the Youth Movement issued a circular calling upon the 'free youth of Bahrain' to renounce sectarianism and to work for national unity.<sup>5</sup> In January 1939, deputations of rural Baharna submitted

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- 1 Agent's No. C/704-1.b/5, *op. cit.* The five merchants were: Yusuf Fakhroo, Mansour al-Uraiyyedh, Mohsin al-Tajir, Saiyed Sa<sup>c</sup>eed Saiyed Khalaf, Isa bin Saleh Hindi: The latter left the group later on.
  - 2 About the Municipalities Belgrave wrote: "Complaints against the Municipalities originate entirely from the Baharna who consider that more of them should be employed on the staff of the Manama Municipality". Belgrave: Report on Causes and Objects of Recent Agitation. I.O.R. 15/2/176, 22.11.1938.
  - 3 Translation of a Memorandum containing demands submitted to H.H. Shaikh Sir Hamad ALKhalifah, by five merchants of Bahrain, dated 19th Ramadan 1357 (12.11.1938). I.O.R. 15/2/176.
  - 4 Translation of a petition from the people of Hedd to H.H. Shaikh Sir Hamad ALKhalifah received on 24th Ramadan 1357 (17.11.1938). I.O.R. 15/1/343.
  - 5 Arabic circular dated 20th Shawwal 1357 (13.12.1938). I.O.R. 15/2/176.

a petition to Shaikh Hamad pledging loyalty to him and to his Government.<sup>1</sup>

In reporting the events of Bahrain, the Administration there adduced a number of causes, direct and indirect, which aroused the people's resentment and triggered off the call for reforms. These factors were defined as follows:

1 National Awakening: By the late 1930s the number of school-leavers had risen considerably. Some of them were bread-winners of their families and regarded themselves as more learned than their elders. They joined clubs, read newspapers, and pursued all sorts of cultural activities and were open to nationalist, pan-Arab ideas. (See also Chapter Six on Education.) Work with the Oil Company opened their minds to some new yet hard facts, that foreigners were better trained than they were for Company posts. Such being the case, blame was bound to fall on the deficiencies of the local educational system, both from disappointed students and from disillusioned parents who expected higher income for their children.

2 High Unemployment: In 1938 the number of jobless persons increased for the reasons discussed in Chapter Seven, under Oil.

3 The Reform Movements of Kuwait and Dubai: People in Bahrain were under the illusion that the Executive Councils of Kuwait and Dubai were created with British support, and that British support was forthcoming for the Movement in Bahrain. Also, earlier in 1923 the British Government had retired Shaikh Isa to prepare the way for the reforms.

In addition to the above, both Sunnis and Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs put forward a set of specific grievances with regard to the following:

1 The Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Shara<sup>c</sup> Court: During May 1935, the Shi<sup>c</sup>ah community approached the Government with a demand for the appointment of a third Shi<sup>c</sup>ah Qadi in addition to Shaikh Ali bin Hasan of Sanabis and Shaikh Abdullah bin Mohammad Saleh of Manamah, and that the three Qadis should

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1 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/344, No. 2095/26, 18.1.1939.

sit together as was done in the Sunni Shara<sup>C</sup> Court. Shaikh Ali agreed to the suggestion but Shaikh Mohammad Saleh and his followers opposed it because an assembly of three Qadis was unacceptable to him on religious grounds. The Government enquired into the matter by writing to Shaikh Khalaf and to two other local <sup>C</sup>Alims. None of them supported the view of Shaikh Abdullah who belonged to a Shi<sup>C</sup>ah faction which held different views over the issue from the majority of the Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs of Bahrain. Meantime, Shaikh Abdullah's supporters agitated against the above suggestion and also petitioned the government. The matter created a degree of tension between the two factions and was eventually contained peacefully.<sup>1</sup>

In August of the same year, Shaikh Abdullah bin Mohammad Saleh was suspended from office after allegations of malpractices were made against him. He was about to become the third Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Qadi on the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Shara<sup>C</sup> Court, established during the year.<sup>2</sup> A special tribunal was appointed by the Shaikh to try the Qadi. This resulted in much friction between his followers from Manamah, and those of the other two Qadis: Shaikh Ali bin Ja<sup>C</sup>far and Shaikh Ali bin Hasan from the villages.<sup>3</sup> The seat of a third Qadi remained vacant until April 1936, when Shaikh Baqir bin Ahmad al-<sup>C</sup>Usfour was appointed to the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Shara<sup>C</sup> Court.<sup>4</sup>

Thereafter, the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah public opinion became critical of their Qadis and of the Court clerk who interfered with decisions taken by the Qadis and the Court was closed in June 1938, as mentioned earlier. Describing the condition of the Court, the Agent wrote:

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- 1 Adviser to Officiating Agent. I.O.R. 15/3/176, No. 195/6A, 22.5.1935.
  - 2 Assistant P.A. to H.E. Shaikh Hamad. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 268/V.O., 15.8.1935.
  - 3 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 781/6A, 2.11.1935.
  - 4 P.A. to the Secretary to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 157-G/6, 19.4.1936.

"It was the disgraceful condition of the Shi<sup>c</sup>a Shara<sup>c</sup> Court which provided opportunity for agitation to crystallize. It had long been recognized by the Bahrain Government that this Court must be overhauled, but there was unavoidable delay in reorganisation. The leaders of the Manamah town Baharnah in ventilating the legitimate complaints of Shias in respect of the Court took opportunity to raise vague demands on various other matters ..."<sup>1</sup>

2 The Bahrain Courts: It was an established British policy to entrust Al Khalifah with magisterial posts on State Courts. Work in the Courts provided opportunity for direct contact with the people and the British Authorities desired to involve the Rulers in public affairs. To this effect the Agent wrote:

"In the circumstances of Bahrain there are great advantages in selecting the magistrates from the AlKhalifah family, but they undoubtedly need instruction ... it is recognised that ignorance of elementary principles of procedure has led to conflicting decisions in similar cases and has been one of the main causes of complaint by the public."

