

# BAHRAIN 1920-1945

BRITAIN, THE SHAIKH  
AND THE  
ADMINISTRATION

MAHDI ABDALLA AL-TAJIR

# Bahrain 1920–1945: Britain, The Shaikh and the Administration



# BAHRAIN 1920-1945

BRITAIN, THE SHAIKH  
AND THE  
ADMINISTRATION

MAHDI ABDALLA AL-TAJIR



CROOM HELM  
London • New York • Sydney

© 1987 M.A. Al-Tajir  
Croom Helm Ltd, Provident House, Burrell Row,  
Beckenham, Kent BR3 1AT  
Croom Helm Australia 44-50 Waterloo Road,  
North Ryde 2113, New South Wales

Published in the USA by  
Croom Helm  
in association with Methuen, Inc.  
29 West 35th Street  
New York, NY 10001

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Al-Tajir, Mahdi Abdalla  
Bahrain 1920-1945 : Britain, the Shaikh  
and the administration.  
1. Bahrain — Politics and government  
I. Title  
953'.65'04 DS247.B28

ISBN 0-7099-5122-1

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Al-Tajir, Mahdi Abdalla.  
Bahrain, 1920-1945: Britain, the shaikh, and the  
administration.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Bahrain—Politics and government. 2. Bahrain—  
Economic conditions. 3. Great Britain—Foreign relations  
—Bahrain. 4. Bahrain—Foreign relations—Great  
Britain. I. Title.

DS247.B28T24 1987 953'.6502 87-3611

ISBN 0-7099-5122-1

Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
Billing & Sons of Worcester



# Contents

## Preface

## Notes on Transliteration and Method of Numbering Abbreviations

1	<i>Introduction</i>	1
2	<i>Bahrain 1919–June 1923</i>	20
	Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifah and the Administration	20
	The Ruler, the Agent, and the rulings of the Bahrain Order-in-Council	22
	Jurisdiction over subjects of Arab Rulers	22
	The disagreement over the Majlis al-‘Urf	25
	The political climate at the time of Major Dickson	26
	The Government replies to the Shaikh’s four requests	28
	The inauguration of the Municipality	29
	Shaikh Hamad’s elevation to the Administration	30
	The Baharnah uprising of February 1922	35
	The Dowasir tribesmen seek support from the mainland	39
	The Foreign Office intervenes	40
	The situation in the first half of 1923	42
	Shaikh Isa’s involuntary retirement	45
3	<i>Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad</i>	52
	The institution of a Civil List	52
	The Customs: reorganisation under a British Director	53
	Land revenue	54
	The administration of justice	54
	The institution of Shaikh Hamad’s Court	55
	Shortage of trained local personnel	56
	The resistance to the reforms	56
	The first outrage at Sitrah	57
	The campaign against Major Daly	58
	The protests of Shaikh Isa	59
	The Baharnah support the reforms	60
	The Congress of October 1923	62
	The Resident’s reply to the petitioners	62
	The Resident’s visit to Bahrain	64

## Contents

	The Dowasir leave Bahrain	65
	Zayani resorts to law	66
	The second outrage at Sitrah	67
	The culprits stand trial	68
	The creation of a force of levies	69
	Shaikh Isa's Memorial to the Government	70
4	<i>Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies: Bahrain 1924–1929</i>	76
	Introduction	76
	Official concern over the reforms	78
	Land survey and record of rights	80
	The institution of the Department of Waqfs	82
	The return of the Dowasir tribesmen	84
	Leniency for the prisoners	88
	Consolidation of the British position: appeasement and indirect control	92
	Concern over the Westernisation of Bahrain: a reappraisal of the reforms	96
5	<i>The Pearling Industry</i>	104
	The diving seasons	104
	Taxes	105
	The customary laws and usages of pearling	105
	Shares	106
	Diving systems	106
	The shortcomings of the Salafieh system	107
	The pearling reforms	109
	The industry faces hard times	115
	Factors which militated against the industry	122
	The industry's fortunes 1935–45	124
	Recent views and counter-views	126
	Table 5.1 Statistics of boats and advances for 1935–45	130
6	<i>The Politics of Education: From Seclusion to Integration 1919–1945</i>	135
	The emergence of modern schools	135
	The first educational mission to Beirut	137
	The formation of a Shi'ah Education Committee	138
	The dismissal of the Syrian headmasters: the beginnings of centralisation	139
	The recall of the mission from Beirut	142
	The 1930s: education in the age of oil	143

## Contents

Reorganisation of education under British Directorship 1939-45	146
The development of technical education	153
Educational affairs before the end of the war	155
7 <i>Agriculture, Oil, Trade and Finances of Bahrain, 1920-1945</i>	162
Agriculture	162
Attempts to improve agriculture	163
The leasing of date-gardens	166
The oil industry	169
BAPCO and its Bahraini employees	173
How the oil industry affected Bahrain	177
Table 7.1 Oil production and royalties 1934-45	179
Table 7.2 Company employees 1933-45	179
Trade and finance	180
Government income and budgetary affairs	180
Table 7.3	182
Table 7.4	186
Table 7.5	189
Table 7.6	199
Table 7.7	199
Table 7.8 Total Customs revenue 1925-45 (Rs.)	215
Table 7.9 Total value of cargo transhipped in selected years (Rs.)	215
Table 7.10 Total trade of Bahrain 1926-39 (Rs.)	216
Table 7.11 Annual budget estimates 1945-64 (1926-46), main allotments — expenditure	217
8 <i>The Background to the Years 1930-1945</i>	219
The Administration and relations with Iran	219
Judicial affairs	225
(1) The Bahrain Court	225
(2) The Lower Bahrain Court	226
(3) The Shara' Court	226
(4) The Majlis al-'Urf	227
Baharnah leadership in the 1930s	228
Agitation for reforms — 1938	238
The Administration during the war	248
Rationing and control of foodstuffs	252
9 <i>Conclusion</i>	262
Bibliography	272
Index	277

**Dedicated with love and gratitude to my parents**

## 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 the researcher has 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 organised by the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. 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 Dr R.M. Burrell of the Department of History at the School, who supervised this study with careful scrutiny, sustained advice and guidance.

I am also grateful 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 Indian 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

## *Preface*

the University of London were all helpful to me. I wish to thank Miss Barbara Terris of the Inter-Library Loan Systems — SOAS, 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.

M.A. Al-Tajir

## Notes on Transliteration and Method of Numbering

Transliteration of Arabic words and the use of diacritical marks are kept to a minimum throughout the book. However, the system adopted here is the one with which Arabists and others concerned with the Middle East are familiar. In the official correspondence of the period studied here many names of persons, places, etc., are written in variant forms by different writers, viz. Isa, Easa for 'Īsa; Qazi, Qadhi for Qāḍī; Shiah, Shia for Shī'ah . . . etc.

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 here.

Finally, note that *Dōwāsir* is the plural of *Dōsari*, a Najdi tribesman resident in Bahrain. Similarly, *Baḥārnah* is the plural form of *Baḥrāni*, a native Shī'ah Arab. J.G. Lorimer (*Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, 'Omān and Central Arabia) uses a slightly different spelling: *Baḥārinah*, which conforms to the written Arabic form rather than the spoken form employed in this study.

It should also be noted that in the tables in Chapter 7 the numbering is given in the system of crores and lakhs e.g. 1,03,650 not 103,650, i.e. one lakh three thousand, six hundred and fifty rupees.





# 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.O.	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



# 1

## Introduction

This study 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 detailed below.) While some aspects of the history of Bahrain during the 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 Bahrain's 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 its 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 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.

## Introduction

The opening chapters of the book provide an account of Bahrain in the early 1920s when it was ruled by Shaikh 'Isa bin 'Ali Al Khalifah, who was born in 1848 and acceded to the Rulership in 1869. His three surviving sons were Shaikh Hamad, born in 1874, Shaikh Mohammad born in 1877, and Shaikh Abdullah born in 1880. The Al Khalifah who followed the Māliki sect of Islam had ruled the island 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' Court, Bahrain's Administration consisted of a few local Councils such as: the *Majlis al-'Urf*, a Council to enquire into commercial disputes; the *Sālifat al-Ghawṣ*, the Court for pearl-diving affairs; and the Shaikh's own Majlis where he met and conferred with his allies, the Chiefs of the tribes and the leading men of Bahrain. Every town had an *Amīr* appointed by the Ruler and authorised 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 the 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'ite.

For centuries, the Shi'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 follows:<sup>2</sup>

The mass of the people of Bahrain who are . . . . . Shi'ahs, were the sufferers and their condition resembled that of helots, who could call no lands nor the produce of any lands their own.

## *Introduction*

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'ah Arabs, but in the period covered in this book 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:<sup>3</sup>

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.

In addition to the tribal element, the Sunni community of Bahrain includes a large number of Huwalah Arabs who profess Arab descent but whose grandparents 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>4</sup>

By virtue of the two Treaties signed with the Shaikh in 1880 and 1892, Britain controlled Bahrain's foreign relations,<sup>5</sup> but prior to 1919, it 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 2). In both cases, the issues affected foreigners, not the Shaikh's subjects.

## *Introduction*

Control of the Agency at Bahrain in the period 1914–20 was the responsibility of Sir Percy Cox who was the Political Resident in the Gulf, 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, the Sultan of Najd and Dependencies, which 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>6</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>7</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 Indian Office.<sup>8</sup>

The enforcement of the Bahrain Order-in-Council in 1919 (see Chapter 2) enhanced the powers invested in the Political Agent and thus created a measure of tension between him and the Shaikh. For some time, 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 the then Agent, Major Dickson, would have preferred a show of force:<sup>9</sup>

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



## *Introduction*

Isa were to occasionally wake up and see a warship lying out in his harbour.

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'ah and detrimental to their privileged position. It was at this stage that Ibn Saud seemed likely to be drawn into Bahrain affairs.<sup>10</sup> During the first half of 1923, a series of outrages was 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:<sup>11</sup>

conditions in Bahrain have stabilized themselves under the rule of Shaikh Hamad. But the rule has been substantially rule by the Political Agent.

The modernisation 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:<sup>12</sup>

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.

## *Introduction*

The reforms of the 1920s certainly brought about 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 per cent of the State's annual income — and this includes the Ruler's one-third share from oil royalties — the Ruling Family possessed more financial power in the oil era than the merchants of Bahrain, some of whom had been ruined by the failure of the pearling industry. This study 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.

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 in the 1920s of the Persian claim to the sovereignty of Bahrain 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 pulled out the few remaining British 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>13</sup> From the start the Persian Government rejected a British proposal to discuss Bahrain independently of any other issue, and in exchange for abandoning its claim to Bahrain it 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 in the wake of the changes that had occurred in Iran. The Committee saw no real harm in Persia assuming its proper share of responsibilities in the Gulf provided it did not allow some other

## *Introduction*

power to take the place of Britain. None the less, Persian nationalism and Persia's membership of 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 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 a 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 deadlock, and a year later a suggestion to declare Bahrain 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:<sup>14</sup>

The principality is an independent Arab State under the protection of His Majesty's Government, but not a British Protectorate.

The air route agreement with Iran was signed in December 1928 and the service began in April 1929, but the route was transferred to the Arabian littoral after the expiry of the agreement on 31 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>15</sup>

The controversy over Bahrain inevitably affected relations with Iran. During the 1920s Tehran repeatedly accused the British authorities in Bahrain of failing to provide adequate protection for the Shi'ahs there. Throughout the 1930s Tehran and Bahrain were involved in tit-for-tat measures and counter-measures against each other's subjects then resident in their respective countries. Relations between Persians and Bahrainis, rather than the Anglo-Persian controversy itself, are treated briefly in the course of this study, and a section in Chapter 8 is devoted to these relations as they developed in the 1930s and were stabilised after 1937.

In Bahrain the Second World War years were a period of hardship, of food shortages and of rationing, but they also saw the

## *Introduction*

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.

The present study comprises eight chapters. Chapters 2-4 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 2 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 covers 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 British assurances to Ibn Saud.

Chapter 3 deals with specific improvements carried out under the Administration of Shaikh Hamad, namely the drawing up of the Civil List, the reform of the Customs, and the institution of Shaikh Hamad's Court. Thereafter, the discussion centres on the politics of reform and 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 Congress of October 1923, the Dowasir exodus from Bahrain, the trial of the Khalids and the creation of the Levies conclude the Chapter.

The background to the years 1924-9 is set out in Chapter 4. This covers the disbandment of the Levies in 1926, the survey of towns and villages, and the creation of new Government Departments such as that for Land Registration and Waqfs (religious endowments). 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 treated in some detail. After Daly's departure from Bahrain at the end of 1926, Shaikh Hamad's involvement in



## *Introduction*

political affairs increased, and this was 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 5 the affairs of the pearling industry are analysed systematically, and the 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 6. Agriculture, oil and Bahrain's trade and finances are treated in Chapter 7. The political background to the years 1930-45 is investigated in Chapter 8, and this includes the Baharnah grievances of 1934 which centred on inadequacies in the Court system, the lack of schools, and the absence of representation on certain Councils. The cool reaction of the Authorities to those complaints is also discussed. With the development of the oil industry in the 1930s and the expansion in education and general communications, 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 section then endeavours to draw together the main themes of the study and to offer an overview of the many changes which affected Bahrain during the period.

## **Sources of the study**

As noted earlier this study 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 representing the British political authorities in the Gulf. These primary sources cover virtually all the affairs of Bahrain in the period under consideration. The Political and Secret series contains much of the correspondence between the 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.

## *Introduction*

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, and information on contacts made with Ibn Saud, the Shaikh of Qatar and the Chiefs of the Trucial Coast.<sup>16</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>17</sup>

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

Major Daly to Col. F.B. Prideaux. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 20-S, 5 August 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 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.

As regards the Foreign Office material, the series F.O. 371, volumes 8947 and 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 'Āman fī Jazīrat al-'Arab*, (*Fifty Years in Arabia*), (Cairo, 1960) 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 Rīḥānī: *Mulūk al-'Arab* (Beirut, 1925), Vol. Two, pp. 179–249. Rīḥānī, a well-known writer, traveller and lecturer, visited the islands during the first half of 1923 and met Shaikh Isa in his Majlis in Moharraq. 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-Zāyed, 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 6 on Education.) Both Rīḥānī and Wahbah provide 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 and this is discussed in Chapter 2.

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'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 to 1942, and continued thereafter in the same capacity to serve his son, Shaikh Salman, from 1942 to 1957. 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 includes his regular reports, is far more detailed and is 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 Belgrave.



## *Introduction*

Whereas several previous studies covered a longer 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'ahs in Bahrain with British connivance. Also, reform meant different things to different communities. To the foreign community of Bahrain, especially the Indians engaged in inter-regional trade, reform meant the introduction of an organised 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. In the eyes of the Sunni tribal element reform had to be resisted since its 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 2 and 3.

(c) The Saudi influence, as exercised by the Najdi element in Bahrain in the early 1920s, was quite significant. The works of Rumaihi and Khuri (see below) fail to mention the correspondence between Ibn Saud and Colonel Knox, acting Resident, especially that 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 uphold Sunni control of the Administration in 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 1923–4. These protests have received little or no attention from previous writers.

## *Introduction*

(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 recommendations which resulted have received little attention in previous works and they are treated in considerable detail in Chapter 4.

(f) Pearling is examined much more systematically in this study 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. 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 and the British developmental contribution in the years 1939–45, including the important role of the British Council.

(h) In addition, this study surveys the trade and finances of Bahrain and includes a review of the total value of the trade — 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 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 and 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 cover 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 mention the strike in 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 — AUB — 1964) deals with the modern history of Bahrain beginning with the 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'ah Arabs, the Anglo-Iranian controversy over the sovereignty of Bahrain, and the development of the national movement in the early 1950s. While, like the preceding one, it is a sound study, 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* (AUB, 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* (AUB, 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 (p. 113), though the correct date is after the expiry of the Air Route Agreement with Iran on 31 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 Politics in Bahrain 1869–1915* (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 above. 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) needs to be reconsidered since adequate information based on old Arab sources has come to light in recent years.<sup>18</sup>

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 have written 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, namely 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 lasted 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 gradually deprived the native Shi'ah Arabs of their lands after they had conquered Bahrain in 1783 (see Rumaihi *Political and Social Change*, p. 25; also, 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 among 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‘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 recognised that Shi‘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‘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‘ahs held their Qaḍis nor to minimise 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. Khuri’s statement (p. 89) that Major Dickson ‘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 6 November 1919 to 28 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 on the Joint Court (see Chapter 3). 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 the school because at this stage it was financed by private donations from the Sunni community of Bahrain. Finally, concerning ‘other modernizing

## Introduction

institutions' the present 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'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:<sup>19</sup>

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.

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

The author of the present book 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. Modernisation came in several forms and as a result of a multiplicity of factors and the author hopes the following chapters will provide a useful and thorough examination of the many processes which were at work.

## Notes

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 October 1928.

2. Colonel F.B. Prideaux, P.R., to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/73, No. 521–S, 6 September 1924.

3. Colonel A.P. Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/73, No. 57–T, 22 March 1924.

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

## Introduction

5. 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. 237–8.

6. 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 31 January 1921. I.O.R. L/P + S/11/193.