It was clear that while the people made advances in many fields, procedures at the Courts stayed sadly elementary and the magistrates, even in the late 1930s, were relying on native reasoning in the absence of legal knowledge. The increasing intricacy of cases litigated in the Courts demanded a corresponding sophistication from the judges on the Bench. The credibility of the Court system became the focus of growing public scrutiny. What was acceptable in the 1920s, was subject to great public disapproval in the 1930s.<sup>2</sup>

3 The Sunni Shara<sup>c</sup> Court: Complaints against Sunni Shara<sup>c</sup> Court mainly affected the three Qadis who were too slow in their procedural methods, in addition to seeking compromises instead of giving judgments. The Adviser described them as " ... ignorant, narrow minded and unprogressive".<sup>3</sup>

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1 Agent's No. C/704-1.b/5, op. cit.

2 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. 1822/9, 16 Shawwal 1357 (9.12.1938).

3 Ibid.

In addition to the above three there were two other specific grievances related to Education and the Oil Company, discussed earlier in Chapters Six and Seven. However, the Administration in Bahrain designated two areas of complaint which were to receive remedial attention: better pay and working conditions for BAPCO's local employees (See Chapter Seven), and improvements to the Judicial System. As regards the latter, the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Shara<sup>C</sup> Court was re-organized in October 1938 making it a much more efficient Court than it was before. Other measures included the opening of a school for the teaching of Islamic jurisprudence, and the sending of students for training abroad. No immediate plans were made for the reforming of the Sunni Shara<sup>C</sup> Court against which the complaints were not as serious as those levelled by the Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs against the Shi<sup>C</sup>ah Court.

As regards the codification of laws the Committee in charge began its work in 1935. By the end of 1938 the Committee had accomplished the following: compilation and codification of relevant proclamations, the drafting of a number of rules on various subjects like: diving laws, pearl sale, fish-traps rules, bankruptcy, land regulations, division of immovable property and pre-emption, in addition to the collation of rules and regulations which were in force in the Bahrain Courts. Commerce, Penal Code, etc. which required the services of a legal expert were left unattended. Accordingly, Shaikh Hamad decided to hire the services of an expert who was envisaged to deal with the more specialized part of the Committee's work. As a temporary measure, the Adviser was restored as Joint-Judge on the Bahrain Court.<sup>1</sup>

In his final assessment of the events of 1938, the Resident blamed the Bahrain Administration for lack of foresight. He wrote:

"It seems to me that to a large extent the Bahrain Government are responsible for the present situation. They were extremely

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1 Ibid.

remiss about initiating reforms, e.g. the Bahrain Code, ... , and allowed corruption and inefficiency in the Law Courts though they have now made last minute reforms ... .. the whole essence of the agitation is that the people of Bahrain of all elements have no legal means of putting forward their grievances, whether real or imaginary, and are therefore reduced to illegal channels such as agitation ... "1

As far as the Adviser was concerned, whose dominance over the Administration was a matter for public resentment, he blamed the agitations for reforms upon nationalist sentiments of the people:

"In my opinion the causes of the whole trouble are, incipient nationalism, the sectarian differences between the Sunnis and the Shias and resentment at the wealth from oil which pours into the coffers of the AlKhalifah."2

According to the Agent, the Reform Movement in Kuwait and Dubai provided inspiration to the movement in Bahrain, but there was no resemblance between them:

"There has been revolution in Kuwait and Dubai owing to crass folly and abuse of their power by the Shaikhs. In Bahrain there has been ... evolution. Slowly but surely representatives of the people are being drawn into the Administration ... ultimately functions now performed by Belgrave and his colleagues will be taken over by natives of Bahrain."3

The Resident's advice to the Shaikh was to form an Advisory Council, himself appointing its members. He wrote:

"I gave exactly the same advice to two other Shaikhs - Kuwait and Dubai. They did not take it and the consequence is that both of them have now been forcibly saddled with Executive Councils. In other words, instead of the Shaikh sitting on the Council, the Council sits on the Shaikh."4

It remains to be said that the four representatives,<sup>5</sup> who submitted to the Government the Memoranda of 12th and 22nd November 1938 (the latter was cited in Chapter Seven under Oil) continued their good efforts on

1 P.R. to P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 597-S, 17.11.1938.

2 Causes and Objects of the Recent Agitation, op. cit.

3 P.A. to P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. C/720-1.b/5, 26.11.1938.

4 Resident's No. 597-S, op. cit.

5 i.e. Mansour al-Urayedh, Mohsin al-Tajir, Saiyed Sa<sup>c</sup>eed and Yusuf Fakhroo.

behalf of the people. On the other hand, the Youth Movement was weakened by the arrests of its members. With the tribal element professing loyalty to its traditional allies the Rulers, the villagers and the divers untouched by what was happening, the leaders had to accept whatever the Government of Bahrain decided to offer. From the start, Baharnah leaders from Manamah joined hands with members of the Sunni community in submitting joint-demands. This in itself, unthinkable in the 1920s, became the achievement of the late 1930s.

#### The Bahrain Administration During the War

The Second World War affected Bahrain in a number of ways not experienced by the people before. During March 1939 Abdullah al-Zāyed founded the weekly newspaper al-Bahrain.<sup>1</sup> Earlier in 1936 he introduced the first printing press in Bahrain.<sup>2</sup> However, British authorities there used the paper as a vehicle for presenting the Allied point of view throughout the War period. Also, as a counterpoise to German war propaganda, diffused by the Arabic Service of Radio Berlin, the British set up the Bahrain Broadcasting Station which went on the air on 4th November 1940.<sup>3</sup> When War first broke out, Shaikh Hamad made a contribution to the War Fund and identified himself and his subjects with the Allied cause. Initially, certain measures to protect Bahrain's oil installations were put into operation. More elaborate defence schemes followed later, and with the introduction of a system of food rationing the impact of the War was brought much closer to the people.

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1 Ālam al-Kutub, Vol. III, p. 506, op. cit.

2 Belgrave's Annual Report for 1936 mentions the supply of electricity to the printing press during the year. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1303/9-A, op. cit.