7. L. Oliphant to U.S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. E 2649/1644/91, 18 March 1922.

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

9. Major H.R.P. Dickson to D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/71, No. 69-C, 13 March 1920.

10. Ibn Saud's formal relations with Britain were first shaped by the Treaty of Dārīn of 1915, which earned him and his successors 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-Qūṣaibi as his Agent in Bahrain, about whom Daly wrote: 'he had the monopoly of the carrying trade between here (i.e. Bahrain) and 'Ojair and owns a number of boats. The brothers Qūṣaibi, 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-Qūṣaibi aspires to become recognized as Bin Saud's Consul here.' Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 88-C, 23 May 1922.

11. Memorandum, B. 396.

12. Sir D. Bray, F.S.G.I.: Note on Reforms in Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/127, no number, 6 November 1927.

13. For a brief account of 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', in Hopwood, *The Arabian Peninsula*, p. 187. For the background to the British association with Henjam and Basidu, see pp. 165–9.

14. Memorandum, B. 396.

15. 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.

16. The Agency Reports also contain the following regular headings: Ruler of Bahrain and the Al Khalifah 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.

17. 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.

18. In his doctoral thesis Qubain states (Part II, p. 286), 'the Shi'is are all Baharnah. There is no agreement as to the ethnic origin of these



## *Introduction*

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 '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 'Abd al-Qais and are presently peopled by the Baharnah Arabs who are descended from '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'ism in Bahrain back to the Safavid rule in Persia (1501-1732) is misleading (*Gazetteer* . . . , Geographical and Statistical, Part IIA, p. 208). Arab sources trace Shi'ism in the region to the time of 'Ali Ibn Abī Ṭālib, the fourth of the rightly-guided Caliphs. They mention 'Abd al-Qais among his earlier supporters, Awāl island being their stronghold. They reveal that a large number of 'Abd al-Qais personalities fought on his side in the battle of al-Jamal in 656 A.D., and in the battle of Ṣiffīn shortly afterwards. In the wake of the tribal conquest of Bahrain in 1783, the Shi'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* (London, 1982)

19. Daly: Note on Muhammad Sharif. I.O.R. 15/2/102, 12 June 1924. Mohammad Sharif Awazi became secretary of the Municipality shortly after the appointment of Shaikh Hamad as President of the same in 1921.

## 2

### Bahrain 1919–June 1923

#### **Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifah and the Administration**

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

Shortly before the First World War 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 to visit 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 6 June of that year.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of the visit was to convey to King George V the congratulations of Shaikh Isa on the successful outcome of the war.<sup>5</sup> On 1 August he was granted an audience with the King, and a month later on 1 September was interviewed by Sir Arthur Hirtzel, Assistant-Secretary of State — India Office, at Abdullah's request.

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>6</sup>

On 4 September, 1919 Abdullah embodied them in a Memorandum which he signed: 'Abdullah bin Isa — The Successor'.<sup>7</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 interventions 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-'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.

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 . . .

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 27 October Shaikh Abdullah arrived back in Bahrain via Egypt, where he had a brief stay, and thereafter engaged in plans for the setting up of a modern school in Moharraq, then the Al Khalifah's place of residence. Abdullah's authority was now considerably greater than that of Shaikh Hamad the Heir Apparent.<sup>8</sup>

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

### *Jurisdiction over subjects of Arab Rulers*

The Bahrain Order-in-Council<sup>9</sup> was initially introduced in August 1913, but owing to the outbreak of the First World War, it was suspended until February 1919 when it was reintroduced. It was subjected thereafter to a number of Amendments 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 dependants, 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 following comment:<sup>10</sup>

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 Bahrain unless this Order contains some express and specific provision incompatible with the observance thereof'.

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 (see also Chapter 3). Cases of appeal from the Agency Courts were taken to the Chief Court at the Residency in Bushire. The Order also recognised and defined local institutions such as the Majlis al-'Urf, the Salifah Court, and the Shara' 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-'Urf; to accept or reject any of the Shaikh's nominees;

and to sanction the appointment of the Shara' Qadi and the Salifah judge. The new regulations, which aimed at ensuring fair play, were none the less 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) the Majlis al-'Urf; (c) the Salifah Court. Items (a) and (b) are discussed in this chapter, whereas item (c) is treated in Chapter 5.

The reduction of the Shaikh's power, as a result of the Order, was 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:<sup>11</sup>

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.

Later on, Shaikh Isa explained that the above concession was not meant to include the dependants of local Arab Shaikhs with whom he had reciprocal judicial arrangements.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to the occupation of Hasa by Ibn Saud in May 1913, Najdis, Hasawis and 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>13</sup> In the 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:<sup>14</sup>



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.

At this point, the Resident, who did not anticipate any serious difficulties, advised the Government of India to avoid any definite ruling in the matter.<sup>15</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>16</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>17</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>18</sup>

Throughout the War, by informal arrangement, Shaikh Isa was allowed jurisdiction over the above Arabs.<sup>19</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>20</sup> Also, in August of that year, a similar arrangement was made whereby Shaikh Abdullah bin Jasim Al-Thāni of Qatar requested the Agent in Bahrain to exercise judicial authority over Qataris.<sup>21</sup> Following these arrangements, Major Dickson issued a Notice to the public to the effect that:<sup>22</sup>

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.



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>23</sup>

*The disagreement over the Majlis al-'Urf*

When the Majlis al-'Urf met on 2 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, Haji Ahmad Ali Yateem,<sup>24</sup> and appointed Haji Abd Ali bin Rajab instead, 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>25</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, recently brought into force in February 1919, to the 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:<sup>26</sup>

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.

On 5 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>27</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>28</sup> 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.

In November 1919, Major Dickson succeeded Captain Bray as Political Agent Bahrain, and the following January 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 14 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>29</sup>

Shaikh Isa replied by pointing out that he still awaited an official reply to the 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>30</sup>

Thereafter, Shaikh Abdullah met Dickson and the discussion centred on his father's requests to the Government. Both sides decided to restore the meetings of the Majlis, which accordingly met on 23 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 British Government's reply to his requests.<sup>31</sup>

It is noteworthy that the first three of Shaikh Isa's five nominees were peninsular Arabs: Abdullah bin Hasan ad-Dosari, Abdur Rahman az-Zayani, and Abdul Aziz al-Qusaibi, the others being Yusuf Fakhroo and Haji Abd Ali bin Rajab. The foreign members of the Majlis nominated by the Political Agent were: Mohammad Shareef Awazi, Haji Abdul Nabi bin Ahmad Bushehri, Mr Tika Gangaram Tikamdas, Seth Budha el-Banyan and Hafiz Khanbhai Mohammad Ali Bohra.

### **The political climate at the time of Major Dickson**

Shortly after Dickson took over as Political Agent Bahrain he found, like his predecessor 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:<sup>32</sup>

. . . 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.

In a letter to the Deputy-Resident, Dickson wrote about the 'wild political ideas' which Shaikh Abdullah had contracted abroad, and the fact that Shaikh Isa missed no opportunity of reminding him of his independence, namely:<sup>33</sup>

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.

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 had described earlier in 1917 as follows:<sup>34</sup>

(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.

Following Bray's advice, Dickson embarked upon the holding of regular Majlis — Arab-style — for the local people, where people with grievances could air them in the presence of the Agent. He also employed an Iraqi Muslim 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:<sup>35</sup>

. . . 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 other words keep the P.A. and the Ruler in a state of enmity and manage them.

*The Government replies to the Shaikh's four requests*

Before the end of 1919, British officials in the area exchanged views about Shaikh Isa's requests. In December the Deputy-Resident outlined 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:<sup>36</sup>

his Government is singularly inefficient and weak and is not nearly as good as most of the other Shaikhs. Its tendency is to exploit the Islands and their inhabitants for the benefit of the Alkhalifah and one or two leading Arab families.

After some initial delay, the Secretary of State for India eventually communicated to Shaikh Abdullah the official response to the four requests which he had submitted earlier on his father's behalf. The first request was turned down on the grounds that the Government could not permit the Shaikh to exercise jurisdiction over the 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>37</sup>

His second request, to be allowed to nominate 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 other request for the opening of a port at Zubarah was dropped on the basis of the difficulties surrounding



the issue. Major Dickson had earlier expressed his opposition to this request, on the grounds that the Shaikh of Qatar would be certain to resist the development of a new port in Qatar since it would undermine his trade at Dohah, as would Ibn Saud who had recently opened a trade centre at 'Ojair'.<sup>38</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.

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*

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 1 July 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>39</sup> Road construction and repairs, hygiene, sinking of artesian wells and creation of the municipal police were among the Municipality's earliest tasks.<sup>40</sup>

When it was 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 hostile slogans. According to the Agent, the crowds were asked by certain interested persons, including Kanoo, to demonstrate against the Municipal Council which was, they were led to believe, an alien body threatening the local institutions.<sup>41</sup>

After a number of sessions, the Council became a powerless body because 'Shaikh Abdulla and the Secretary, scandalously mismanaged the Municipality, and the Council so cowed, that its meetings had become a farce.'<sup>42</sup> To restore its credibility the Agent introduced a set of bye-laws making Council decisions subject to majority vote. He also decided to attend the Council's meetings *ex officio*, thus providing further safeguard against foul play. This increased involvement in the affairs of the country gave rise to greater resentment on the part of the Rulers, especially Shaikh Abdullah and his supporters. A campaign against the Agent's intrusions in the Shaikh's Administration began and a petition was organised against him by Shaikh Abdullah's supporters. The campaign coincided with the end of Dickson's period of service in Bahrain and before leaving Bahrain in November 1920, his final remarks on the political scene were as follows:<sup>43</sup>

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.

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.

### **Shaikh Hamad's elevation to the Administration**

After Dickson's departure, Khan Sahib Saiyed Siddiq Hasan — the Indian Assistant — acted for the Political Agent. During this time the Agency's influence over the affairs of Bahrain dropped sharply. 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, and 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, Daly stated:<sup>44</sup>



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 effect made to enforce justice . . .

The constant changes of Political Agents and periods during which a subordinate held charge, admirably suited his purpose.

Shaikh Isa was now in his dotage, and his decisions were largely influenced by his powerful wife, Shaikh Abdullah's mother.<sup>45</sup> Shaikh Abdullah represented his father in the Administration of Bahrain and held the offices of President of the Municipal Council and of the Education Committee. Apart from the tribal elements, his supporters included Jasim Mohammad al-Chirawi<sup>46</sup>, his Secretary and a 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 in the Administration. Several attempts by intermediaries, acting on advice from the Agent, failed to persuade Shaikh Isa to remove Abdullah from office and to appoint Hamad in his place. Fear of Abdullah supplanting Hamad in the question of the succession to Shaikh Isa finally forced Daly to write to the Shaikh urging him to appoint Hamad to the Administration.<sup>47</sup>

On 18 June 1921 Shaikh Isa agreed to the Agent's suggestion and wrote in confirmation: '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>48</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 by the Agent as Secretary to the Municipality. Awazi replaced Mohammad Akhtar, an Indian Muslim, dismissed earlier on account of 'tactless behaviour and dishonest methods'.<sup>49</sup>

These measures were approved by the notables of Bahrain, Sunnis as well as Shiahs, who sent letters of thanks to the Agent.<sup>50</sup> To consolidate Hamad's public image as the successor, arrangements were made for a public meeting at which a number of speakers were to deliver talks and poems, expressing their joy at the occasion. This projected meeting failed to materialise, however, owing to the following reasons adduced by the Agent:<sup>51</sup>

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.

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 Government and the Government of Bahrain'.<sup>52</sup> The following November Chirawi 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:<sup>53</sup>

. . . 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 . . .

Hafiz Wahbah, who witnessed the events of 1920–21, left us some critical remarks about the Agent's actions. He blamed Daly for 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>54</sup>

Daly's task of improving the Administration of Bahrain was beset with grave difficulties, nevertheless he was determined to see it through. Official policy required him to use persuasion with the Shaikh in bringing about any changes in the Administration. He believed however, that such a policy was no longer producing the desired results.<sup>55</sup>

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.

At this juncture the Baharnah representatives approached the Agent and reminded 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 Britain, as Protecting Power, to introduce good government in Bahrain failing which they threatened to seek the protection of another Arab Ruler whose identity they did not reveal. These views seem to have been acceptable to the Agent who commented: 'I respectfully submit that these representations made on most adequate grounds, as we have ample proof, are worthy of consideration'.

On 21 December 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 his Administration, which they refused to supply.<sup>56</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:<sup>57</sup>

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 is subject to plunder and themselves liable to mal-treatment every moment.

The deputation put to the Resident their community's specific grievances including the case of a man who had lost his father and was himself threatened. The Resident granted him Agency protection and commented as follows in his letter 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.

Acting on a request from the Resident, the Agent despatched a detailed report on specific cases of maltreatment which the deputation had raised.<sup>58</sup> These were communicated to the Government of India in a series of letters from the Resident which bore the title: 'Bahrain Misrule'.<sup>59</sup> More importantly, the Resident expressed his doubts about the official policy adopted so far in Bahrain:<sup>60</sup>

. . . 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.

The Resident attributed the problems facing Shaikh Hamad's Administration to the resistance put up by his younger brother, whose temporary deportation to the mainland he now recommended to the Government.<sup>61</sup>

At this time, Major Daly wielded great influence over the affairs of Bahrain and this made him the focus of hostile criticism. Several articles critical of his interference in the Administration of Bahrain appeared in the Egyptian paper *Al-Akhbar* during January 1922.<sup>62</sup> He blamed them on H. Wahbah whom he described as 'notoriously anti-British',<sup>63</sup> and accused him of being 'Abdullah's right-hand man in diffusing propaganda'.<sup>64</sup>

In their opposition to the new Administration the disaffected elements resorted to acts of violence and on 12 January 1922 they fired on Manamah police posts with the object of terrifying the police.<sup>65</sup> As a result, the Agent drew the Shaikh's attention to the dangers facing the country, and asked him to take the necessary measures to contain the explosive situation before it deteriorated further and dragged various factions into acts of violence. Realising the seriousness of the situation, Shaikh Isa turned to the Agent for advice.<sup>66</sup>

At this point, Hafiz Wahbah arrived from Kuwait. He had earlier been blamed for 'creating dissension between the Agency



and the Government of Bahrain'.<sup>67</sup> His presence in Bahrain was not desirable and Shaikh Isa, acting on advice from the Agent, denied him entry into the country.

On 31 January, the Government of India sent a cable to the Resident, which read:<sup>68</sup>

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.

It was clear that so 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, it was still committed to its earlier policy which had so far failed to bring about positive changes on the part of the Shaikh. It 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. It 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.

Thereafter Shaikh Abdullah was confronted with the evidence against him. He admitted to his role in the disturbances, promised to rectify his own position and pledged his support for Shaikh Hamad's Administration. Despite misgivings on Hamad's part,<sup>69</sup> Abdullah was allowed a fresh start.

### **The Baharnah uprising of February 1922**

On 6 February 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 and 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, in the words of the Agent, was 'oblivious to the fact that he was sitting on a volcano'.<sup>70</sup> This communal action by the Baharnah posed a serious challenge to the authority of the Shaikh who sought the Agent's advice. The latter, not wishing to be directly involved in relations between the Ruler and his subjects, urged Shaikh Hamad to find ways of appeasing the Baharnah.<sup>71</sup> It was decided that a deputation of Baharnah, accompanied by a number of leading Sunni personalities, should seek an audience with the Ruler.<sup>72</sup> During the meeting, the Baharnah submitted the following demands:<sup>73</sup>

- (i) No one except the Ruler and Shaikh Hamad to decide (Court) cases or to have the right to punish in any way.
- (ii) Cases which Shaikh Hamad cannot decide to the satisfaction of both parties to be referred by him to the Shara', Majlis al-'Urfi or Salifah as the case may be.
- (iii) No one to be dragged off to the Ruler's Court without notice, but to be served with a summons signed by Shaikh Hamad.
- (iv) 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 those written in the document to be enforced.
- (v) Steps to be taken to stop the Shaikh's camels being allowed to enter and graze in private gardens.
- (vi) 'Sukhrah' (i.e. forced labour; also commandeering of donkeys) to cease.
- (vii) The practice of placing calves belonging to the ruling family with Bahraini bakers to fatten free of charge, to cease.
- (viii) The prison to be put in proper order and a reasonable house provided for the same.

After consulting with the chief members of his family, Shaikh Isa agreed to concede to these demands. The Agent, on the other hand, doubted the Shaikh's real intentions.

On 7 March 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>74</sup> He also cautioned Shaikh Abdullah not to oppose Shaikh Hamad's Administration and urged Shaikh Hamad to show firmness in dealing with 'oppression'.<sup>75</sup>

Thereafter both Shaikhs Hamad and Abdullah frequently sought the Agent's advice admitting to him that the difficulties facing them were caused by 'past misrule'. Commenting on this change of attitude, the Agent noted:<sup>76</sup>

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.

Since February 1922 the Baharnah had refused to pay discriminatory taxes, with Shaikh Hamad pursuing a conciliatory policy towards them. His efforts were thwarted, however, by his uncle Shaikh Khalid and his sons who continued to try to collect taxes. During April many Baharnah assembled at the Agency in protest, and when they refused to leave, the Agent asked Shaikhs Hamad and Abdullah to talk to their representatives. They agreed to disperse only after they had received assurances from the Shaikhs that they would 'instruct Shaikh Khalid to cease interference with liberty of persons and to postpone collection of taxes'. In addition, they were told that the Rulers would consider their complaints regarding taxation and the administration of justice, and subsequent to these developments the Shaikhs decided to abolish the 'obnoxious taxes' in preference to 'reasonable and just taxation'. In addition to Customs revenue, the Shaikhs collected the following taxes:<sup>77</sup>

- (i) Date-garden tax. Collected quite arbitrarily . . . from Shiahhs only.
- (ii) 'Raqabieh', literally 'neck-tax' or 'poll-tax' levied on males at varying rates in different localities. It has been collected from Shiahhs only and is particularly obnoxious to them.
- (iii) Fish-tax. Levied from Shiahhs only at varying rates.<sup>78</sup>
- (iv) A special tax on Shiahhs during Muharram.
- (v) A variety of taxes collected in kind from Shiahhs only.
- (vi) 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.

The Shaikhs now asked the Agent to suggest an alternative method of taxation. After sounding out local opinion, he submitted the following scheme:<sup>79</sup>

- (i) 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' law.
- (ii) Fish tax of 1–10th on fish caught in the local fish traps, and 1–20th on fish caught otherwise.
- (iii) Abolition of 'Raqabieh' and all other taxes on Shiahs, and substitute therefore 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.
- (iv) The impartial collection of the existing pearling tax.

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 submitted the matter to the Resident noting that if the Sunnis refused to pay taxes, the Shi'ah's would follow suit, in which case the Shaikh's income would be drastically cut. Already the Shaikh's revenue had dropped as a result of the Baharnah refusal to pay what they regarded as arbitrary taxes. For the scheme to be acceptable to both sections of the population it was necessary that it received the approval of the Government before its introduction, Daly noted. At this juncture the Shaikhs were at a loss as to how to collect revenue from the Shi'ahs without provoking further protests. The Agent advised them to open a Government Office to be run by two clerks.<sup>80</sup> This office was destined to become the precursor of a central bureaucracy.

Early in May 1922, the Government of India cabled the Resident:<sup>81</sup>

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.

Although the Government promised moral backing for the reforms, it was nevertheless anxious to avoid any accusation that they were forced upon the Shaikh.

In June 1922 a reconciliation, apparently on firmer grounds than before, was effected between Shaikh Abdullah and the Administration of Shaikh Hamad. 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>82</sup> The Resident commented:<sup>83</sup>

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.

This 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>84</sup>

### **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 as placing Shi'ahs and Sunnis on an equal footing. After the visit news of Ibn Saud pledging them support circulated in Bahrain.<sup>85</sup>

It is important to note that the Dowasir had settled in Bahrain, in Budayya and Zallaq, in 1845.<sup>86</sup> They had acknowledged Shaikh Isa's Chiefship in name only and were now opposed to recognising Shaikh Hamad as his successor. About their earlier dealings with Shaikh Isa, Lorimer wrote:<sup>87</sup>



. . . 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.

After the Baharnah uprising of February 1922, the Dowasir approached Shaikh Hamad offering him their support, but he very wisely turned them down.<sup>88</sup> He was careful not to get involved in their designs, which conflicted with official advice, quite apart from the fact that he might have alienated Baharnah support at a time when he could not afford to lose it. The Dowasir threat to abandon the islands *en masse* was taken seriously by Shaikh Hamad who maintained good relations with Ibn Saud and intended to keep them so. In the past such threats often forced the Ruler to give in to their demands.<sup>89</sup>

The movement for reform in Bahrain was a source of concern to Ibn Saud who feared lest it should spread among his own Shi'ah 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 and as a result 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>90</sup>

### **The Foreign Office intervenes**

During the first half of 1922 Persian newspapers put out articles on Bahrain alleging that the British authorities there were condoning the maltreatment of Shi'ahs. These allegations were heeded by the Foreign Office and on two occasions, in March and May,<sup>91</sup> it 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 the Resident summarised the Foreign Office views to the Agent, as follows:<sup>92</sup>

The Foreign Office points out that the gross injustice involved by the Sunni immunity from taxation and the victimisation of Shiahs with British connivance affords



opportunity for anti-British agitations in Persia and elsewhere.

In Bahrain Shaikh Isa remained opposed to suggestions of reform and the Resident believed that nothing short of a rebellion by the Baharnah could force him to introduce improvements in his Administration.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, Shaikh Isa would not allow Shaikh Hamad to take any decision affecting the Administration without his prior consent. With the Government of India committed only to moral support of Shaikh Hamad's plan for tax reforms, and with Ibn Saud pledged to assist the Dowasir in their efforts to resist the implementation of that plan, the Agent preferred to play for time and to watch 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, 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>94</sup> One article demanded, *inter alia*, the appointment of a 'Karguzar' — Persian Governor — in Bahrain<sup>95</sup>, and another accused Major Daly of mistreating the Persians.<sup>96</sup> Yet 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>97</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>98</sup> Concern over the future of Anglo-Persian relations finally forced the Foreign Office to intervene with the India Office during early December 1922 urging the introduction of reforms on the following lines:<sup>99</sup>

that steps may be taken forthwith for the introduction at Bahrain of reforms tending to ensure the equitable treatment of Shiahs. 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.

### **The situation in the first half of 1923**

The faltering of the reforms represented a serious blow to the Baharnah hopes of achieving parity with the Sunni Arabs. Haji Ahmad bin Ali Khamis, one of their leaders, informed 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, Shaikh Isa had made such a commitment; and through their friends in India the Baharnah would publicise their grievances in the Indian press.<sup>100</sup> The increased political awareness of the Baharnah was induced, according to the Agent, by a number of factors, internal and external, namely the Rulers' enhanced wealth and power, the pursuit of harsh policies against the Shi'ahs, the spread of newspapers which covered events in Iraq, India and Egypt and travel and interaction with foreigners especially during the pearling season.

During January 1923 a number of leading persons made a final attempt to try to get Shaikh Isa to agree to the Manamah Municipality's scheme for water and electricity supply, but the Shaikh remained as unyielding as ever. Towards the end of January, the Resident informed the government that persuasion had so far failed to produce results with the Shaikh. He also admitted that, since the reforms were pro-Shi'ah, they were bound to evoke a strong reaction from Ibn Saud. He summed up the position as follows:<sup>101</sup>

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 the 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.

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 along the lines indicated in their earlier letter of December 1922.<sup>102</sup> Despite the mounting pressure, the Government of India preferred to see the Shaikh taking the initiative in favour of reform rather than appearing as their mere

recipient. For the first time, however, it contemplated the use of drastic action against the Shaikh as a last resort:<sup>103</sup>

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.

During April 1923, Colonel Trevor departed on leave and Colonel S.G. Knox acted for him as Resident. On 20 April a fight broke out between a Najdi and a Persian over a watch in the main market place in Manamah. The quarrel soon spread and engulfed members of both communities. In the clashes which followed several Najdis and Persians were wounded. In reporting the incident, the Agent mentioned that the casualties would have been much higher had it not been for the efforts of the small police force, which managed to contain the violence. In fact, the force was formed chiefly of Persians and was controlled by Mohammad Sharif Awazi, Secretary of the Municipality. On 10 May fresh disturbances erupted between the two sides leaving eight persons dead and many more wounded.<sup>104</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>105</sup> The Persians of Bahrain reported the matter to the authorities in Tehran.<sup>106</sup> On 12 May, the third day of clashes, the Dowasir attacked the Baharnah village of 'Āli, wounding several people and setting a number of houses on fire.<sup>107</sup>

In a subsequent letter to the Resident, Ibn Saud claimed that the attacks on 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 failing to stop the troubles at an earlier stage and suggested an enquiry into the affair in order to determine the cause of the trouble.<sup>108</sup> In his reply, 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>109</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, 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.

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 9 May he sent a telegram to the Colonial Office arguing for the maintenance of the *status quo*, which if altered by any action against the Shaikh would antagonise other Shaikhs in the area including Ibn Saud. 'Misrule', he added, was no worse than the state of affairs twenty years earlier and 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>110</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 Shi'ahs are supposed to suffer in Bahrain'. He believed they were aimed at reviving the Persian claim to the sovereignty of Bahrain and that they would not subside with the enforcement of pro-Shi'ah reforms in Bahrain. He reiterated his earlier view about the preservation of Sunni supremacy.<sup>111</sup>

But if the intention is to tax Sunnis and Shi'ahs 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.

In a telegram to the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy expressed disagreement with some of Knox's views, and described his letter as 'hastily drafted'. He disputed Knox's statement that reforms were chiefly 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.<sup>112</sup>

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 . . .

He agreed with Knox's view that following the departure of Sir Percy Cox and the termination of Ibn Saud's subsidy, the latter was 'particularly difficult to handle'. He summed up the 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.

### **Shaikh Isa's involuntary retirement**

Following the disturbances of 10–12 May 1923 the Resident proceeded to Bahrain, arriving there on 14 May. On 18 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 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. Shaikh Isa was reported to have said: 'You can kill me or turn me out, but while I am alive, I will not retire' and also that in his private opinion 'the Shaikhdom of Bahrain was not worth a cigarette'.<sup>113</sup>

At the Resident's request, 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 replied:<sup>114</sup>

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.

On 26 May, Knox held a Majlis for the representatives of the



people at which Shaikh Isa's enforced 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>115</sup> There followed another speech by the Resident praising Shaikh Isa's 55 years of rule, and attributing 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.

Knox wound up his speech by warning the Shara' Qadis of the consequences of allowing leading people 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.

On 15 June 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:<sup>116</sup>

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.

## Notes

1. Abdullah's Wazir in the area was Abdullah bin Radi, from Jid Hafs, described by the Agent as a man of questionable integrity. See

*Bahrain 1919–June 1923*

Major Daly to Col. Trevor, I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 1-C, 3 January 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 January 1922.

4. Telegram from Political-Baghdad to Political-Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/72, No. 8307, 31 July 1919.

5. J.G. Laithwaite: Memorandum on Bahrain 1908–1928. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1041, No. B. 396, 8 October 1928.

6. Note by Sir Arthur Hirtzel, I.O.R. 15/1/319, 1 September 1919.

7. Memorandum from Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa. I.O.R. 15/1/319, 4 September 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. 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 the King. A.R.P.A. 1925. I.O.R. 15/2/296.

8. 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 'Aisha — his mother — that all houses of Bahrain be decorated with red and green flags for six days in his honour.

9. 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.

10. Major A.P. Trevor to P.A., Bahrain, I.O.R. 15/1/299, 5 May 1915.

11. Translation of a letter dated 16 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.

12. J.G. Laithwaite: Exercise of Jurisdiction in Cases Affecting Foreign Subjects in Bahrain by the British Political Authorities. I.O.R. L/P + S18, No. B-422, 3 March 1930, pp. 2–3.

13. Major Trevor — P.A. to Col. Sir P. Cox — P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 556, 9 September 1913.

14. Translation of a letter dated 9th Sha'ban 1331 (14 July 1913) from Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdur Rahman Al-Faisal to Shaikh Isa, Ruler of Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/1/319.

15. 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 October 1913.

16. Trevor to Shaikh Isa. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 525, 11 May 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 May 1914).

17. Major S.G. Knox, P.R., to Shaikh Isa. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 266, 28 May 1914.

18. Translation of a letter from Shaikh Isa to Major Knox. I.O.R. 15/1/319, 17th Ramadan 1332 (10 August 1914).

*Bahrain 1919-June 1923*

19. Major Dickson to D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/12, No. 9-C, 17 January 1920.
20. 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 April 1920.
21. Translation of a letter dated 5th Zi l-Qa'dah 1338 (22 July 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 August 1920.
22. Notice to the Public from Major Dickson, I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 391, 26 November 1920.
23. Letter from K.S. Siddiq Hasan, Indian Assistant, to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 476-C, 6 December 1920.
24. Note that Yateem was a member of the Majlis since Captain Prideaux's time as P.A. Bahrain, October 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 April 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. See translation of a letter from Shaikh Isa to Capt. Bray, P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/12, 12 June 1919. Also, see Yateem's letter to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/12, 6 July 1919.
25. See Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 1919. I.O.R. 15/2/12.
26. 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 December 1919.
27. Captain Bray to H.E. Shaikh Isa Alkhalifah. I.O.R. 15/2/12, No. 162, 5 June 1919.
28. Shaikh Isa's letter of 12 June 1919.
29. Dickson to Shaikh Isa. I.O.R. 15/2/12, No. 10, 10 January 1920.
30. Translation of a letter from Shaikh Isa to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/12, 21st Rabi II, 1338 (13 January 1920).
31. Telegram from Dickson to D.P.R. Bushire. I.O.R. 15/2/21, No. 18-C, 23 January 1920.
32. Captain Bray to C.C. Baghdad. I.O.R. 15/2/93, 27 May 1919, p. 22.
33. Dickson to D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/319, 176 C/E 3, 6 December 1919.
34. Major Trevor, D.P.R. to Captain P.G. Loch, P.A. Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/241, 22 June 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 November 1920. Also, A.R.P.A. 1924. I.O.R. 15/2/296.
35. See Dickson's note on Yusuf Kanoo and his past and present connection with local parties, attached to Memorandum No. 430-C, hereafter referred to as Dickson's Note.
36. A.P. Trevor, D.P.R. to Acting C.C. Baghdad. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 246-S, 28 December 1919.
37. A Carter, S.S.I., to Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Alkhalifah. I.O.R. 15/2/72, No. 1145/E.A., 5 May 1920.
38. No. 176C/E3.

*Bahrain 1919-June 1923*

39. Dickson's Note, para. 17.
40. Trevor to E.B. Howell, Officiating Secretary to G. of I., I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 626-S, 10 November 1923.
41. Dickson's Note, para. 19.
42. 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.
43. Dickson to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/241, 26 November 1920.
44. Daly's Report of 1921.
45. Daly described her as '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.
46. Chirawi's uncle Ali bin Abdullah was Shaikh Isa's Financial Secretary and Confidant. See Dickson's Note.
47. Daly's Report of 1921.
48. Translation of a letter from Shaikh Isa bin Ali Alkhalifah to His Majesty's P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/73, 18 June 1921.
49. 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.
50. These letters and their translations are preserved in I.O.R. 15/2/121.
51. Telegram from Daly to the P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/73, No. 56-C, no date.
52. 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 July 1921.
53. 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 May 1923.
54. *Khamsūna 'Āman fī Jazīrat al-'Arab* — Fifty years in Arabia (Egypt 1960), p. 15.
55. Daly's Report of 1921.
56. Col. A.P. Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 45-S, 13 January 1922.
57. Translation of a Petition presented to the Resident on 21 December 1921, appended to the Resident's letter to the Government. I.O.R. 15/2/83, No. 495-S, 30 December 1921.
58. 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 January 1922.
59. See I.O.R. 15/2/83, No. 495-S, I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 23-S,



*Bahrain 1919-June 1923*

- I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 24-S, 6 January 1922; I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 45-S, I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 76-S, 19 January 1922.
60. No. 23-S.
61. No. 24-S.
62. Telegram from the P.A. to the P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 10-C, 12 January 1922.
63. Daly to P.A. Kuwait. I.O.R. 15/1/327, no number, 22 January 1922.
64. No. 45-S.
65. Telegram No. 10-C.
66. Telegram from the Resident to the F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/327, no number, 15 January 1922.
67. Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/327, number not legible, 22 January 1922.
68. Telegram from Foreign, Delhi, to Political, Bushire. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 119-S, 31 January 1922.
69. 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 February 1922.
70. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 29-C, 7 February 1922.
71. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 34-C, 13 February 1922.
72. The leading Sunnis who accompanied the deputation to the Shaikh were Abdul Aziz al-Qusaibi, Yusuf Kanoo, and Mohammad Sharif Awazi.
73. No. 34-C. See also A.R.P.A. 1922. I.O.R. 15/2/296.
74. No. 119-S.
75. Col. Trevor to D. Bray, F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 209-S, 11 March 1922.
76. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 70-C, 11 April 1922.
77. Ibid.
78. 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 iii, which confirms the collection of fish tax, hence it represents some form of control by the Rulers.
79. No. 70-C.
80. Ibid. Also see Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 304-S, 14 April 1922.
81. Telegram from Foreign, Simla, to the Resident, Bushire. I.O.R. 15/2/129, No. 549-S, 2 May 1922.
82. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 105-C, 27 June 1922.
83. Trevor to Daly. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 506-S, 6 July 1922.
84. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 111-C, 13 July 1922.
85. Ibid.
86. Lorimer: *Gazetteer* . . . , Historical Part I-B, p. 883.
87. Ibid., Geographical and Statistical, Vol. II, p. 249.
88. No. 111-C.
89. Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 529-S, 16 July 1922.
90. No. 111-C. Also, A.R.P.A. 1923. I.O.R. 15/2/296.
91. F.O. Letter No. E 2649/1644/91; L. Oliphant to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 5373/1644/91, 29 May 1922.