3 A.R.P.A. 1940, op. cit.

One of the earliest acts of war in the Gulf was the sinking by the Allies of an Italian submarine at the entrance to the Gulf in July 1940. Its crew, now prisoners of war, were first transferred to Bahrain from where they were subsequently sent to India in great secrecy. On 19th October of the same year the Italians bombed the Bahrain refinery, perhaps in retaliation for the loss of the submarine.<sup>1</sup> By the end of 1942 the Manamah Municipality had erected ninety air raid shelters.<sup>2</sup>

On 8th May 1941, the Agent wrote to the Resident about the state of public opinion in Bahrain. He reported on the people's dissatisfaction with the Administration and with its officials, and defined their complaints as follows:

- "a. The Bahrain Law Courts. Complete incompetence of judges, absence of laws and procedure, extreme dilatoriness in disposal of cases, excessive authority of Court clerks, unfair decisions.
- b. Adviserate. The Adviser is very much disliked. He allows his Indian Secretary (K.P. Narayan) too much power, corruption amongst subordinate officials unchecked, grievances of public are disregarded, Adviser is unbusinesslike and allows confusion and slackness to prevail throughout the administration in all departments.
- c. Customs and Electricity Departments are the same as for Adviserate, Education Department is better but Director is unpopular owing to his unfortunate manner.
- d. State officials British, Indian and Arab are impatient with the public and unwilling to examine grievances.
- e. The Police are exceedingly corrupt ...

It is generally considered, however, that the State Administration is under British control and the blame for its acts or omissions therefore falls on us."<sup>3</sup>

On 25th May 1941 the Resident corresponded with the Government of India over the affairs of Bahrain. He cited the Agent's letter, above, and attributed people's dissatisfaction to a "deep-seated discontent with the local administration". He believed that the people had legitimate

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1 Ibid.

2 Adviser's Annual Report for 1942. I.O.R. 15/2/299.

3 Major Alban to Colonel Prior. I.O.R. 15/1/344, no number, 8.5.1941.

complaints against the Bahrain Courts, and that as early as 1932 he had urged Belgrave to form a committee and to collate Government notices which had the force of law. He even provided him with an Arabic translation of the Sudan Penal Code for introduction in the Bahrain Courts. Belgrave had failed to act on these suggestions and since then he had rarely attended the Bahrain Court and had only functioned on the "nebulous" Court of Appeal. No coded law of any kind existed in Bahrain, he wrote, and earlier attempts to secure the services of Sardar Lehna Singh or Judge Lloyd came to nothing. The Resident described the Shaikhly judges as "incompetent, lazy and arbitrary, and compare unfavourably with those in Kuwait".<sup>1</sup>

He then switched his attention to State officials beginning with Belgrave who was at the head of the Administration:

"I am afraid this is true. Belgrave is becoming increasingly unpopular except with the Shaikhs. His mental capacity has not kept pace with the growth of Bahrain, and owing to 15 years in a most debilitating climate, he appears to me to be losing his mental grip. He has become very arbitrary and dislikes criticisms by any local inhabitants, in fact he has absorbed much of the Shaikhs' outlook himself. He and the other Bahrain officials have had things their own way for so long without any supervision, inspection, or control, that they have become a society of self-satisfied Czars, and Belgrave, in particular, who has marked likes and dislikes tends to be "inaccessible" to any one except the Shaikhs, with whom, however, he is very good, and who take up a great deal of his time. He is under the impression that he is overworked, but this is largely due to lack of method and a tendency to waste his time on trivialities. For example, though he does not know anything about animal husbandry he will spend hours looking at some milch cattle owned by the State, or in designing new furnishings for the Shaikh's palace. He is, of course, quite ignorant of administration, as he was caught in the jungles of Tanganyika, and though I had suggested to him more than once that he should take the opportunity of his leaves to study a little law he has never found time to do so.

As regards his financial "Advisership" I need only quote his action in investing the entire State Reserve in a currency other than that of the State. His own finances he very wisely delegates to his wife."<sup>2</sup>

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1 Colonel Prior to O.K. Caroe, F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/344, No. 343-S, 25.5.1941.

2 Ibid.

The Resident described the Customs Department as "efficient", and its Director de Grenier as "most unpopular and arbitrary". The Director was disliked by the Indians whom he treated with disrespect; there were too many of them in his office and their presence was attracting criticism from the local Arabs. Although he was hard working and "efficient in his limited way", he nevertheless "has one manner for people who matter and another for those who do not".

The Electricity Department was the subject of "unending criticism" and lately the Resident had requested the Bahrain Petroleum Company to provide a committee of experts to examine its activities in the last ten years. The Committee, having conducted its investigation, reported that nothing was wrong with the technical side of the Department's work, but that accounting and administration were "inefficient in the extreme". Commenting upon the same, the Resident wrote:

"The fact is that the present Electrical Engineer (R.W.B. Steele) ..., has no head for business and it is unfortunate that he was not disposed of before war broke out ... He is an instance of a person who was reasonably efficient 10 years ago but who has gone to seed during 10 years in Bahrain without adequate expert supervision."<sup>1</sup>

The Resident gave a favourable impression about the Department of Education which as a result of re-organization made great progress. The initial investigation carried out by the new Director into the affairs of primary education "reflected no credit upon Belgrave as the head of the administration", the Resident wrote. He felt sorry for the people of Bahrain who were deprived of access to responsible officials, and were denied the right to air genuine grievances. He added "the Shaikhly state of mind seems to prevail in which any unfavourable comment is considered subversive".

He then discussed the affairs of the Police noting that in 1931

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1 Ibid.

owing to financial stringency he had to terminate the services of Captain Parke, the then Commandant of Police. Since then the Police had been commanded by Belgrave in return for an allowance of Rs. 100 per month. "Belgrave", he wrote, "knows nothing about Police work, and, finally, as a result of Weightman's (the then Agent) insistence he (Belgrave) allowed Hallows to make investigations which disclosed a very large number of abuses ..."<sup>1</sup>

The Resident told the Government of India that Major Alban, the Agent, spent more time with the local inhabitants than Belgrave, and that they confided in him and disclosed to him a great deal which should have reached Belgrave's ears, but which did not. He concluded his despatch by saying:

"We are blamed in Persia for having landed them with Reza Shah, and it is quite certain that we are blamed in Bahrain for any defects in the State administration. How can it be said that we do not interfere in Bahrain? We deposed the late Ruler, introduced British officials and have regulated the finances for over sixteen years. While the Political Agent should not usually interfere in the administration beyond tendering advice in appropriate quarters, it is his business to redress genuine grievances ... Every case to which Alban has drawn my attention so far has been one which required investigation or action on the part of the State and in each case his views have been borne out by the facts ... I do not wish it to be thought that Belgrave's day of usefulness to the State has expired ... Belgrave is a gentleman, and is well liked by the Shaikhs who have implicit confidence in him. At the same time there is no doubt that Bahrain has grown too fast for him, and after the war some form of expert assistance will have to be found for him."<sup>2</sup>

#### Rationing and Control of Food-stuffs

Bahrain's chief concern during the War was to ensure sufficient food supplies for its 90,000 or so inhabitants.<sup>3</sup> India was the chief

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 The above figure was established on the night of January 22nd, 1941 when the Government of Bahrain conducted the first census in the history of Bahrain. The figures obtained showed a total population of 89,970 persons; 74,040 were Bahrain nationals; 41,944 Sunnis; 46,354 Shi'ahs; 15,930 foreigners. Government of Bahrain Annual Report for 1369 A.H.

supplier of cereals, sugar and tea, while imports of goats, sheep, potatoes, onions, fresh and dried fruits were obtained from Persia. Shortly after the War broke out in 1939, the office of Food Controller was created to supervise the retail sale of essential items to the public at controlled prices. In 1940 a Food Control System was introduced to check profiteering, hoarding and to monitor prices and the distribution of supplies to the public. At first Captain A.C. Byard was appointed Food Controller, but from 1940 onwards the Director of Customs was made responsible for that task.

During 1941 shortage of shipping caused delays in shipments of flour from India resulting in acute shortages in Bahrain. Nevertheless, the cost of living in Bahrain was reported to be much lower than in neighbouring states.<sup>1</sup> During the year there was a great deal of unemployment owing to reduction in the Oil Company's labour force, a poor diving season and because the government was not engaged in any project which would have provided jobs to unskilled labour. On 14th May of the year, the Agent suggested to Shaikh Salman to start some food distribution centres for those who had no means of livelihood. The suggestion was made with a view to averting any possibility of disturbances.<sup>2</sup> The Shaikhs approved the idea, and in conveying their approval to the Agent, the Adviser noted:

"In Muharraq especially many of the poor people are finding it difficult to earn money with which to feed themselves, but at the same time I do not think that any disturbances are imminent."<sup>3</sup>

In 1942 temporary shortages of rice, wheat and sugar were experienced. This was largely due to merchants transshipping to Saudi Arabia food-stuffs originally ordered for Bahrain. They were lured by chances of greater

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1 Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 81-9A, 31.1.1942.

2 Major Alban to Belgrave. I.O.R. 15/1/344, No. C/449, 14.5.1941.

3 Belgrave to Alban. I.O.R. 15/1/344, No. C/833, 17.5.1941.

profits there where price controls did not exist. The Government of Bahrain responded by banning the export of all food-stuffs to other countries except sugar and tea which were allowed to go to Persia in return for meat, vegetables and fruit. In June a system of card rationing for rice, flour and wheat was introduced under the supervision of Manamah and Moharraq municipalities. Retail centres were opened in both places, and to assist the Food Controller in his task a Food Control Committee was appointed in August.<sup>1</sup>

Also, during the summer of 1942, a philanthropic project: Relief of the Poor Fund, was launched under the auspices of Shaikh Salman, the new Ruler. Two Committees, one Sunni one Shi<sup>c</sup>ah, were formed for the purpose. Donations amounting to Rs. 32,000 were collected from members of the Ruling Family, and from Bahrainis and non-Bahrainis. In addition to the above sum, B.A.P.C.O. contributed Rs. 1,500 to the Fund. The money was used for the purchase of food-stuffs which were then distributed to the needy and poor of Bahrain.<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of 1942 shortages of rice, wheat and flour were experienced in India, and consequently the Government there restricted their export.<sup>3</sup> This led to severe shortages of cereals in Bahrain where the Authorities applied to the Middle East Supply Centre (M.E.S.C.), about which E.M. Lloyd wrote:

"In February 1943, when supplies of rice from India ceased, the annual requirements of Kuwait, Bahrain, Muscat, the Trucial Coast, and eastern Saudi Arabia were reported to MESC to be about 60,000 tons of rice. MESC could only offer wheat, flour and barley as substitutes and the records show that in 1943 the Persian Gulf Shaikhdoms reluctantly accepted 21,000 tons of flour and 3,000 tons of barley, while eastern Saudi Arabia took 15,000 tons of flour and 1,000 tons of barley.

This sudden and enforced change in diet from rice to wheat flour caused discontent and threatened to have political repercussions. Indeed it was feared that, if the pearl fishers did not get their

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1 A.R.P.A. 1942, op. cit.

2 Adviser to Assistant P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/846, No. 1568/23, 30.8.1942.

3 A.R.P.A. 1942, op. cit.

normal diet of rice, dates and fish, the pearl-fishing fleet, which normally starts operations in May ... , might stay at home and create trouble."<sup>1</sup>

During 1943 a Merchants Advisory Committee was formed to consider the problems of supplies and shipping, and the number of authorized shops for the sale of rations was increased. The rationing of rice, wheat and flour continued for the second year running and a person's monthly quota for the year was fixed at 20 lbs of cereals divided into 8 lbs of rice, reduced in March to 4 lbs and in September to 2 lbs, plus 12 lbs of wheat. Whenever a person's quota of rice was reduced his quota of wheat was raised instead. Towards the end of 1943, the Government of India placed a total ban on exports of rice, and the individual quota was accordingly adjusted to 12 lbs of wheat, 4 lbs of flour, and 4 lbs of barley. Hence rice, a staple diet of the majority of the people, ceased to be the standard dish of the day.<sup>2</sup>

Sugar was rationed at 4 lbs per person per month, but from April of the year this quota was reduced to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs so that surplus sugar could be made available for export to Persia. Extra sugar was also procured from India for the purpose, as is borne out by the Controller's account below:

"It has been found that the more sugar these traders can obtain, the more plentiful are their imports. In view of this and as a result of representations to the Government of India through the Political Authorities, an extra quota of 25 tons per month has been sanctioned for this purpose. This is important, Bahrain being entirely dependent on her neighbours for live Stock."<sup>3</sup>

Apart from cereals and sugar, imported exclusively by the Government of Bahrain, local merchants were allowed to bring in tea, coffee, ghee, piecegoods and cigarettes. In mid-1943 shortages of tea and coffee

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1 E.M.H. Lloyd, Food and Inflation in the Middle East 1940-5, (1956), pp. 66-7.