92. Telegram from the Resident to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/127, no. 1217, 11 July 1922.
93. Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 542-S, 22 July 1922.
94. H.G. Chick, His Majesty's Consul in Shiraz, to Sir Percy Loraine. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 71, 30 September 1922.
95. *Istakhr*, No. 24, 17 September 1922. I.O.R. 15/1/319.
96. *'Asr-i Azadi*, No. 116, 21 September 1922. I.O.R. 15/1/319.
97. *'Asr-i Azadi*, No. 120, 17 October 1922. I.O.R. 15/1/319.
98. Trevor to D. Bray, F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/319, No. 772-S, 17 October 1922.
99. L. Oliphant, F.O., to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. E 13476/1644/91, 7 December 1922.
100. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 2-C, 8 January 1923.
101. The Resident to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 42-S, 27 January 1923.
102. L. Oliphant to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. E 2313/67/91, 8 March 1923.
103. Telegram from the Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department, to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, 17 April 1923.
104. Telegram from Col. S.G. Knox to S.S.C.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, p. 248, 11 May 1923.
105. Telegram from Daly to Col. Knox. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 431, 11 May 1923.
106. Telegram from the Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department, to S.S.I.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, p. 257, 11 May 1923.
107. Telegram from Daly to Knox. I.O.R. 15/1/341, No. 62-C, 12 May 1923. Also telegram from Knox to His Majesty's Minister in Tehran. I.O.R. 15/1/341, No. 103/440, 13 May 1923.
108. 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 May 1923).
109. Col. Knox to H.H. Imam Sir Abdul Aziz ben Abdur Rahman al-Faisal al-Sa'ud. F.O. 371: 8947, No. 172, 14–20 June, 1923.
110. Telegram from Col. Knox to S.S.C.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, p. 255, 9 May 1923.
111. Col. Knox to Government of India. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 222-S, 11 May 1923.
112. Telegram from the Viceroy to S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, p. 242, 14 May 1923.
113. Telegram from the Resident to the S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, p. 233, 20 May 1923.
114. Ibid.
115. Telegram from the Resident to the S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, p. 222, 29 May 1923.
116. 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 June 1923.

### 3

## 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 reduction of the absolute powers of the ruling class. The plan for levying equal taxes, such as land-revenues, on all 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, was bound to cause resentment among the powerful classes. What follows is a discussion of the reforms which the new Administration of Shaikh Hamad sought to implement and the initial resistance shown by the tribal class to their enactment; reform of the pearling industry is left to Chapter 5.

### The institution of a Civil List

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 the 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 1923, amounted to Rs. 30,000 monthly, of which Rs. 4,000 was

Shaikh Isa's monthly salary, plus an extra Rs. 2,000 to cover the cost of the Shaikh's move in the summer from Moharraq to Manamah. This was believed to be sufficient, since 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 Ltd, chosen by the Administration to function partly as the State Bank.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Customs: reorganisation under a British Director**

The Customs represented the chief source of government revenue, 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, the Customs had been farmed out to 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, 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 4 October–3 November 1923, exceeded Rs. 100,000. The daily income amounted to Rs. 1,000 for the first time. 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>5</sup> Under the Hindu Director, the Shaikh was allowed to draw drafts on the Customs. After the 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>6</sup>

Both the introduction of the Civil List and the organisation of the Customs enabled the Administration to draft its first monthly budget. Now that income outstripped expenditure, a feeling of security and stability spread throughout 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>7</sup>

### **Land revenue**

By 1923, the various taxes imposed upon the Baharnah under the old regime had ceased to exist. 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>8</sup> The chief obstacle to the collection of land revenue was the fact that the bulk of the cultivable land was in the possession of the Rulers 'who 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.<sup>9</sup> Land revenue and the land survey are discussed further in Chapter 4.

### **The administration of justice**

In July 1923, the Agent described the absence of proper native courts as 'the root grievance of Bahrainis'.<sup>10</sup> The local judicial system, then in operation, consisted of a Sunni Shara' Court and a Sunni Qadi: Shaikh Qasim al-Mehza'. Two Shi'ah Qadis, Shaikh Khalaf al-'Usfour and Shaikh Salman bin Ahmad al-Hirz of Jid Hafş, dealt with cases which were referred to them. The Agent blamed the shortcomings of the system on the sectarian policies of the day:<sup>11</sup>

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.

The Agency Courts were the only Courts which functioned efficiently, namely:



### *Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

- (i) *The Political Agent's Court*, also called the District Court, which dealt with cases involving British subjects and other foreigners. Indian Criminal and Civil Codes were applied in this Court in addition to some other Indian Acts.
- (ii) *The Joint Court* in which both the Agent and Shaikh Hamad, the latter from 1923 onwards, investigated cases between Bahrain subjects and British subjects or British protected persons.<sup>12</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:<sup>13</sup>

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 Shaikhs's family and the others by the Political Agent with incongruous results.

### *The institution of Shaikh Hamad's Court*

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 signalled the new Administration's intention to put an end to the earlier practices whereby 'every member of Al-Khalifah family used to convict and punish Baharnah peasants without trial'.<sup>14</sup>

The example of the Joint Court was taken into consideration when the Court was created.<sup>15</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 off without notice', as had been the case in the past. Moreover, no one but 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 adoption of translations of the Indian Criminal and Civil Codes, such as were in use in Aden and in Zanzibar at the time. However, this inadequacy remained difficult to remedy and continued to be a nagging problem of the 1930s and the early 1940s.

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 approved by the new Administration.<sup>16</sup>

### **Shortage of trained local personnel**

From the start, the reforms were beset with various difficulties, not the least being the lack of capable men either among the 'Ruling Family' or the 'notables of Bahrain'.<sup>17</sup> Shaikh Hamad showed a keen interest in the reforms and was actively engaged in them.<sup>18</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>19</sup>

Towards the end of 1923, Mr Bower's term of office as Director of Customs was soon to expire 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>20</sup> Finally, in January 1924, Mr C.L.L. de Grenier, formerly an accountant in Baghdad and Bushire, was appointed Director of Customs under a three-year contract with the Government of Bahrain.<sup>21</sup>

### **The resistance to the reforms**

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 and produced petitions, memorials, cables and articles in the press 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, the tribal Nakhudas and a few Sunni merchants.

The Baharnah, who were to benefit from the reforms, were subjected to a campaign of intimidation. In June 1923, the Dowasir raided the Baharnah village of 'Āli, killing and wounding a number of people.<sup>22</sup> As a result, one of their Chiefs, Ahmad bin Abdullah ad-Dosari, was detained, questioned by Shaikh

### *Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

Hamad and, together with his son, convicted and penalised.

The campaign served to show that the new Administration of Shaikh Hamad was unable to provide protection for the Baharnah. Nevertheless, a precedent was established in that for the first time a Dosari chief was tried and fined by the authorities in Bahrain. In addition, he 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 on the tribe was out of proportion to the severity of the crime, as the Agent's comment indicates:<sup>23</sup>

In the 'Āli 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, . . .

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>24</sup> Shaikh Hamad expressed concern about the situation and the Resident subsequently assured him of government backing for the reforms.<sup>25</sup>

On the night of 10 August, a Shi'ah 'Ālim Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmad and his colleague Hasan bin Ramadan were stabbed to death on the road between Budayya' and Diraz. It was reported that the 'Ālim was murdered because he had called the villagers to testify in the '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>26</sup> The Baharnah now forwarded a petition to Shaikh Hamad demanding that the culprits be brought to justice.<sup>27</sup>

### *The first outrage at Sitrah*

On 18 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 had 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 sustained by them as a result. The Khalids took the incident as a pretext to wage an attack against the villagers in the course of which one man was killed. On 19 September, 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' Qadi.<sup>28</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 22 September, acting on advice from the Agent, Shaikh Hamad held a Court for the trial of his uncle, Shaikh Khalid, 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'. 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 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's banishment, and two of Shaikh Khalid's servants were given prison sentences.<sup>29</sup>

These sentences were viewed by the Baharnah as very lenient, hardly sufficient to deter further acts of violence. But the fact that Shaikh Hamad acted at all against senior members of his family was considered a triumph for the rule of law and order.

### *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

### *Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

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 the reform of the Customs, agitated for the abolition of the landing tax on goods.<sup>30</sup>

Early in October 1923, Shaikh Mohammad bin Abdullah wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for India, complaining about the Agent's disregard for local institutions, his hostile attitude to the Al Khalifah family, his unlawful arrest of Ahmad ad-Dosari, and his refusing Wahbah entry into Bahrain.<sup>31</sup> Following this, the Syrian paper *Fata el-'Arab* published an article by Shaikh Mohammad in which he criticised Colonel Knox for forcing Shaikh Isa to retire against his will and for threatening to confiscate the property of the Dowasir.<sup>32</sup> Shortly afterwards, another article, also by him, appeared in the Syrian paper *Alif Bā* which was critical of the British political authorities.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, Shaikh Mohammad's activities against the Administration, including his frequent visits to Kuwait and Iraq from where he sent cables to various addresses, were known to British officials in the area. But whether he sent them with the knowledge of his father, Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa, there was no conclusive evidence.<sup>34</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>35</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 about Major Daly and urging the Government to hold an enquiry into the affairs of Bahrain.<sup>36</sup>



Colonel Trevor, who was on leave, returned to office on 21 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>37</sup> The signatories, apart from Shaikh Isa, included the Dowasir who were angered by their earlier chastisement and the Sunni pearling Nakhudas who feared that the Government intended to collect taxes on their pearling fleet. 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>38</sup>

The petition was critical of Daly's control of the Shaikh's Administration, of his high-handedness during the riots of May 1923, and of his raising a police force made up entirely of Persians and controlled by a Persian. The petitioners resented Shaikh Isa's enforced 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. Finally 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>39</sup>

This petition was followed by a cable to the Government of India dated 23 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>40</sup>

### **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 reform on which they relied for a more balanced form of government. On 25 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 expressed their satisfaction 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 remain in Bahrain until the reforms were firmly established. They were alarmed by rumours



of his imminent departure, in which case, they wrote, the reforms would be discontinued and a return to the chaotic conditions prevailing earlier would follow.<sup>41</sup>

On 26 October, the day the disaffected elements 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', summarised as follows:<sup>42</sup>

- (i) They expressed satisfaction with Shaikh Hamad's Court established in July 1923, and looked forward to further judicial reforms.
- (ii) As native and loyal subjects of Shaikh Hamad they denounced the agitations against the reforms and hoped for their smooth implementation.
- (iii) 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. (For discussion of the pearling reforms, see Chapter 5.)
- (iv) They desired an end to the depredations caused by the Shaikh's wandering camels from which they were the chief sufferers.
- (v) They wanted the Government to levy equitable taxes on the whole population, Shi'ahs as well as Sunnis; they rejected the discriminatory taxes imposed exclusively upon the Baharnah.
- (vi) They demanded proper care and attention for prisoners and objected to their being imprisoned in a derelict godown in the house of the Amir.
- (vii) They desired Sunni Nakhudas to release their Shi'ah divers from duty on the 10th of Moharram — a day of mourning for the Shi'ahs.
- (viii) They asked that Government should help reduce the taxes, levied in kind, from Baharnah fishermen who caught fish by weirs.
- (ix) They wanted equal opportunities for 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.

### **The Congress of October 1923**

On 15th Rabi' I, 1342, i.e. 26 October 1923, the tribal groups opposed to the reforms summoned their supporters to a 'Congress'. This meeting was organised by Abdul Wahhab az-Zayani, whose family was engaged in the pearl trade, together with Ahmad bin Lāḥej. Zayani, described by Rihani as the leader of the national revival in Bahrain, had been agitating for a parliament for some time.<sup>43</sup> Earlier, in 1921, his campaign for constitutional rights made him unpopular with Shaikh Isa, and also with Major Daly whom he criticised for interfering in the domestic affairs of the country. He was asked unofficially 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>44</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>45</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 was reluctant.<sup>46</sup> Official correspondence pertaining to this period contains nothing to show that such a contact actually took 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. All those invited attended, apart from Zayani and the two Najdis, bin Lāḥej and Ahmad bin Abdullah ad-Dosari. The Majlis failed to placate the petitioners.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Resident's reply to the petitioners**

In his reply to the petition of 22 October the Resident informed

### *Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

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, had become convinced of their necessity. He added:<sup>48</sup>

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 of your island has become a public scandal it became necessary for the High Government to take action.

The Resident also sent two letters to the Baharnah in response to their earlier petitions, telling 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>49</sup>

Acting on the Resident's instructions, the Agent subsequently published the following Notice to the people:<sup>50</sup>

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.

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 that 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>51</sup>

### **The Resident's visit to Bahrain**

There followed a visit to Bahrain by the Resident which lasted throughout the first week of November 1923. On the first day he was presented with a petition, on behalf of the Congress, on board the RIMS *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' 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 they said constituted the decisions of the Congress:<sup>52</sup>

- (i) 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.
- (ii) All court cases to be sent to the Shara' or 'Urfi, which is in accordance with the Shari'a.
- (iii) A national Parliament to be started to look after the interests of the people as in other countries.
- (iv) A Court of four acceptable persons skilled in diving affairs to decide all diving cases.
- (v) The Consul to be forbidden to break the good relations existing between Great Britain and the Bahrain Government, or to interfere in internal matters.
- (vi) We have selected twelve persons to represent us.

On the final day of the visit, Shaikh Hamad summoned the petitioners to a meeting with the Resident, held at the latter's request. All attended the meeting except bin Lāḥej 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 informed that His Majesty's Government backed Shaikh Hamad and was opposed to their mass exodus; that the Rulers of the Gulf States had been asked by the Government not to give asylum to

Heads of tribes or Nakhudas; and 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>53</sup> When the meeting came to an end, both Zayani and bin Lāḥej were detained and subsequently deported to India, in accordance with an earlier request for their banishment submitted by the Administration in Bahrain and sanctioned by the Government.<sup>54</sup>

Before leaving Bahrain, the Resident met the Baharnah representatives who handed him a petition in appreciation of the Government's positive attitude towards the reforms. This occasioned the following comment from the Resident to the Government:<sup>55</sup>

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.

### **The Dowasir leave Bahrain**

Early in November 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' under another Chief, Isa bin Ahmad ad-Dosari. Earlier, during the attack on 'Āli, 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 in place of the intractable Ahmad.<sup>56</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:<sup>57</sup>

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.

The belief that Ibn Saud might try to employ the Dowasir of Budayya' for his own ends led the Resident to write to the Government of India seeking their approval for a letter to be sent 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>58</sup> The Government agreed to this.<sup>59</sup>

The Administration in Bahrain viewed the Dowasir exodus with a sigh of relief, as the official comment indicates:<sup>60</sup>

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.

### **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 7 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 15 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 Lāḥej.<sup>61</sup> The Remembrancer of Legal Affairs summarised the affair to the Government of Bombay as follows:<sup>62</sup>

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.

### **The second outrage at Sitrah**

On the night of 7-8 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>63</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>64</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 had 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. In addition, the attack was also aimed at saddling Shaikh Hamad's Administration with further difficulties.

While Shaikh Hamad was absent from the country, his younger brother Shaikh Mohammad acted for him. When the Khalids role in the Sitrah offence was established beyond doubt, they expressed their willingness to Shaikh Mohammad to stand trial, but only before the Shara' Court. To this the Agent objected, stating 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 with by the Ruler, or failing him, His Majesty's Government'.<sup>65</sup>

The Baharnah submitted two petitions to the Agent dated 1 and 5 Jamadi II, 1342, corresponding to 8 and 12 January 1924.<sup>66</sup> Two messengers also delivered a separate petition to the Resident in Bushire on behalf of their community on 12 January.<sup>67</sup> These petitions stated that in the Baharnah's view the sentences passed on the offenders in earlier cases had failed to prevent further acts of violence against members of their community. 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:<sup>68</sup>

. . . any scheme of reforms aimed at the improvement of the status of the oppressed Shiahs 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?

## *Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

Shaikh Hamad returned to Bahrain on 14 January in response to a cable from the Resident.<sup>69</sup> He found large crowds of the Baharnah gathered at the Agency demanding prosecution of the Sitrah culprits, and 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>70</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 Government's commitment to improving the Administration of Bahrain on a gradual and steady basis.<sup>71</sup> In a letter to the Government of India, the Resident noted:<sup>72</sup>

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.

The Resident's letter drew a firm response from the Government, who cabled him ordering the arrest and punishment of the perpetrators of the Sitrah crimes. Above all, they wanted to see Shaikh Hamad assume the proper obligations of rulership:<sup>73</sup>

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.

### *The culprits stand trial*

On 25 January the Resident visited Bahrain, and on the following day, Shaikh Khalid accompanied Shaikh Hamad to the Agency to meet him. The Agency was surrounded by crowds of Baharnah

### *Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

who were 'groaning or moaning: justice'.<sup>74</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 Rafaa' 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.