2 Director of Customs Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. PA/HL/10/88, 23.1.1944.

3 Ibid.

were reported and the Government had to ration their sale for a while. With the arrival in early August of Bahrain's monthly quota of 20 tons of tea and 32 tons of coffee from India, in addition to the importation of 500 cases of tea from Dubai and coffee from Aden, the rationing of tea and coffee ceased.<sup>1</sup>

The Medical Authorities viewed a person's individual quota of cereals and sugar as sufficient for his physical needs. However, the poorer members of the community were unable to purchase the full ration with the result that many suffered from malnutrition and its accompanying bodily disorders. To keep prices down, the Government of Bahrain subsidized the sale of essential food-stuffs to the public.<sup>2</sup>

Despite strict measures to control the export of all types of goods from Bahrain, cases of smuggling occurred in 1943 and many arrests and convictions were made.<sup>3</sup>

In 1944 the Government of Bahrain spent 80 lakhs of rupees on the purchase of wheat, flour, barley, rice, sugar and dates. This money was subsequently recovered from the sale of such essential items to the public. During the year, the M.E.S.C. allocated 1,500 tons of Iraqi rice to the Gulf Shaikhdoms and Bahrain's quota amounted to 400 tons.<sup>4</sup> Extra rice was smuggled into Bahrain by owners of local dhows both from India and from Iraq.<sup>5</sup>

Both in 1943 and 1944 divers were served with jareesh, crushed wheat, in addition to dates and date-juice. The cereal ration of 20 lbs per person per month was maintained throughout, but the individual

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1 Ibid.

2 A.R.P.A. 1943, op. cit.

3 No. PA/HL/10/88, op. cit.

4 Director of Customs Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/300, No. PA/HL/1/139, 7.2.1945.

5 Lloyd, p. 67.

quotas were subject to alteration depending upon the availability of each item. Early in 1944, a person's quota of sugar was set at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs for town-dwellers, and only  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound for villagers, on account of the higher consumption of sugar by the former among whom there was a large community of foreigners. Export of sugar and tea to the Persian Coast was allowed in return for live stock, onions, potatoes and fruit. The smuggling of tea to the neighbouring countries occasioned shortages during the first half of the year. In the second half, tea was rationed to the public and this ensured a fairer distribution. Complaints were made by the public against butchers who refused to sell meat at official prices, or who withheld stocks from the market. As a result, the Municipality, at the recommendation of the Food Control Committee, engaged salaried butchers to retail meat to the people. Towards the end of the year acute shortages of meat were reported and the Municipality restricted slaughtering to only four days per week.<sup>1</sup>

In 1944 the rents of shops and premises recorded unprecedented rises and the Government was forced to intervene and to protect the tenants by issuing a Rent Control Order which made it harder for landlords to increase rents or to demand vacation of premises by the tenants for the sole purpose of reletting at a higher rent.<sup>2</sup>

During 1945, the monthly cereal quota of an adult was maintained at 20 lbs, and for the first half of the year the individual rations included wheat, mixed flour, barley and milled wheat. For the rest of the year quotas were set at 13 lbs of wheat, 3 lbs of mixed barley and millet flour, plus 4 lbs of rice per person. Throughout Ramadan an extra ration of rice was issued and the quota was adjusted to 6 lbs of rice, 3 lbs of millet and 11 lbs of wheat. After Ramadan the quota was modified to

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1 No. PA/HL/1/139, op. cit.

2 A.R.P.A. 1944, op. cit.

4 lbs of rice, 12 lbs of wheat and 4 lbs of millet. In total a sum of 118 lakhs of rupees were spent in the purchase of wheat, millet, rice, tea, sugar and dates, reported to the Controller.<sup>1</sup>

During the war Persian exports of rice averaged 30,000 tons per year, but owing to a bumper harvest Persia sent 40,000 tons in 1945. The M.E.S.C. negotiated a consignment of 1,800 tons on behalf of Bahrain which arrived towards the end of the year.<sup>2</sup> Both rice and wheat continued to be sold to the public at subsidized prices. Tea and coffee were in abundant supply and these were no longer included in the ration system. Sugar was rationed at 3 lbs per adult in the towns, and 1 lb per adult in the villages. Throughout the year meat supplies were in abundance despite the fact that the Government of Bahrain incurred severe losses as a result of the destruction of their herds of goats by pneumonia.

During the second half of the year, the Government purchased a huge consignment of cloth and retailed it to the public at prices lower than those obtained in the local markets. Despite restrictions on the export of goods from Bahrain, attempts at smuggling did not cease and many arrests were made as a result. Prices of most commodities were reported to be lower in 1945 than in the previous year.<sup>3</sup>

The War involved the Government of Bahrain in a series of new measures such as the population count of early 1941, import of essential food-stuffs for local consumption, introduction of controls on export of food-stuffs from Bahrain, checks on prices, rents, and also anti-hoarding and anti-profiteering regulations. The Municipalities had to cope with the opening of food centres, with the organizational and

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1 Director of Customs Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/301, No. PA/C/22, 20.1.1946.

2 Ibid. Also Lloyd, pp. 247-52, op. cit.

3 A.R.P.A. 1945, op. cit.

supervisory duties of retailing rationed food to the public. As Food Controller, the Director of Customs had to plan imports of essential food-stuffs for months ahead and to consult with importers over the affairs of shipping and supplies. The Food Control System apparently functioned to the satisfaction of the people for whose benefit it was introduced. Shortages of supplies occurred from time to time, and cases of malnutrition and ordinary people finding it difficult to afford food even at subsidized prices were also reported. Nevertheless, conditions in Bahrain were reported to be better during the War than those obtaining in some of the neighbouring countries. In other words the War re-inforced that process of government involvement in a wider sphere of affairs that had been begun in the earlier period.

## Chapter Nine

### Conclusion

This thesis has considered twenty-five years in the modern history of Bahrain. During that time this small state underwent some important transformations which influenced its social, political and economic structure. Until some time after the First World War Bahrain's Administration consisted of a couple of traditional councils and courts which were barely capable of coping with the challenges of the times. In a decade or so, Bahrain managed to create and sustain a governmental apparatus which was creditable to the country and which then had no parallel elsewhere in the neighbouring Shaikhdoms. It should be noted that this achievement was the outcome of the policy of reforms applied during the 1920s, i.e. prior to the discovery of oil.

Before the introduction of the policy of reforms the ruling family of Bahrain wielded unrestricted powers, and they often used them rather wilfully and arbitrarily. Those adversely affected by this misuse of authority were, principally, the Baharnah Arabs. Oppressive members of the ruling family were rarely prosecuted, and if it was necessary, they were tried by the Shara<sup>c</sup> Qadi whose impartiality and disinterestedness was open to doubt. Every prominent member of the ruling family exercised authority over a locality where his Wazir and Fidawis acted as his agents with the people. In the absence of institutionalized legal constraints, the will of the Shaikh was unfettered and his powers were virtually absolute.

Throughout the First World War, the British Government continued to give the Shaikh a virtually free hand with regard to domestic rule in Bahrain. There followed a period of misgovernment and subsequent events and public protests reminded Britain of her obligations concerning the introduction of a reasonably good government there. Shaikh Isa had ruled by custom and tradition long enough for this to have induced in him

a disinclination for any change. Change as he perceived it implied the alteration of the status quo, which despite its conspicuous ills, was none the less beneficial to the ruling family over which he presided. The Treaty of 1861, concluded with Britain by his predecessor Shaikh Mohammad bin Khalifah, defined the Shaikh's status as Independent Ruler of Bahrain. After the enforcement of the Bahrain Order-in-Council in 1919 the conduct of Bahrain's affairs was subjected to dual control exercised both by the Shaikh and by the British Political Agent. With his customary prerogatives thus reduced, the Shaikh believed that his independence would be compromised in local Arab eyes. This is not to defend his Administration, ridden as it was with serious flaws and it had to be changed if it were to become acceptable to the people. The sense of urgency for reforms increased after the Baharnah uprising of February 1922, in protest against unjust treatment, forcing a confession from the Ruler's sons, for the first time, that "past misrule" was at the root of the problem.

Putting the reforms into practice was certainly not a smooth and straightforward task. First, the Administration had to deal with the rebellious Dowasir tribesmen who perpetrated numerous acts of violence in furtherance of their own political ends. Their threat in 1922 to muster the support of Ibn Saud against the Administration in Bahrain was taken seriously by the British Authorities. For the first time during 1922-23 one of their contentious leaders was fined and they were penalized for their lawless behaviour. The firmness which the Administration exhibited in dealing with the Dowasir left no doubt as to the British Government's determination to prevent any external intrusion in the affairs of Bahrain.

The reforms initiated in Bahrain in the 1920s inevitably affected the structure of power there, and culminated in the reduction of the excessive authority of the Shaikh and in curbing the autonomy of the

tribal elements. During the implementation of the reforms the Agent became heavily involved in the Shaikh's Administration so that in addition to his duties as Political Agent he, in effect, supervised the execution of the actual reforms. Instead of proffering advice to the Shaikh he was now occupied in the day to day affairs of the Administration. The Shaikh's lax attitude was partly responsible for this state of affairs which heightened the Agent's prominence way beyond the powers legally invested in him by the Bahrain Order-in-Council.

Under the reforms judicial practices were standardized, secular courts were established and proper procedures were introduced. The one problem that plagued the judicial reforms was the absence of new civil and criminal codes for use in the native courts, and this continued to be a problem for the Administration throughout the period treated in this thesis. The Shara<sup>C</sup> Qadis were, however, made to work with committees and councils whose members were laymen and this engendered in them considerable resentment though the new arrangements did result in greater efficiency and a notable reduction in mal-practices. Seizure of land from the natives and its confiscation, a chronic problem of the pre-reform era, ceased to be a serious concern. A uniform municipal tax on houses, shops, etc., replaced, in 1922, the taxes which had previously been collected exclusively from the Baharnah. Sunni-Shi<sup>C</sup>ah relations gradually improved in the wake of the changes made, and the fact that the two communities came to share schools, jobs, social clubs, etc., especially in the 1930s, generated greater communication between them.

In his book Rumaihi ascribes the absence of unity between Sunnis and Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs in the 1920s to the latter's unwillingness to co-operate with the former. He points out that the Baharnah sided with the pro-British Administration instead of uniting with their Sunni compatriots, in opposing what was to him British meddling in the internal affairs of

Bahrain.<sup>1</sup> In fact the Baharnah saw in the administrative reforms their one hope of securing a more even-handed form of government which would treat them on a basis of equality with the Sunnis. For long they had been subjected to unequal treatment meted out to them by the old regime. For this reason they supported Shaikh Hamad's Administration and acted as a counterweight to the wishes of the tribal camp which was opposed to that Administration. Their backing for the reforms was entirely comprehensible since the *raison d'être* of the reforms was the formation of a more efficient and responsible Administration. Rumaihi also believes that the Baharnah absence from the Congress of October 1923, indicated their lack of faith in the Sunnis.<sup>2</sup> The chief decision of that Congress was a call for the restoration of Shaikh Isa to the rulership of Bahrain, and this revealed that the interests of the tribal elements, the major beneficiaries of the old regime, continued to take precedence over the interests of others who attended the Congress. In view of their needs, it would be inconsistent to expect the Baharnah to participate actively in a Congress which was bent upon restoring the head of the old regime under which they had suffered greatly. The unity of Sunnis and Shi<sup>c</sup>ahs was in fact held back by the psychological and religious cleavages of the past, which were exacerbated by the harsh policies pursued against the Baharnah by the tribal elements over a long period of time. In the absence of mutual trust and regard the attainment of unity remained a distant objective and Sunni-Shi<sup>c</sup>ite relations remained a sensitive matter throughout the period of this thesis.