As the chief offenders, Shaikh Ibrahim bin Khalid, his brother Shaikh Salman bin Khalid, and Abdur Razzaq — a distant relative of Al Khalifah — 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 a year's 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>75</sup>

The Agent was satisfied with the proceedings of Shaikh Hamad's Court and 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>76</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>77</sup> The Resident agreed to this suggestion and recommended it to the Government of India, adding that members of the force ought to be drawn from Arabic-speaking, trained Baluchis, preferably ex-recruits of the Muscat Levies. Local Arabs, he wrote, were 'unsuitable', and the Persians were 'objectionable to the Arabs'.<sup>78</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.' He added that if he had had a police force at his command, it would certainly have



bolstered his authority *vis-à-vis* the recalcitrant tribal elements.<sup>79</sup>

Subsequently, the Government of India approved the creation of the levies on the lines suggested by the Resident,<sup>80</sup> and 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. It comprised 150 men, detachments of whom were posted in Muharraq, Budayya' and Sitrah.<sup>81</sup>

### **Shaikh Isa's Memorial to the Government**

Acting in his capacity as Shaikh Isa's authorised Agent in Bombay, Abdul Wahhab az-Zayani engaged the legal services of Mohammad Ali Jinah, barrister-at-law, then associated with the Bhaishankar Kanga and Ghirdarlal firm of barristers, who were attorneys for Shaikh Isa. On behalf of the Shaikh, the firm sent a detailed Memorial dated 13 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 Government'.<sup>82</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'. The British authorities, it was alleged, had persistently refused to consider the complaints of 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'. Shaikh Isa urged the Government to reconsider its earlier decision, which had resulted in his forced retirement in breach, he claimed, of the contractual rights his treaties with Britain bestowed upon him.

On 22 March, the Resident, to whom the Memorial was sent for consideration and comment, gave his views regarding the issues raised by the Shaikh. He described the Memorial as 'a farrago of suppressio veri and suggestio falsi'.<sup>83</sup> He pointed out that Shaikh Isa's appointment to the Rulership of Bahrain was effected with British backing and that the Shaikh had repeatedly



ignored official advice to reform his Administration and channel funds for public services. As regards the Shaikh's statement that his rule was 'peaceful and popular', the Resident argued:<sup>84</sup>

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. It is emphatically unpopular with the Shiah majority as countless petitions and reports have shown.

Commenting upon the allegation that Major Daly had abolished all law Courts, he wrote that only the Salifah Court was 'in abeyance from inanition, 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.

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.

With the removal of the chief obstacles to the enactment of the reforms, the resistance to them had gradually died out. First 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

## *Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

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 and ensured Baharnah support for the new regime. He continued to serve until 1926, thereby becoming the longest serving Political Agent in Bahrain.

### **Notes**

1. Daly to Col. Knox, I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 77-C, p. 183, 10 June 1923.
2. Captain Prior, P.A., to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. C-84, 29 June 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 July 1923.
4. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 131-C, 4 October 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.
5. A.P. Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 622-S, 10 November 1923.
6. Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 716-S, 22 December 1923.
7. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 208/C/9/2, 17 December 1923.
8. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 28-C, 11 February 1923.
9. No. 622-S.
10. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 99-C, 25 July 1923.
11. No. 28-C.
12. 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.
13. No. 28-C.
14. No. 622-S.
15. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/133, No. 37-C, 17 March 1923.
16. No. 99-C.
17. No. 622-S.
18. No. 208/C/9/2.
19. Telegram from F.S.G.I. to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 1688-S, 8 December 1923.
20. No. 208/C/9/2.
21. A.R.P.A. 1924. I.O.R. 15/2/296.
22. Telegram from Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 82-C, 24 June 1923.
23. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 106-C, 22 August 1923.

### *Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

24. Ibid. This subsidy refers to the arrangement whereby the British Government granted Ibn Saud pecuniary assistance to the extent of £5,000 monthly. For further details, see the Resident's letter to H.H. Imam Sir Abdul Aziz ibn Abdur Rahman al-Faisal al-Sa'ud. F.O. 371: 8947, No. 173, 14 June 1923.

25. Telegram from Knox to Daly. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 657, 24 June 1923.

26. No. 106-C.

27. Petition signed by a number of Baharnah leaders, dated 3rd Moharram, 1342, I.O.R. 15/2/88.

28. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 122-C, 20 September 1923.

29. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 123-C, 25 September 1923.

30. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 131-C, 4 October 1923.

31. Letter from Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Khalifah to S.S.I., 20th Safar 1342 (2 October 1923). I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, pp. 57-8.

32. 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 November 1923.

33. Extract entitled 'Situation at Bahrain' from Palmer to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/327, 5 November 1923.

34. Trevor to Government of India, No. 622-S.

35. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 200-C, 8 December 1923.

36. Col. Knox to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 568-S, 9 October 1923.

37. 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 October 1923. See enclosures to the Resident's letter to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 601-S, 27 October 1923.

38. Daly to Col. Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 141/1/9, 17 October 1923.

39. The signatories of 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, Shahin 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.

40. Telegram from Shaikh Isa to the Viceroy. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, 23 October 1923.

41. Undated petition presented personally to the Resident by three of the signatories on 25 October 1923. I.O.R. 15/2/88. See enclosures to the Resident's letter No. 601-S.

42. Translation of Petition from seven Baharnah representatives, handed to the Political Resident on 26 October 1923. I.O.R. 15/2/88. It

## *Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

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 and ensured Baharnah support for the new regime. He continued to serve until 1926, thereby becoming the longest serving Political Agent in Bahrain.

### **Notes**

1. Daly to Col. Knox, I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 77-C, p. 183, 10 June 1923.
2. Captain Prior, P.A., to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. C-84, 29 June 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 July 1923.
4. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 131-C, 4 October 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.
5. A.P. Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 622-S, 10 November 1923.
6. Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 716-S, 22 December 1923.
7. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 208/C/9/2, 17 December 1923.
8. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 28-C, 11 February 1923.
9. No. 622-S.
10. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 99-C, 25 July 1923.
11. No. 28-C.
12. 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.
13. No. 28-C.
14. No. 622-S.
15. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/133, No. 37-C, 17 March 1923.
16. No. 99-C.
17. No. 622-S.
18. No. 208/C/9/2.
19. Telegram from F.S.G.I. to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 1688-S, 8 December 1923.
20. No. 208/C/9/2.
21. A.R.P.A. 1924. I.O.R. 15/2/296.
22. Telegram from Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 82-C, 24 June 1923.
23. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 106-C, 22 August 1923.



*Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

24. Ibid. This subsidy refers to the arrangement whereby the British Government granted Ibn Saud pecuniary assistance to the extent of £5,000 monthly. For further details, see the Resident's letter to H.H. Imam Sir Abdul Aziz ibn Abdur Rahman al-Faisal al-Sa'ud. F.O. 371: 8947, No. 173, 14 June 1923.

25. Telegram from Knox to Daly. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 657, 24 June 1923.

26. No. 106-C.

27. Petition signed by a number of Baharnah leaders, dated 3rd Moharram, 1342, I.O.R. 15/2/88.

28. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 122-C, 20 September 1923.

29. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 123-C, 25 September 1923.

30. Daly to Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 131-C, 4 October 1923.

31. Letter from Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Khalifah to S.S.I., 20th Safar 1342 (2 October 1923). I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, pp. 57-8.

32. 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 November 1923.

33. Extract entitled 'Situation at Bahrain' from Palmer to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/327, 5 November 1923.

34. Trevor to Government of India, No. 622-S.

35. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 200-C, 8 December 1923.

36. Col. Knox to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 568-S, 9 October 1923.

37. 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 October 1923. See enclosures to the Resident's letter to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 601-S, 27 October 1923.

38. Daly to Col. Knox. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 141/1/9, 17 October 1923.

39. The signatories of 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, Shahin 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.

40. Telegram from Shaikh Isa to the Viceroy. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, 23 October 1923.

41. Undated petition presented personally to the Resident by three of the signatories on 25 October 1923. I.O.R. 15/2/88. See enclosures to the Resident's letter No. 601-S.

42. Translation of Petition from seven Baharnah representatives, handed to the Political Resident on 26 October 1923. I.O.R. 15/2/88. It



*Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

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.

43. 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.

44. Daly's No. 141/1/9.

45. Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/73, No. 57-T, 22 March 1924.

46. Rumaihi, *Bahrain — Social and Political Change* . . . , p. 181.

47. Telegram from the Viceroy to S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, 2 November 1923.

48. For Trevor's reply to Shaikh Isa's Petition, see enclosures to his No. 601-S.

49. Letter to the Baharnah signatories of the undated petition handed to the Resident on 25 October 1923 by three of their number. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 277, 27 October 1923. Also letter from 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 October 1923.

50. See enclosure two in Trevor's letter to the G. of I. No. 622-S.

51. Trevor to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 602-S, 27 October 1923.

52. For the above petition see enclosures to Shaikh Isa's Memorial of 13 February 1924. I.O.R. 15/2/73. 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.

53. See enclosure three to Col. Trevor's No. 622-S.

54. Letter from Shaikh Hamad, Deputy to Government of Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/127, 27 Rabi al-Awwal 1342 A.H. (7 November 1923).

55. Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 662-S, 24 November 1923. This latest petition from the Baharnah was signed by Mulla Hasan bin ash-Shaikh Āl-Mājid.

56. Daly's No. 80-C.

57. No. 622-S.

58. Trevor to G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, No. 631-S, 11 November 1923.

59. J.E. Shuckburgh to the Under-Secretary of State for India. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, 17 November 1923.

60. A.R.P.A. 1923.

61. 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 December 1923.

62. Extract from a note by the Remembrancer of Legal Affairs, to the Government of Bombay, No. 2307, 17 December 1923; attached to Hotson's letter to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, 19 December 1923.

63. Telegram from the Resident to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/

*Reforms Under the New Regime of Shaikh Hamad*

1042, No. 51, 10 January 1924.

64. The Resident of G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 56-S, 17 January 1924. Note that Ibrahim was married to Moozah, Shaikh Abdullah's sister.

65. Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 13-C, 13 January 1924.

66. 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, *Historical Part IB*, p. 921), 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.

67. No. 56-S.

68. Daly's No. 13-C.

69. No. 56-S.

70. Telegram from the Resident to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 90, 15 January 1924.

71. Col. A.P. Trevor to the Baharnah signatories to the two petitions. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 16, 16 January 1924.

72. No. 56-S.

73. Telegram from the G. of I. to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 195-S, 21 January 1924.

74. Col. Trevor to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 89-S, 2 February 1924.

75. Col. Trevor to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 108-S, 9 February 1924.

76. Maj. Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/131, No. 32-C, 29 January 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.

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

78. No. 622-S.

79. Telegram from the Resident to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 128, 22 January 1924.

80. Telegram from the G. of I. to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 222-S, 24 January 1924.

81. Telegram from the Resident to the G. of I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 229, 7 February 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 January 1934.

82. Memorial from Shaikh Esa bin Ali AlKhalifah to H.E. Sir Rufus Daniel Isaacs, Viceroy and Governor General of India, Bombay, 13 February 1924. I.O.R. 15/2/73. Attached to the Resident's No. 57-T.

83. No. 57-T.

84. Comment on Memorial dated 13 February 1924 from Shaikh Isa bin Ali AlKhalifah to H.E. the Viceroy. I.O.R. 15/2/73.

## 4

# Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies: Bahrain 1924-1929

### Introduction

By the end of 1924, resistance to the reforms had almost subsided and the people had become reconciled to the benefits to be gained. Relations between the Rulers and their Shi'ah subjects were showing gradual improvement from 1925 onwards, though the bitterness engendered by the previous years of maltreatment 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 that year he agreed to draw on his allowances from the State, after having refused to do so for about three years.<sup>1</sup>

The second half of the year witnessed a number of attempted murders, some with fatal consequences. On 1 August 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 escape with only minor injury. No political motive was given for the attack, the repercussions of which were reported in the Persian press.<sup>2</sup> Ismail was tried and executed on 21 September. Two other members of the same force, Mohammad bin Kunari and Murad bin Dulpul, 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>3</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 13 November 1926 Captain L.S. Parke was put in charge of it.

More serious was the attempt on Shaikh Hamad's life on the night of 13 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. The Bahrain Court was subsequently 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. Shaikh Salman presided over the Court, assisted by Shaikh Abdullah, the Adviser and four assessors: two Sunnis and two Shi'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 Ṣubāh.

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 Sa'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>4</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 Farsiya village, in which two men were killed. The case had originally been tried by Shaikh Hamad, who found him guilty and 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 previously been 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-'Uraibi, one of his tenants from the village of Tubli. 'Uraibi was killed in the attack



and his son, who was gravely wounded, was thrown into prison. The motive for the attack was a 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 it was satisfied that he had instigated the affair. 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>5</sup>

### **Official concern over the reforms**

By the end of July 1924, the Government of India informed the Resident of their concern about the Bahrain reforms which they believed had exceeded what was originally intended.<sup>6</sup>

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.

Answering this communication, the Resident pointed out that Shaikh Hamad was in full agreement over the four chief reforms: on 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>7</sup>

In a letter to the Agent in Bahrain, the Resident conveyed the views of the Government that only 'moderately conceived objectives' 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:<sup>8</sup>

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?

In his reply, the Agent gave a number of reasons necessitating the introduction of the reforms. He listed the original reforms which had been 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 realised 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. The land survey and registration of property were 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:<sup>9</sup>

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.

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 the reforms, both from the Government and from the tribal elements who resisted their introduction.

### **Land survey and record of rights**

Land survey and registration of property were questions of great urgency to Shaikh Hamad's Administration. Their 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>10</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'ahs was caused by the loss of their lands over the years. Many cases contested 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:<sup>11</sup>

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.

As early as November 1923, Shaikh Hamad applied to the Government of India to help find a team of surveyors to work in Bahrain. During the following year both Shaikh Hamad and Major Daly dealt with cases which involved land disputes, and the experience they gained, in working them out proved of great help to the surveyors later on. Some such cases obliged the Government to compensate for damages sustained by owners under the old regime:<sup>12</sup>

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 purchasing money taken by Shaikh Isa.

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 1925 the Administration asked the Survey General of India to help furnish them with staff to survey Manamah Island north of Jabal Dukhan, and the islands of Moharraq and Sitrah, and to produce scale maps for this. 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>13</sup>

In May 1925, Shaikhs Hamad and Abdullah, accompanied by Major Daly, left for an official visit to England. Captain G.L. Mallam, the acting Agent, followed up the preparations for the survey. The Surveyor General had drawn up a plan which would have cost the Government of Bahrain Rs. 70,000, more than had earlier been allocated.<sup>14</sup> The staff was eventually reduced and the cost brought down to Rs. 39,000, with the Survey to be completed in six months.<sup>15</sup>

In early 1926 the Indian staff began to arrive in Bahrain and during March 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 of the Department, which included the maintenance of records of all sales of immovable property. On notification 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 drawn up including a plan of the property. A registration charge of Rs. 10 was levied on each sale and duplicate copies of the deed were kept by the Department and the owner.<sup>16</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 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 up to 6 January 1927 amounted to Rs. 34,000, including the cost of equipment.

In the course of 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 divided up among numerous owners. The Adviser commented as follows:<sup>17</sup>

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.

### **The institution of the Department of Waqfs**

Until 1926 Waqf property in Bahrain was managed by Muta-wallis, i.e. executors or administrators of Waqfs. Government control of the Waqfs did not yet exist, thus making it easier for the administrators to indulge in corrupt practices. Funds left for mosques, schools and charities were misappropriated by those in charge of them. The Adviser commented:<sup>18</sup>

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.



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'ah.<sup>19</sup> Three Sunni Shara' 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'ad, and Shaikh Abdul Latif bin Jodar. They were assisted by Mohammad bin Rashid Al Khalifah, a former judge in the Bahrain Court, and a clerk.<sup>20</sup> The Shi'ah Waqfs were entrusted to the Shi'ah Qadi Sayed 'Adnan bin Sayed 'Alawi, Sayed Husain al-Mutawwa' and two clerks.<sup>21</sup> Shortly after it was set up, 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 repairs and maintenance, and the collection and disbursement of the Waqfs. Two months after it had been started, apart from the duplicating of documents, very little progress had been 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'ahs, presided over by Shaikh Abdullah. A distinction was made between purely religious and administrative affairs. The Qadis were entrusted with the religious aspects of the work, and the lay members of the Council were made responsible for the secular side. 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'. The public, on the other hand, viewed the new measures with satisfaction.<sup>22</sup>

In December 1927, the three Sunni 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'ahs, in support of their case. Nevertheless, the Administration initially ignored their demand, believing that the Qadis were more important to the Shara' Court than to the Waqf Department.<sup>23</sup>

After the death of the Shi'ah Qadi Sayed 'Adnan in November 1928, the Shi'ah Waqfs were temporarily entrusted to his executor, Shaikh Mohammad Ali al-Madani. Thereafter, Shaikh Abdullah bin Mohammad Saleh and Shaikh Ali bin Hasan al-Musa were appointed as Shi'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>24</sup> The Committee consisted of six persons from the villages and four from Manamah. In order to placate the feelings of Qadi Shaikh Abdullah, no president was elected for the Committee,<sup>25</sup> whose members were so successful in their work that they were able to discover new Waqfs, and to raise the income by Rs. 50,000.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile the Administration decided to leave the Sunni Qadis in charge of the Sunni Waqf until such time as the public pressed for State intervention.<sup>27</sup>

### **The return of the Dowasir tribesmen**

The Dowasir departed from Bahrain against the wishes of the Government. As a result, their property was seized and their divers were freed from their contractual obligations and from any debts which they owed to them. They were now settled in Ibn Saud's territory in Dammam, which provided relatively easy access to Bahrain. More important, news of Ibn Saud's pledge 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 were made from time to time. In 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'. 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>28</sup>

In February, the Resident wrote to Ibn Saud drawing his attention to the circumstances which had forced the Government of Bahrain to take action against the Dowasir, to the 'unfettered license' which they had enjoyed under Shaikh Isa's regime, to the resistance they had shown 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', 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>29</sup>

In his reply, Ibn Saud denied all knowledge of talks he was alleged to have held with the Dowasir or of promises he had made to them about recovering their possessions in Bahrain. Nevertheless, he pointed out that 'the Islamic State of Bahrain and its Shara' has no right to confiscate the property of Muhajirin'.<sup>30</sup>

Reporting the contents of the letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Resident commented:<sup>31</sup>

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' 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' 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.

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. To this end, he wrote:<sup>32</sup>

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 Shiahs, 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.

The status of the Dowasir of Bahrain was highlighted by an incident on 26 August 1924 in which a Dosari Nakhuda from Budayya', Ibrahim bin Buṭi, 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 him that the accused was a Dosari from Bahrain, and therefore a Bahrain subject, and that as he had committed 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>33</sup>

Early in September 1926, Col. F.B. Prideaux, the then Resident, visited Bahrain. His visit lasted from 3 to 19 September. There followed an interview between Shaikh Hamad, the Resident and three Dosari Chiefs, Abdul Latif bin Ibrahim,<sup>34</sup> Isa bin Sa'ad and Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Hasan. They complained of the heavy taxes levied on 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:<sup>35</sup>

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.

These conditions were unacceptable to Ahmad bin Abdullah, who had earlier ordered his men out of Bahrain, and he therefore rejected them and discouraged the other two chiefs from accepting them.

When Colonel Haworth succeeded Prideaux as Resident in January 1927, he paid two visits to Bahrain on 29 January and 24 February. During his second visit, which lasted for nine days, he learnt about a letter which Ibn Saud had sent to Shaikh Hamad asking him to return their 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 other citizens. For 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:<sup>36</sup>

In this reference it must be noted that Alkalifah 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.

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'.

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 them. The State had already had to buy back some of their houses which it had sold earlier, and to compensate their owners for money spent on maintenance and repairs. In addition, the Government had to recall all leases of date-gardens owned by the Dowasir, which had been leased out after their departure. This 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. 200,000–300,000 as compensation for debts owed by their previous divers, which had been cancelled by the State.<sup>37</sup>

In a gesture of goodwill towards Ibn Saud, Shaikh Hamad decided to concede all the Dowasir demands. In support of this decision, he informed the Agent that the confiscation of the property of a tribe leaving a Ruler's dominions was contrary to Arab custom, and that he had agreed to it against his wishes. He sympathised with the Dowasir because they had left Bahrain, not in defiance, but out of fear of government action against them. Unlike Āl ben 'Alī before them, the Dowasir had done 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 Ibn Saud's wishes, to which Hamad replied that '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>38</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>39</sup> Meanwhile 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>40</sup> On the other hand, the Resident wrote to the Government stating that compliance with all their demands would be interpreted by them as a sign of weakness rather than forgiveness and would convey the impression that the British attitude towards them was rash in the first place. He concurred with the Agent in that:<sup>41</sup>

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.

### **Leniency for the prisoners**

During September 1925, while Daly was away on leave, Shaikh Hamad approached the acting Agent with a request to sound out the Government of India about the granting 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'ahs and by a general atmosphere of stability within the country.<sup>42</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>43</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 were released, and on arrival in Bahrain they were kept in the State prison for

a short period and were then let out on 6 February 1926.<sup>44</sup>

When Daly returned to office on 24 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 without retrial enabled them to escape with inadequate punishment, in his view.

On 16 March 1926 the two Hasawis were released. When asked about their role in the attack, they admitted that they had acted on the orders of the Khalids.<sup>45</sup>

By the end of July 1926, Ali bin Khalid, sentenced to banishment 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. Commenting upon Shaikh Hamad's action, Daly wrote:<sup>46</sup>

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

In September 1926, Major Barrett replaced Daly as the new Agent in Bahrain. Early in January 1927, Colonel Haworth took over from Prideaux 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 it to mention here that the reassessment resulted in the changes in policy outlined below:<sup>47</sup>

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

As a result the Shaikh was allowed a greater say over the

domestic affairs of Bahrain. At this time, Ibrahim bin Khalid Al Khalifah, sentenced to death for his part in the second outrage at Sitrah, corresponded with Shaikh Hamad in the hope of negotiating terms for his return to Bahrain. Having got 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>48</sup> The letter referred to the Shaikh's efforts to effect a reconciliation between the Khalids and the Baharnah, and that the arrangements being made had an air of disingenuousness 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 spared a retrial by the Shara' Court. Belgrave concluded:<sup>49</sup>

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.

In the exchanges that followed between the Shaikh and the Agent, the latter underlined the gravity of the Khalids' guilt and the 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, he described the original trial as illegal because it was not conducted by the Shara'. Disagreeing with the Shaikh's views, the Agent reminded him that there were 27 witnesses for the prosecution in the Wadyān case, and that in civilised countries many individuals were executed on evidence much less incriminating than had been recorded in this case. His advice to the Shaikh was to send them to the Shara' Court for retrial. The Agent reported the matter to the Resident as follows:<sup>50</sup>

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.

On 28 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'ah Qadi and by Hasan bin Marzouq, representing the children of the victims and head-man 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 the prosecution, to which they replied in the affirmative, adding that they had received assurances from the Shaikh to the effect that the Khalids would not indulge in offences against them in future.<sup>51</sup> A proclamation prepared in advance of the meeting was read out which, *inter alia*, contained the following:<sup>52</sup>

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.

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' Court. Nevertheless, the Shaikh's decision and the accommodation reached received the Agent's approval for the following reasons:<sup>53</sup>

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.

The accommodation involved monthly allowances for the three offenders ordered by the Shaikh, and the return of their property which had been seized earlier by the State.<sup>54</sup> Commenting on this, the Resident noted:<sup>55</sup>

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.

### **Consolidation of the British position: 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 the place; (b) the resurgence of Wahhabi power; and (c) the retirement of Shaikh Isa from active rulership and the appointment of Shaikh Hamad, with whose consent Britain was intervening in Bahrain.<sup>56</sup>

He then dealt with each factor in detailed historical perspective. 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 their regaining of them in 1753 until they finally lost them to the Arabs in 1783, thus 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 also his belief that the British involvement in the affairs of Bahrain

exceeded British rights there:<sup>57</sup>

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 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.

Haworth believed that the cessation 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 1915.

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'ahs in Bahrain were subjected to gross

mistreatment in 1917 and after, Tehran protested to the British Government which, as a result, prevailed upon the Shaikh to introduce reforms, but to no avail. Thereafter, Shaikh Isa was retired and his 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 in 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, Haworth wrote:<sup>58</sup>

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.

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 obtain for him a letter of recommendation from Ibn Saud in order to facilitate his task with the British Government.

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

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 . . .

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.



## *Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies*

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 Shiah as people of an unprivileged class . . .

He concluded by asking the Government to prevail upon the Shaikh to apply for British protection, and urged it to extend it to him. The British staff in 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:

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.

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 Anglo-Persian relations of declaring Bahrain a British Protectorate. He demanded the postponement of this step till such time as the outstanding issues with Persia were settled and a new treaty was negotiated and signed.<sup>59</sup>

Haworth's views brought a visit to Bahrain by Sir Denys Bray, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, which lasted from 3 to 5 November 1927. Its purpose was to assess the process of the reforms and the extent of British involvement in Bahrain. Bray described the British position there as 'unassailable' and was satisfied with British rights which had been acquired by virtue of Britain's treaties with the Shaikh. These rights gave the British Government control over Bahrain's foreign affairs and jurisdiction over foreign nationals. Although he was pleased with the reforms already effected, he regarded British influence as in excess of British rights, and favoured a halt to the process of reforms:<sup>60</sup>

## *Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies*

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.

Bray desired the curtailment of the Government's commitments to the Shaikh's Administration, thereby minimising the risk of losing the 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.

British rule in Bahrain, he wrote, was 'over-advertised' by the presence of a Punjabi Police Force, in the uniform of an Indian Regiment. He favoured the gradual withdrawal of the Punjabis and their replacement by Arab elements; the reduction of the British staff 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.

He 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.

### **Concern over the Westernisation of Bahrain: a reappraisal of the reforms**

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 start of the reforms. It feared that the modernisation of the Administration in Bahrain might backfire.<sup>61</sup>

## *Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies*

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 to 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.

It issued instructions to the Resident requiring him to consider the situation in Bahrain with regard to the remarks quoted 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, and whether it was practical to reverse the process. He went over British relations with Shaikh Isa from 1904 to 1923, stressing areas of disagreement, the shortcomings of the Shaikh's Administration and the introduction of reforms such as the organisation of the State finances, the Civil List, reform of the Custom House, the opening of Government Offices, reform of the diving industry, the survey of towns and villages, the creation of the Levy Corps, the Bahrain Court, and reform of the education system and Waqfs.<sup>62</sup>

The Agent praised the enlightened 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:

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.

### *Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies*

He regarded the services of the existing British staff in the Administration as indispensable. The Adviser controlled the finances of the State and acted as co-judge in the Bahrain Court. The Director of Customs, Mr de Grenier, had given five years of invaluable service to the State. As chief revenue officer, he had increased State revenue by 20 per cent without raising customs duty; 97 per cent of the revenue accruing to the State was the result of his efforts. The Shaikh was satisfied with the Director's work and if the Government ordered 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:

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' . . . , and the innumerable Courts maintained by petty Shaikh-lings purely as a vehicle for their oppression.

By mid-1929 the survey of towns and villages had almost been completed, 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 made his stay with the force highly desirable.

Finally, he stressed the fact that there was nothing in the reforms which could be discarded with impunity. What were 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.

In a subsequent letter to the Government, the Resident concurred with the views of the Agent and refuted the claim that Bahrain was being hastily subjected to Westernisation. Government policy towards the Shaikh, he wrote, was motivated by 'fear of interference', and even the action which they reluctantly took against the Shaikh in 1923 was pressed upon them by the Foreign Office. Col. Barrett was opposed to the reduction of the British staff in 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 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 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>63</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.

### *Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies*

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 . . .

The Government of India's intention to reverse the process of reform in 1929, was clearly a hasty suggestion. It was obviously motivated by the dictates of wider policies and by unsubstantiated concern that Bahrain was being exposed to excessive Western influence, which threatened to militate against Britain's friendly relations with other Shaikhs of the Gulf.

Originally, the Foreign Office had urged the introduction of the reforms with a view to ensuring 'equitable treatment of Shiah'.<sup>64</sup> By 1929 there remained much in the local administration which needed reforming. The events of the early 1930s, the subject of a subsequent chapter, revealed a significant number of inadequacies especially affecting the Shaikh's Shi'ah Arab subjects in such areas as education, law and representation on various Government Councils. The desire to dismantle the reforms revealed the Government as a remote authority out of touch with the real problems of Bahrain. The arguments put forward by British representatives in the area in favour of the reforms confirmed that they were indispensable to the Bahrain administration 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 its interests from Persia to somewhere more congenial. The Arab littoral of the Gulf was the natural choice and Bahrain, cut off from mainland Arabia and with treaty relationships with Britain, offered the ideal place. The Persian threat during the late 1920s to take the issue of Bahrain to the League of Nations gave rise to serious speculation about the amount of control Britain exercised over the administration of Bahrain which, according to British officials, exceeded its 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' Court. Equally important was the easing of British control of the Administration thereby allowing the Shaikh a bigger role in its affairs.

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.

### Notes

1. Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/73, number illegible, 30 May 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 by sending a personal letter to the Persian Minister of Court in Tehran, in which he described this account as 'outrageous'. See Sir R. Clive to Mr M.A. Henderson. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1045, E6026/193/91, 28 October 1930.
3. 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.
4. C. Belgrave to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 355, 19 August 1929.
5. 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.
6. 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 July 1924.
7. Prideaux to Latimer. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 484-S, 24 August 1924.
8. Prideaux to Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 487-S, 26 August 1924.
9. Daly to Prideaux. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 209/9/1, 31 August 1924.
10. Resident's No. 622-S. Note that by 'gardens' are meant date-groves locally known as date-gardens.
11. 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.

## *Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies*

12. A.R.P.A. 1924.
13. Daly to the Surveyor General of India. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 37/9/3, 28 April 1925.
14. Captain Mallam to Col. C.G. Crosthwaite, Acting Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 78/9/3, 6 September 1925.
15. Telegram from P.A. to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 1017, 30 September 1925.
16. Report by the Adviser on the Land Registration Department. I.O.R. 15/2/296, 20 Sha'ban 1345 (23 February 1927).
17. Ibid.
18. The Adviser to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 328/27, 25 Rabi' II, 1346.
19. Captain Alban to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. C-95, 26 August 1927.
20. See Official Notice from Shaikh Hamad to the three Qadis. I.O.R. 15/2/133, No. 1027/25, 21st Dhul Qa'd, 1345.
21. The Adviser to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. 119/27, 12th Safar 1346.
22. No. 328/27.
23. Belgrave to Col. Barrett. I.O.R. 15/2/130, No. C-17, 18 December 1927.
24. Captain C.G. Prior to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. C-84, 29 June 1929.
25. Belgrave: Notes on Expenditure (Budget) 1347 (1928-9). I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044.
26. A.R.P.A. 1929.
27. A.R.P.A. 1931. I.O.R. 15/2/297.
28. Telegram from the Resident to the S.S.C.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1039, 31 January 1924.
29. 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 February 1924.
30. 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.
31. Letter from A.P. Trevor to the S.S.C.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 14/163, 2 March 1924.
32. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/87, No. 88-C, 31 March 1924.
33. Daly to Prideaux. I.O.R. 15/3/1/6, no number, 13 October 1924.
34. Note that Shaikh Hamad showed his sympathy to the Dowasir by retaining the brother of Abdul Latif bin Ibrahim in his personal service.
35. Col. F.B. Prideaux to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 517-S, 4 December 1926.
36. Col. L.B.H. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 87-S, 27 March 1927.
37. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/87, No. 934, 20th Shawwal 1345.
38. Major Barrett to the Secretary to the Political Resident. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. C-53, 14 April 1927.
39. No. 934.
40. No. C-53.
41. Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. 138-S, 1 May 1927.



### *Reforms and Reappraisal of Policies*

42. Translation of a letter dated 1st Rabi' I, 1344 (20 September 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 Daghat to two years. Daly to Captain B.S. Horner, Secretary to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 29/1/16, 14 February 1926.
43. Col. C.G. Crosthwaite, P.R. to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 346-S, 23 September 1925.
44. No. 29/1/16.
45. Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 46/1/16, 29 March 1926.
46. Daly to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 73/5/18, 1 August 1926.
47. A.R.P.A. 1927. I.O.R. 15/2/296.
48. Major Barrett to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. C-68, 14 February 1928.
49. Belgrave to Barrett. I.O.R. 15/2/88, no number, 10 February 1928.
50. C-68.
51. Belgrave to Barrett. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 32, 3 May 1928.
52. Translation of a Proclamation No. 290/17 of 1346. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042.
53. Barrett to the Resident. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1042, No. C-151, 4 May 1928.
54. Adviser to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 977/2A, 22nd Dhul Qa'd, 1346.
55. Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/88, No. 203-S, 16 May 1928.
56. Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1041, No. 294-S, 1 September 1927.
57. Ibid., paras. 69-71.
58. Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1041, No. 295-S, 1 September 1927.
59. Clive to Sir Austen Chamberlain. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1041, No. E4499/184/91, 24 October 1927.
60. Sir D. Bray: Note on Reforms in Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/127, Mohammerah, 6 November 1927.
61. Deputy-Secretary to G. of I., to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. F164-N/29, 28 May 1929.
62. C.G. Prior to the Resident. I.O.R. No. C-84.
63. Col. C.C.J. Barrett, P.R., to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 385-S, 28 August 1929.
64. F.O. Letter No. E 13476/1644/91.

## 5

### 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, oyster shells were also exported 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 income from the Customs.<sup>2</sup> Boat-building and sail-making were two other aspects of the traditional economy which flourished alongside pearling.<sup>3</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 them.<sup>4</sup>

## *The Pearling Industry*

The main diving season, *al-Ghawṣ al-Kabīr*, lasted from mid-May to the end of September, during which time the 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 *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.

Apart from the *Fuṭām* or nose clip, and a loin-cloth and 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>5</sup> Until 1920, the Ruler could by customary right levy a 10 per cent *ad valorem* tax on a single pearl fished in Bahraini banks, provided its value amounted to Rs. 10,000 upwards.<sup>6</sup> 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 below under the pearling reforms.