The three main constituents of the Bahraini society: the Rulers and their tribal allies, the town-dwelling Sunnis, and the urban and rural

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1 Social and Political Change ..., pp. 195-6, op. cit.

2 Ibid., p. 181.

Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs, certainly retained their identities after the reforms. The Ruling family who at first resisted the reforms, eventually reconciled themselves with the new system of authority and accepted power in its attenuated form. Their influence was, however, noticeable in almost every new institution that the country had. They presided over the Municipalities, the Courts, government departments and various other councils and offices. They adhered to their earlier attitude of not allowing the people a real share in power, partly encouraged in this by the official policy of the British Government which restricted the native inhabitants to Government service merely in an administrative or advisory capacity. Legislative Councils, which commanded executive powers, were avoided in Bahrain and elsewhere in the area as a matter of policy.

The British always viewed the Arab littoral of the Gulf as an area of essentially Sunni influence. This perception also applied to Bahrain where there was a majority Shi<sup>C</sup>ah population. When Ibn Saud voiced his unease at the removal of Shaikh Isa from office in 1923 he received assurances from the Resident concerning the British Authorities' intention to sustain Sunni control over the Administration.

In its approach to the reforms the Government of India was sometimes wary and occasionally inconsistent. In the first place, the policy of reforms was in itself imposed upon the Government of India by the Foreign Office in the aftermath of criticisms from Tehran implicating the Government of India in misrule in Bahrain. Having accepted the policy of reforms the Government of India was cautious not to be directly associated with them. They urged only basic reforms and left their planning, finance and execution to their representatives in the area. Also, they desired to see the Shaikh actually taking part in them and not merely responding to Government incitement. Later in 1926, the Government of India revealed a serious lack of vision when it asked the Agent to consider a halt to the process of reform and possibly to reverse the changes

that had been made. This sudden shift in Government attitude was occasioned by a feeling of unease over Britain's ties with the other Trucial Shaikhs who were apprehensive over what was happening in Bahrain. These fears, manifested during the second half of the 1920s, were to receive the attention of the Government of India for they came at a time when the Arab Coast was increasingly designated as the focus of those British interests which might have to be transferred from Persia.

The global recession of the early 1930s brought economic hardships to Bahrain. The country's pearl-trade was seriously affected by that depression, and subsequently by a host of external factors over which Bahrain had no control. When the pearling reforms began in 1924 the prevailing system manifested serious defects, and there was no shortage of evidence to prove its injustice and inadequacies. The British Authorities in Bahrain saw the diver as the victim of mal-practices for which the Nakhudas, most of whom were of tribal affiliations, were largely responsible. In short, the system served the interests of the Nakhudas, not those of the divers who despite their hard work received very small returns in addition to incurring uncontrollable debts. Bahrain was the centre of the Gulf's pearl-trade and the British chose it for the pearling reforms. When reformed the system was calculated to attract more divers to Bahrain from the neighbouring Shaikhdoms, and to serve as an example for others to follow. Also, it was envisaged to emancipate the impoverished divers from conditions of virtual bondage to the Nakhudas.

The reforms enacted sought to regulate the legal and financial aspects of the system as they affected the three vital participants - the merchant, the Nakhuda and the diver. They also included legislation against trade in Japanese pearls, and against the use of modern equipment for diving purposes, measures which tried to ensure protection for the industry. Apart from committing the Nakhuda to the observance of the customary laws as defined by the Government of Bahrain, and the reduction

of the advances to the divers to prevent the growth of debts, there was nothing in the reforms which could have injured the pearl-trade of Bahrain.

The worldwide depression of the 1930s, growing international demand for cultured pearls and dwindling purchases and prices of Bahrain pearls, accelerated the collapse of the industry.

The reforms were certainly good in themselves and they did help to alleviate the conditions of service of the divers, but international factors were soon to bring a devastating decline to the pearl trade, and that did great financial harm to those who had previously financed it. The reforms had been designed to remove abuses from a traditional system of pearl fishing, they were not designed to strengthen the industry as such and they certainly could not protect it against those powerful external forces which were, in the end, to destroy it.

As a result of the depression the Administration of Bahrain first switched its attention to agriculture as a possible area for development. Some serious efforts were made but these were thwarted by the high salinity of the soil, absence of local expertise, falling water levels in some places and lack of water in others, and above all inadequate investment in agriculture. Experimentation with the growing of cotton proved successful, but the price of cotton fell as a direct result of the recession deterring merchants from involvement in the new crop. Most of the productive land was owned by the ruling and merchant families who preferred to invest on a short term basis and to achieve quick returns. Landlords always preferred to turn their attention to seasonal crops which needed small investments with generally predictable and rapid profits. Also, they relied principally on the rents which they received from the lease of their gardens, including a quota of the dates and vegetables which were stipulated in the conditions of the tenure. The conditions governing the lease of date-gardens were the cause of much trouble between the landlords and their tenants, usually Baharnah. The price of dates

fluctuated from one season to another, so did the produce of dates from a given garden. Pests frequently infested the trees, and locusts caused damage nearly every season. When a tenant failed to settle the agreed annual rents in full he often faced prosecution and the threat of losing his trivial possessions, including the tenancy of the garden, his only means of livelihood.