According to J.G. Lorimer, two types of taxes were levied in Bahrain in the early nineteenth century, viz. *Nōb*: a boat-tax collected during the autumn diving, and *Tarāz*: a poll-tax collected on behalf of the crew of a boat during the spring diving.<sup>7</sup>

## **The customary laws and usages of pearling**

Under the Salafieh system, which operated widely in Bahrain, the sea-Nakhuda, i.e. the captain of the boat, borrowed money from a creditor called the *Musaqqam* or *Nakhuda el-Barr*, i.e. the shore-Nakhuda. From this loan the boat-Nakhuda gave cash advances to his divers, equipped his boat, purchased provisions, *Zād*, for the consumption of the crew and also paid the boat-licensing tax. The

## *The Pearling Industry*

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; and *Kharjīeh*, 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 for 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 subject to government control and were announced in a public proclamation before the start of the main diving season.

### *Shares*

The Nakhuda deducted his expenses from the profits obtained from the sale of the catch. He received one-fifth of the proceeds, *Khums el-Mihmal*, 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, *Ghaiṣ*, obtained three shares, each puller, *Seib*, two shares, and the assistant *Radīf* one share. In addition to the one-fifth, the Nakhuda was also entitled to a diver's share.<sup>8</sup>

### *Diving systems*

*Khammās*, *Āzil* and *Salafīeh* were three distinct systems by which a Nakhuda operated. The majority of the Nakhudas were of tribal descent, and were allied to the Rulers. Under *Khammās*, more popular in 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 *Salafīeh*, examined separately below. *Khammās*



## *The Pearling Industry*

ensured the divers a fairer share of the profits without the risk of getting into debt, such as was carried over by the *Salafieh* diver year after year. Under the 'Āzil system a diver joined a Nakhuda's boat, supplied his own foodstuffs 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, and controlled a large boat and therefore a large crew. The majority of his divers were non-Bahrainis working on a contractual basis. He operated either on *Madyan* or 'Āmil 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 given below:

	<b>Salafieh</b>
<b>Madyan</b>	<b>'Āmil</b>
(a) Interest was chargeable on loans advanced by the creditor at not more than 20% on <i>Tisqam</i> and 10% on <i>Salaf</i> advances.	Loans were interest-free.
(b) Interest was chargeable on Nakhuda's advances to the divers at 20% on <i>Tisqam</i> and 10% on <i>Salaf</i> .	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 in the section on the pearling reforms, p. 109.)

### *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 was 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 foodstuffs they supplied to the divers. If a diver died, his son was required to dive to settle his father's debts. If there was no son to take the father's place in 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, and 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>9</sup>

During the years 1921-2, 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>10</sup> According to the Bahrain Order-in-Council, the Court should have consisted of one or more judges well-informed in diving laws and appointed 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, but not abolished, during the 1923 season when the Administration asked the Sunni Shara' Qadi to investigate diving cases. Commenting upon the Qadi's findings, the Agency report concluded:<sup>11</sup>

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

### *The Pearling Industry*

examine . . . disclosed that all 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.

### **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:<sup>12</sup>

The ideal diving system should 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.

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 the 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:<sup>13</sup>

This reform presents the greatest difficulty of 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 . . .

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 is to enforce these rules with more regard to the interests of the divers and haulers, those 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.

As the pearling reforms would have directly involved Shaikh Hamad's Administration with the tribal elements, who were opposed to the reforms in general, the reform of the pearling industry plus the 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 their introduction 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>14</sup> Sample account books were prepared by the Resident, consisting of a general account for the whole of the Nakhuda's transactions, together with separate



## *The Pearling Industry*

accounts for each diver and hauler. The Qadi was entitled to scrutinise the accounts and the diver for the first time had access to them.<sup>15</sup>

It was learnt from the Agent in Kuwait that the Government there collected a diver's share from each boat, amounting to circa Rs. 500 per boat.<sup>16</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>17</sup> The collection of this tax, also enforced during the 1924 main 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 on 604 boats; in 1929 they reached Rs. 55,000 collected from 538 boats; and in 1940 income from licensing dropped to Rs. 20,000 obtained from 191 boats.<sup>18</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>19</sup> As part of the reforms a large and well-equipped boom was purchased for use as a hospital boat during the 1924 season. An Indian sub-assistant surgeon was employed to deal with cases of illness among the crews.<sup>20</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 to the Nakhudas on account of the great risks attendant upon the whole 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>21</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 the boat-licensing tax. The Chief believed that his men deserved

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, 1900-4, pledging tax-exemption for the tribe.<sup>22</sup> When the matter was referred to the Resident, he observed:<sup>23</sup>

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.

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 financial relations between the Nakhudas and their crews. 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, 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>24</sup>

The proclamation also defined the Salafieh system, i.e. *Madyan* and *Āmil*, 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. Under *Āmil*, 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, and (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 per cent 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* the shore-Nakhuda was denied 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 licence for a period of five years.<sup>25</sup>

Before the introduction of the new system of accounts, the Administration sought to verify the old accounts, and this involved Nakhudas who had claims of huge debts against their divers. Some debts had accumulated over a period of twenty years or so. On inspection of the accounts, their lack of clarity and reliability was revealed. Many Nakhudas were asked to take their cases to the chief Shara' Qadi because they accepted his decisions. The Qadi, for 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 for four months plus ten days, i.e. 130 days at Rs. 2 daily.<sup>26</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.

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 the expenditure on each boat, the value of the pearls sold, and the shares given to each diver. Previously they had refused to reveal their accounts except to the Salifah Court whose decisions they influenced.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the Nakhudas' opposition to the account books, the Administration had difficulty in 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>28</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 diving affairs. They spoke against the new accounting system and against the sanctioning of the sale of the pearls by the boat crews. 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>29</sup>

They wanted a return to the old days when they exercised authority over their divers, punishing the recalcitrant among them at sea. Under the reforms, they were supposed to file complaints only after they had returned to the shore. The submission 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.

After Daly returned from leave, he dealt with the issues the Nakhudas had 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 practices, describing the latter as a distortion of the original rules. Abuses were inherent in the customary practices which saddled the diver with uncontrollable debts aimed at holding 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 there would be no need for a Salifah Court. The system of accounting, which the Nakhudas saw as complicated, would then become much simpler. However, he failed to realise 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 State control of the advances.

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 price paid remained a secret between the two of them. 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 the 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 he deserved. This rivalry among the Nakhudas, Daly wrote, raised the cost of 'enslaving a diver for life'. But he also recognised the gravity of the risks facing the Nakhudas. These he defined as death and sickness among the 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 Bahrain institution. 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 own States.<sup>30</sup>

### **The industry faces hard times**

Bahrain's pearl trade was slack during the years 1920-1, particularly in 1921 when a number of small traders went bankrupt. During the second half of 1922 the market improved

## *The Pearling Industry*

and continued so doing in 1923 as the official commentary below reveals:<sup>31</sup>

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 seem to be forthcoming. The trade seems almost entirely confined to Jewish firms in Paris.

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:<sup>32</sup>

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

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 per cent 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 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

### *The Pearling Industry*

their creditors in annual instalments failed to do so, and the sanads were used against them 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 three members: Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman az-Zayani, Haji Mohammad bin Hindi, and Haji Abd Ali bin Rajab, with the Adviser as President. The Court enquired into the most urgent cases and after great difficulty was able to persuade the creditors to accept the Nakhudas' boats and their divers' debts. The Nakhudas were also persuaded to accept less cash for themselves and their divers from their creditors. Commenting upon the settlements effected, the Adviser wrote:<sup>33</sup>

It appears that in every case the tadjars (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.

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 puller respectively. They had not been consulted over the reductions and the only justification for this was, according to the Adviser, lack 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 aimed at reducing their debts.

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 Mohammad Al Khalifah, a member of the Ruling family, was appointed its President.<sup>34</sup> Shortly afterwards the duties of the Salifah Court were merged with those of the Majlis al-'Urfi.<sup>35</sup>

During 1927 the catch improved by 20 per cent 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>36</sup> This improvement continued and in 1928 both the pearl trade and the general trade of Bahrain were good. The sale of exceptional pearls increased during the year by 10–15 per cent over the previous year and that of inferior grades was down by 20 per cent. The Tisqam for the following season was maintained at its 1928 level.<sup>37</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>38</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>39</sup>

The global recession of 1930 aggravated the slump in the pearl trade. The season's sales dropped to less than 28 lakhs of rupees.<sup>40</sup> Foreign buyers had unsold pearls from the previous season and were reluctant to buy more. Only a few Bahrain merchants managed to sell, and 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 to fix the advances for the season. The merchants complained of the scarcity of cash and desired that the advances should be reduced. They were therefore settled 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 stating that the diver was no longer bound by contractual obligations to his Nakhuda and was free to seek re-employment. When the reduced advances were made public on 14 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, regarded the increase as contrary to the aims of the pearling



### *The Pearling Industry*

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 or by their Nakhudas.<sup>41</sup> On 21 May the divers ended their protest, and the fleet sailed to the banks. The Agent wrote:<sup>42</sup>

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.

Investigations conducted in 1929 showed that many old divers owed their Nakhudas as much as Rs. 3,000. As the earnings were decreasing year by 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 Adviser outlined the impact of two poor seasons upon the merchants:<sup>43</sup>

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 hard 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.

The worsening economic conditions twice forced the Government

### *The Pearling Industry*

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>44</sup> Earlier in December 1928, he spelt out a similar warning:<sup>45</sup>

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.

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, the local dealers suffered financially and the extent of their loss is best described by the excerpt below:<sup>46</sup>

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.

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 25 May their leaders were arrested. 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 Natus, 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 future occasions.

According to the Agent, the authorised Salaf advances were the

### *The Pearling Industry*

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 outside the pearling industry.<sup>47</sup> Reporting the matter of the Government, the Resident wrote:<sup>48</sup>

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, Nejdis, 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.

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>49</sup> In the following year, by order of Shaikh Hamad, a Diving Council presided over by the Adviser was introduced to advise on diving affairs. Greater numbers of Nakhudas operated on the Khammas system than before, owing to the fact that they 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>50</sup> The advances for 1933 were maintained at the 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,

## *The Pearling Industry*

he was nevertheless left free to give smaller amounts provided the arrangements he made were acceptable to his divers.

As the industry's future was becoming increasingly uncertain, merchants demanded mortgages of land and property from their Nakhudas against the cash they had lent them. This is borne out by the cases contested in the Courts during the years 1932-3. 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>51</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>52</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>53</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of boats</i>	<i>Estimated total value of pearls in lakhs of rupees</i>
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. 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 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 divers. At the end of 1933 several pearl dealers urged the Adviser to close the banks for a whole year so that the oysters



### *The Pearling Industry*

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 at the same time have put divers out of work for a whole year. Moreover, without the full co-operation of all the Gulf States, a closure restricted to Bahrain boats only would have damaged the islands' economy.<sup>54</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, and that the debts of eight elderly divers reached over Rs. 2,000 and those of nine others exceeded Rs. 1,000.<sup>55</sup>

Concern among European dealers about the circulation of cultured pearls was mentioned in 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>56</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. The Administration could not allow this to happen and, anyway, trade in cultured pearls had already been prohibited.<sup>57</sup> Also in 1929 a local man was convicted by the Court of infringing government regulations regarding the handling or trade in cultured pearls.<sup>58</sup> Commenting on the impact of Japanese pearls, the Adviser noted:<sup>59</sup>

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.

So far we have accounted for those factors which influenced the pearl trade directly. As regards the attitude of the divers,

## *The Pearling Industry*

Nakhudas, and merchants, the Administration's view was outlined as follows by the Adviser in 1934:<sup>60</sup>

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.

### **The industry's fortunes 1935-45**

During the first half of the 1930s, the pearling industry was hit by the recession, and even some time after the world economy had recovered, the industry remained in bad shape. Greater production and circulation of cultured pearls, lack of European and American demand for Bahrain pearls, meagre sales and low 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 improvements were recorded during the years 1935, 1937, 1941, 1943 and 1945, but these were only temporary. The main trend of the industry was one of gradual decline, as was 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 5.1 at the end of this chapter.)

From 1935, European buyers, who used to visit Bahrain every season, more or less ceased coming and the catch was taken to Bombay for sale there. The Indian demand for Bahrain pearls was mainly restricted to the lower grades.<sup>61</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 ex-Nakhudas by monthly instalments of Rs. 5. In this way both divers and Nakhudas benefited from the oil industry.<sup>62</sup> Alternatively 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 Royal Air Force

executed large construction plans.<sup>63</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>64</sup> The improvement was short-lived, however, and 1938 turned out to be a very bad season owing to a poor catch and to a decline in the price of pearls.<sup>65</sup> In the following season the catch was small but of better quality. Both absence of foreign buyers and the unstable world conditions helped to 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>66</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>67</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 per cent was recorded in the price of pearls over the 1940 season, despite the virtual closure of the American and European markets throughout the War period.<sup>68</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 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>69</sup> From 1942 onwards the cost of provisioning the boats increased, largely owing to the great rise in the price of foodstuffs (see Chapter 8). The increase adversely affected the Nakhudas and the divers, and to match the rising cost of living the advances were slightly increased during the years 1942-5 (see Table 5.1 at the end of this chapter).

The 1943 season was described as reasonably good owing to the Indian demand for medium and low 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 were over Rs. 150.<sup>70</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>71</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 were given as Rs. 165.<sup>72</sup>

In 1945 fewer boats operated in the season than in the preceding 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>73</sup> The season was described as 'the best flicker of prosperity from pearls'.<sup>74</sup>

Despite the smallness of the advances throughout the period 1935-45, divers did not raise objections as they did earlier in 1929, 1930 and 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 study, 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>75</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 accounting 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 punish disobedient divers, as was the case before the initiation of the reforms, instead of reporting the matter to the authorities at the end of the season. (See the Nakhudas' Petition of September 1925, cited above.) On the other hand, the divers protested mainly against the reduction of the advances, i.e. Salaf, Tisqam, which were essential to sustain their families while they were away 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



## *The Pearling Industry*

its previous lucrativeness through fall of prices and sales. The same study 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.

The diving systems by which the Nakhudas operated, Salafieh, Khammas, '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 to accrue 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, 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 Salifah Court, were heavily influenced by the 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 obtain 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

## *The Pearling Industry*

unscrupulously by those in charge of it. Moreover, Salafieh owed its survival not to its agreeableness to the divers, but to the sheer weight of the pearling fraternity behind it.

As regards the risk factor in the industry, the study 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.

Normally, the income risk was more real for the divers and pullers than for the creditors and Nakhudas. A creditor was bound to get 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 had 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 most prone to fluctuations.

The study 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.

It is claimed that the reform measure which put an end to '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 accounting system had added to the overall cost of the operation, and that the handing out of uniform loans to all divers without taking account of their skills weakened the desire to be competent in diving, and therefore made the system less effective.

## *The Pearling Industry*

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 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 the 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 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 victimisation, against faulty accounts, against bequeathal of his debts to his son, they ensured 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 culprits were global recession, Japanese pearls, poor sales and prices. In short, nothing could have averted the collapse of the pearl trade, not even the absence

## *The Pearling Industry*

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>76</sup> it did away with interest-bound loans, why did not they encourage the Khammas system? The Administration could have persuaded new divers or those 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 the 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.

*Table 5.1: Statistics of boats and advances for 1935-45. 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	Tisqām		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

## Notes

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

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 March 1923.

3. 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



## *The Pearling Industry*

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.

4. Belgrave to Colonel Prior: Slavery and the Bahrain Pearl Industry. I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. 1337/48, 9 February 1930.

5. Daly's No. 37-C.

6. Colonel H.R.P. Dickson to D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/23, No. 284-C, 3 September 1920. An example of the Shaikh's customary right is an incident documented by Dickson, the then Political Agent. On the night of 30 August 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 realising the gravity of the dangers that awaited him outside the Agency. Earlier, he and Sayed Ahmad bin Sayed Alawi, a leading Shi'ah 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 pay Rs. 4,200 to him on account of the Shaikh's right levied at 10 per cent of the price paid for the pearl. Haji Ahmad disputed the justice 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, Abdul Rahman az-Zaiyani, Salman Al-Matar, Abdul Aziz Al-Qusaibi, Seth Saleh of Bohra Community, Muhammad Shareef Awazi. They were unanimous that the Shaikh's demand was unfair and that the pearl was non-taxable since it was bought outside Bahrain. Dickson then asked 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 Shiah and not from their Arab subjects'. Shaikh Isa was displeased with Ahmad's taking refuge in the Agency and with the Agent's granting of protection to one of his 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.