A great part of the official enthusiasm for agricultural reform was washed away by the discovery of oil in 1932 and its subsequent development. The oil industry saved Bahrain from the grip of acute economic difficulties induced by the general slump and by the failure of the pearl-trade. Oil also raised the expectations of the people. It provided the State with a new large source of revenue with which to develop the infra-structure of Bahrain. Growing revenue from oil helped re-organize Bahrain's finances and expand the municipal, educational and medical services which had been begun. The oil industry opened up employment opportunities for the divers, and the date-cultivators and provided them with the security and stability of a paid job with the Oil Company. The country's imports increased as a result of the people's enhanced buying power. Articles which were regarded as luxuries in the pre-oil era, attracted great numbers of buyers, many of whom were employees of the Oil Company. This in turn, gave new prosperity to the merchants. The Annual royalties which the Government of Bahrain received increased from over six lakhs of rupees in 1935, to over thirty lakhs in 1945, an increase of five fold in a decade. Annual income from the Customs in the same period rose from over six lakhs of rupees in 1935 to nearly twenty-six lakhs in 1945. In this sense oil had a more far reaching impact upon the economy and society of the country than the improvements induced by the reforms of the 1920s. A major outcome of the growth in oil production was the shift in the financial power which moved from the merchants and pearl-ers in the pre-oil period, to the Ruler and his family. There was now greater

cash in circulation in Bahrain, and its flow was, in effect, controlled by the Rulers. There is, therefore, an interesting contrast to be seen in the history of Bahrain during this period. The political reforms of the 1920s had, as has been seen, tended to curtail the arbitrary powers of the ruling family, and this had generated resentment among that group. The introduction of the oil industry, on the other hand, gave them a new sense of economic power and on balance their dominance over Bahrain's affairs probably grew rather than declined.

The striking of oil in Bahrain brought a sense of relief to the country which was facing the prospect of economic collapse. At this time, Bahrain's relations with Persia were subjected to greater strains than ever before. Bahrain in the 1930s was not only an oil producing country, but also became the focus of more British interests in the Gulf. Britain had already handed over to the Iranian Government postal and quarantine services during the 1920s, and transferred the Imperial Airways route to Bahrain and to some other Shaikhdoms on the Arab Coast in 1932. After withdrawal from Henjam and Basidu a new naval base was established in Jufair in 1935. The oil concession in Bahrain also attracted a protest from Iran, and Bahrainis resident in Iran were subjected to new pressures which, inter alia, required them to hold Persian passports and Persian nationality if they owned property there. On a number of occasions they complained to the Administration in Bahrain, which could not do anything for them until 1937, the year the Bahrain Government promulgated its own Property and Nationality Laws. These regulated the position of Persians in Bahrain and consolidated the authority of the Shaikh's Government. Nevertheless, Persian pretensions in respect of Bahrain remained in existence until 1970.

Also during the 1930s there was a conspicuous rise in the political awareness of the people of Bahrain, brought about by the increased communication which the oil industry helped to create. Internally, the

oil industry was responsible for the emergence of an embryonic workers movement whose members were both Sunnis and Shi<sup>C</sup>ahs. Mixed Sunni-Shi<sup>C</sup>ah schools provided the opportunity for greater communication, co-operation and even mutual toleration between the two religious groups. Towards the end of 1938 Bahrainis of both persuasions submitted joint demands to the Government of Bahrain and to the Oil Company for reform of the judicial system, better work and pay conditions at the Oil Company, and adequate technical training to enable Bahraini school boys to apply for jobs which required technical skills. The education system which had undergone certain changes failed to satisfy the parents of the school-graduates who expected higher financial rewards for their children. With the Oil Company becoming the chief employer in the country, the Administration of Bahrain felt responsible for introducing better technical training. Yet again we can see that reforms in one sphere generated demands for change elsewhere and the wish of the Government of India to limit the extent and scope of reforms became impossible to achieve. It might be said that oil from the new wells in Bahrain lubricated more than the engines of foreign cars.

The Government of Bahrain was not willing to shoulder direct responsibility for education prior to 1929-30, apart from giving out some subsidies towards the cost of running a few schools. The schools were run by committees, some of whose members, despite their good intentions, were lacking in knowledge or experience. These committees ran the schools until 1930 when the Government took over direct responsibility. There was a gap of about nine years between the institution of the first Sunni Boys' School in 1919 and the first Shi<sup>C</sup>ah School in 1928, during which time education was subjected to separate and uneven development, negatively affecting the Baharnah boys and girls. There was also a delay of about one decade between the creation of the first Boys' School in 1919 and the introduction of the first class for girls in 1927, and a

girls' school in 1928.

As early as 1929-30, the Administration voiced its unease about the impact on Bahraini boys of pan-Arab ideas, which had already affected students in Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad and Beirut, and which were beginning remotely to influence Bahrain too. The serious implications of these ideas were stressed by the British Director of Education in his report of 1939, with which the Adviser was in full agreement. What both men failed to take into consideration was that Bahrainis were also Arabs and to share the aspirations of the Arab World was not alien to their minds.

From 1939 to 1945 education was subjected to direct British control. As a result the annual allocations for education increased from sixty thousand rupees in 1356 (1937-38) to over one lakh of rupees in 1357 (1938-39), and to over four lakhs in 1364 (1945-46). The whole system was overhauled, a new Technical School was opened, primary education was reorganized, secondary level instruction was introduced for the first time, and extra emphasis was laid on school health services. Technical education was further developed during the years 1941-45, under a new British Principal with previous experience in Iraq. Among the problems encountered was difficulty of recruiting staff for the Technical School and the purchase of equipment during the War.

Between 1920 and 1945 therefore Bahrain experienced a series of important changes. Political and administrative reforms began to alter the institutional structure of Shaikhly rule. Gradually some long-standing abuses were rectified and modern administrative practices were introduced. In these areas Bahrain was certainly ahead of the other Arab Shaikhdoms of the Gulf. The path of change was not a smooth one and with the devastating decline of the pearl trade Bahrain faced economic ruin. Salvation came in the shape of a new industry - oil. The demands of that industry generated further economic and social change, and the new wealth helped Bahrain through the difficult years of the Second World

War. By this time new political ideas were beginning to affect even the traditional societies of Arabia. The process of educational reform, and the new international ties generated by both the oil industry and the relocation of the air route from the Persian littoral, helped to bring on new ideas and new contacts. It is arguable that Bahrain was fortunate in having begun the process of change before oil revenues began to flow. For when they increased sharply after the Second World War, Bahrain already had some experience of change and had already begun to abandon traditional ways of rule. The power of the ruling family was certainly preserved - indeed it may even have been enhanced because of oil revenues - but the benefits of modernity were being shared by many citizens, and because the population was so small no large group was excluded from these benefits. The experience of reform and economic change in the 1920s and 1930s certainly gave hope for the future.

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