## *The Pearling Industry*

7. *Gazetteer*, Part IV, p. 2241, Appendix (C).
8. A. al-Shamlān: *Ṣinā'at al-Ghawṣ*: The Pearling Industry (of Bahrain), pp. 63–5, 108–10.
9. Adviser's No. 1337/48.
10. A.R.P.A. 1921. Also, A.R.P.A. 1922. I.O.R. 15/2/296.
11. A.R.P.A. 1923.
12. Daly's No. 37-C.
13. No. 622-S.
14. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 68-C, 3 February 1924.
15. Trevor to Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 122-S, 15 February 1924.
16. No. 68-C.
17. Resident to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 27-T, 13 March 1924. Note that the pearling reforms, as revealed by the above account, began in 1924, and not from 1921 to 1923 as stated in Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain*, p. 107.
18. Director of Customs to the P.A.: Boat Registrations and Pearl Licences. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. PA/32, 12 May 1924. Also, Annual Budgets for 1929, 1940. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044.
19. See File on Pearling. I.O.R. 15/2/1349.
20. No. 27-T.
21. Col. Trevor to Major Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 233-S, 10 April 1924.
22. Daly to Trevor: Pearling Licences. I.O.R. 15/2/132, 1 April 1924.
23. Trevor to Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 232-S, 10 April 1924.
24. The men were told to obtain the account books from a government office at the Customs, against a payment of six annas per book.
25. 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.
26. During the 1930s the pearl trade was hit by the recession causing a sharp drop in sales, and the minimum earnings of Rs. 260 for each diver was no longer possible.
27. A.R.P.A. 1924.
28. A.R.P.A. 1925.
29. See Translation of an Arabic Petition dated 8th Rabi-ul Awwal 1344 (26 September 1925) from diving Nakhudas of Bahrain to the Government of Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/132.
30. Daly to Captain Stuart-Horner, Secretary to the P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/132, No. 93/9/5, 20 February 1926.
31. A.R.P.A. 1923.
32. A.R.P.A. 1924.
33. Adviser to the Agent. The Pearling Industry. I.O.R. 15/2/296, 25 Sha'ban 1345 (28 February 1927).
34. A.R.P.A. 1926.
35. A.R.P.A. 1927.
36. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/296, No. 564-9A, 5 Sha'ban 1346.
37. A.R.P.A. 1928.

## *The Pearling Industry*

38. Belgrave, Annual Report for 1930. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044.
39. Captain Prior to Colonel Biscoe, I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. C/89, 24 May 1930.
40. A.R.P.A. 1930. I.O.R. 15/2/296.
41. Belgrave's Annual Report for 1930.
42. Prior's No. C/89.
43. Belgrave's Annual Report for 1930.
44. Belgrave to Prior, No. 1337/48.
45. Belgrave, The Pearl Industry of Bahrain, 19 December 1928. I.O.R. 15/2/132.
46. A.R.P.A. 1931. Also see Captain Prior to Colonel Biscoe. I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. C/91, 2 August 1931.
47. Prior to Biscoe. I.O.R. 15/2/848, no number, 30 May 1932.
48. Col. Biscoe to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/848, No. 354-S, 4 June 1932.
49. A.R.P.A. 1932. I.O.R. 15/2/297.
50. Belgrave, Annual Report for 1933. I.O.R. 15/2/297, No. 923-9A, 6 January 1934.
51. Belgrave, The Pearl Trade and the Diving Industry, 1352 (1933). I.O.R. 15/2/195.
52. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 875/9A, 25 Shawwal 1353 (30 January 1935).
53. Belgrave, The Pearl Industry of Bahrain, 19 December 1928.
54. 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 the absence of diving apparatus intensive pearling. See Captain Prior to Col. Biscoe. I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. C-38, 5 April 1930. Also, Col. Biscoe to Prior, I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. 174-S, 12 April 1930.
55. Belgrave, The Pearl Trade and the Diving Industry 1353 (1934). I.O.R. 15/2/195.
56. Cultured pearls were sold for one thirtieth of the price of genuine pearls of similar weight and appearance. See Belgrave's No. 875-9A.
57. Belgrave to Prior, I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. 1492-9A, 9th Dhil Haj 1347 (18 May 1929). Also, Prior to Captain Russell, D.P.R. I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. C/77, 2 June 1929. And also, Russell to Prior, I.O.R. 15/2/122, No. 1448, 20 June 1929.
58. The person involved in the case was Abdullah al-Zayed. In another case in 1933, Khalil Bâkir, a pearl dealer from Qatar trading in Bahrain, was found guilty of a similar offence. Belgrave, The Pearl Trade and the Diving Industry, 1352.
59. Belgrave's No. 875-9A.
60. Belgrave, The Pearl Trade and the Diving Industry, 1353 (1934).
61. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1221-9A, 6 February 1936.
62. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1303-9A, 7 February 1937.
63. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 56-9A, 3

## *The Pearling Industry*

February 1941. Also, Belgrave's Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/300, No. 427-9A, 8 February 1945.

64. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1846/S.F., 8 February 1938.

65. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 2298-9A, 14 February 1939.

66. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 2369-9A, 3 February 1940.

67. No. 56-9A.

68. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 81-9A, 31 January 1942.

69. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/343, No. 273-18, 11 February 1943.

70. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 240-9A, 3 February 1944.

71. Director of Customs' Annual Report for 1943 — Food Control. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. PA/HL/10/88.

72. No. 427-9A.

73. Belgrave, Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/301, number illegible, 23 January 1946.

74. Belgrave, *Personal Column*, p. 134.

75. 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 (eds), *Bahrain and the Gulf*, p. 31.

76. Many Indian merchants in Bahrain were involved in the financing of boats whose Nakhudas operated on the Salafieh system. S.B. Miles recorded their influence as follows: '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 necessities 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.



## 6

# The Politics of Education: From Seclusion to Integration 1919-1945

### The emergence of modern schools

The year 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 at that time.<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 also.

During the summer of 1919 Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa was invited to England where he visited schools and was greatly impressed by what he saw 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 Şubāh, was opened in 1912 and therefore pre-dated al-Hidayah by about seven years.<sup>2</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>3</sup> For the sake of history, mention should also be made of the Persian school, Ittiḥād, founded in Bahrain in 1910.<sup>4</sup>

Mosque-based schools were the precursor of modern education in Bahrain, as in most other Islamic countries. Some of these schools were dependent on trusts and endowments from members of the community and were listed as Waqf schools. A large number of Shi'ah Waqf schools existed in Bahrain from earlier times. Some were destroyed, over the years, by opponents of the Shi'ah faith, for example, the great school once attached to the mosque at the ancient village of Bilād al-Qadīm. Such schools were places for religious teaching carried out by traditional Mullahs or '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>5</sup>

From December 1923, the Administration of Shaikh Hamad paid a regular monthly subsidy to al-Hidāyah School, to the exclusion of the Shi'ah who wanted equal rights, as the statement below indicates:<sup>6</sup>

A scheme he (i.e. Shaikh Hamad) does not favour, but for which there is a considerable demand, is for a school for Shiahs. The Civil List includes a monthly contribution of Rs. 1,000 to the Sunni Boys' schools.

The Administration was highly dissatisfied with the way the 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>7</sup>

During the school year 1926-7, 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 this commentary shows: 'There is considerable feeling against the importing of foreigners, but there was no remedy as local teachers do not exist'.<sup>8</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. 250-300 monthly and were provided with accommodation 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:<sup>9</sup>

## *The Politics of Education*

It is hoped that after the schools have been in existence for a year or two more, some of the pupils will be qualified to take up posts as clerks in the town.

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 merchant classes. It took parents a considerable time to adapt to the idea of sending their daughters to modern schools to learn 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 boys' standard of education, Belgrave wrote in early 1928:<sup>10</sup>

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.

### **The first educational mission to Beirut**

Seven boys were selected in 1928 for further study at the American University in Beirut (AUB) at the expense of the State.<sup>11</sup> The aim was to train a number of Bahrainis for vacant jobs in the Administration of Bahrain. The sons of Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa and 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>12</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.

For the first time the Ruling House of Bahrain allowed its members to join a Christian institution, in this case the AUB — 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.<sup>13</sup>

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.

### **The formation of a Shi'ah Education Committee**

In 1927 leading Shi'ahs headed by the Shi'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 of a number of densely populated vilages in the surrounding areas. Donations for the school came mainly from the Shi'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>14</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>15</sup> On 15 March the following year a second school, al-Madrasah al-Ja'fariyah, bigger than the previous one, was opened in Manamah town also by Shaikh Hamad.<sup>16</sup> It was financed jointly by the Shi'ahs and the State. Its management was entrusted to a Committee of Prominent Shi'ahs presided over by Sayed Ahmad bin Sayed 'Alawi. Mohammad Sa'id Āl-Jum'ah, educated in Baghdad, was appointed headmaster and the staff comprised his brother plus three Iraqi teachers. At the time of its inauguration 198 boys attended the school, the maximum number that it could take. Support for the school came from the Shi'ah Qadis and from the Baharnah Community in Manamah, and the State budgeted Rs. 1,100 during 1347 (1928-9) for the annual upkeep of both Shi'ah schools.<sup>17</sup>



**The dismissal of the Syrian headmasters:  
the beginnings of centralisation**

In 1928, actual State expenditure on education totalled Rs. 70,000.<sup>18</sup> There were then four Sunni boys' schools in existence, located in Manamah, Moharraq, Rafaa' and Hedd. The last one was opened during the year. The total number of boys in them amounted to 442, and in addition there were 75 girls in Moharraq Girls' School. The number of teachers had grown to 26 — 13 Bahrainis, 8 Syrians and 5 Iraqis.<sup>19</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'ah boys' schools, managed separately by a Committee of Shi'ahs. In June of that year Shaikh Abdullah approached the Adviser suggesting the formation of a government body to assume control of education in Bahrain.<sup>20</sup> At this time, the official view regarding education was outlined as follows:<sup>21</sup>

Education is still backward, but thanks to the push of Shaikh Abdullah . . . it has made immense strides during the past two years. The drive in this case has come wholly from Bahrain subjects themselves.

Certain changes were envisaged for the school year 1929-30, as first steps towards State control of education. These were described by the Adviser as follows:<sup>22</sup>

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.

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 this letter was written.

In September 1929 Faiq Adham, the new Lebanese Inspector, was engaged to supervise primary education in Bahrain. He was appointed on the recommendation of the AUB, where he had

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 to replace the one then in force. The new scale determined a teacher's pay according to his 'qualifications' rather than 'personality or influence'. He came into conflict with the two most experienced Syrian headmasters, Sayed 'Uthman al-Hawrani of al-Hidāyah and 'Omar Yahya al-Hawrani of Manamah Boys' School, both of whom resisted the proposed changes including Adham's plan for introducing the teaching of English in the lower forms of primary schools. '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 standstill. 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 a number of demands to him, namely that the Inspector be stripped of his 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>23</sup> The two Syrians were dismissed from their posts on account of 'unsatisfactory behaviour' and on 6 February 1930 they were deported.<sup>24</sup> Some members of the Education Committee spoke against government interference in education, and together with the public expressed sympathy for the two Syrians. The Adviser described their departure as an 'occasion for hysterical demonstration'.<sup>25</sup> The Agency Report commented as follows on the Inspector's plan for education in Bahrain:<sup>26</sup>

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.

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 a meeting to which members of the Sunni Education Committee, the Sunni Qadi, a number of merchants, and even teachers of religion, were invited. Members of the Sunni Committee defended the ousted headmasters and described their dismissal as unfair and rash. They blamed the State for meddling in education and submitted a petition to Shaikh Hamad containing a number of requests, the chief of which was 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 and deliberately allowing the dispute to get out of control.<sup>27</sup>

Following these developments the Agent wrote to Shaikh Hamad suggesting that it was time for the State to assume control of education:<sup>28</sup>

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 was 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>29</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.

In the wake of this suggestion, the schools were subjected to direct State control. Shaikh Abdullah presided over education in general and the Inspector supervised the technical side. These developments were too abrupt for the members of the Education Committee and, in the circumstances, it was left to die a natural death, having served from 1919 to early 1930.<sup>30</sup>

Shortly after the arrival of the headmasters in Syria, an article dated 11 March appeared in the *al-Ayyām* newspaper of Basrah,

which blamed their dismissal on the Political Agent and accused him of involvement in education affairs in Bahrain. The article attributed the removal of the men to their refusal to allow the teaching of English to the lower forms.<sup>31</sup>

The education authorities in Bahrain responded quickly by publishing their own account of educational developments in Bahrain. Their account appeared in the Beirut paper, *al-'Ahd al-Jadid — The New Epoch* — of 29 March. It was signed by 'a Syrian in Bahrain', but was reportedly published with the approval of Shaikh Abdullah and the Adviser.<sup>32</sup>

### **The recall of the mission from Beirut**

From 1930 onwards, the Administration was preoccupied with the question of further training for Bahraini boys who had completed their primary schooling. Primary education, the highest then available in Bahrain, fell short of qualifying a local boy for a clerical post with the Government or with an independent employer. To pursue further studies, the boys, encouraged by their parents, looked to other Arab countries. Commenting on this situation, the Resident wrote:<sup>33</sup>

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.

By the end of the academic year 1929–30, the seven boys had been withdrawn from Beirut. The decision to recall them 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 following were above their academic standard and that they had not been chosen for their academic excellence in the first place.<sup>34</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 outlined thus by the Agency Report:<sup>35</sup>

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.

Earlier, the boys had sent a cable from Beirut, protesting at the sacking of the Syrian masters, which accounted, in part, for the Administration's anger with them. Moreover, British officials were suspicious of the training of Bahrainis in an American institution. In December 1929, the Resident described Beirut as a 'highly Westernized' place, which provided the 'wrong atmosphere' for Bahrainis.<sup>36</sup> Over the years the 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>37</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 following:<sup>38</sup>

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.

### **The 1930s: education in the age of oil**

By the end of the 1930-31 school session, most of the old teaching staff had been 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>39</sup> had had his first training. Some of the former teachers were re-engaged including three Bahrainis, one of whom had a B.A. degree from the AUB. Three Iraqis were also engaged, with difficulty, for the Shi'ah schools. The new staff had to sign regular contracts which stated the terms of employment based on a new pay scale.

## *The Politics of Education*

At the start of the 1931-2 school year, two educational Councils were formed, with Sunni as well as Shi'ah members. They were partly elected by the public and partly appointed by the Government. Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa had recently been appointed Minister of Education. The State now controlled the finances and the pay and appointment of teachers. Members of the Councils resented the tight State control since it deprived them of the opportunities for malpractice which had existed earlier. The Administration had a low opinion of the Councils:<sup>40</sup>

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.

There were six boys' schools during 1931-2, four Sunni, two Shi'ah, and two girls' schools. The number of boys in the schools totalled around 500, and the girls 100. The students were supposed to pay for their books, though few of them did; members of the education council 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 standardised, and the subjects taught included: the Qur'ān, Arabic, reading and writing, grammar, recitation of poems, composition, arithmetic, geometry, book-keeping, history, geography and hygiene. Commenting on the educational changes and the local reaction, the Adviser wrote:<sup>41</sup>

On the whole the public appreciated 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.

The advent of oil in June 1932 heralded brighter prospects for education in Bahrain. During that year the Sunni and Shi'ah boys' schools in Manamah were amalgamated under a central authority and the Educational Councils were abolished owing to their members' dissensions and inefficiency.<sup>42</sup> A new era had

begun in the field of education, implemented more appropriately for reasons of economy than for any other. Boys of both religious sects were subjected for the first time to a unified system of schooling. Fears of Shi'ah opposition to the amalgamation proved unfounded. On the contrary, mixed Sunni-Shi'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 better educational facilities, the opening of new schools in the villages, and the appointment of a competent Baharnah, Ibrahim al-'Uraiyyedh, to the headmastership of Manamah Boys' School. In the past, lack of cash was the State's only justification for not building schools. When the export of oil started in 1934, royalties began to accrue to the State, and public pressure for more schools and better education increased. Lack 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' and Karzakkān. In 1937 the Administration decided to send Mohammad Saleh Sayed 'Adnan, the son of the late Shi'ah Qadi, to Madrasat al-Wā'iẓīn, a Shi'ah school in Lucknow, in order to train as Qadi for the Shi'ah Waqfs.<sup>43</sup> Earlier, the British authorities in Baghdad had advised against sending him to a Shi'ah institute in Iraq.<sup>44</sup>

By 1938 the oil company's high-salaried workers in the skilled jobs were almost entirely foreigners, and the low-salaried manual workers were predominantly natives. Among the latter 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 criticised for being biased towards 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, for girls as well as boys, had risen during the year to ten, the teachers to 42, and the students to 1,113.<sup>45</sup> The number of school-leavers had also grown, and the disappointment of parents at the failure of their children to secure suitable employment became correspondingly greater. By the end of 1938 popular pressure for the removal of the Lebanese Inspector, held responsible by the public for the failings of the school system, had become so persistent that the following March both

he and his wife were removed, after having worked in Bahrain for nearly a decade.<sup>46</sup>

### **Reorganisation of education under British Directorship 1939–45**

After the Inspector's departure, 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 12 to 22 June 1939, introduced him to the schools there and provided an opportunity to confer with the Adviser on various questions. Shortly after the visit Vallance wrote to him:<sup>47</sup>

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.

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 seek it elsewhere. He believed that Egypt was sufficiently far from Bahrain and travel expenses high enough to discourage parents from sending their boys there. 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.

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.

Iraqi schools were places of agitation and Vallance attributed to them the organisation of the political demonstrations, Palestine protests, and the destruction of British and Jewish property in Iraq. To send boys to the above countries was, he believed, 'suicidal'. His advice to Belgrave was:

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.

According to Vallance, finance for the new college was to come from the oil revenues of Bahrain and donations from the oil company there. The British Council was also expected to assist by defraying the cost of teachers of English. The Rulers of the Gulf States were to be induced to send their sons to Bahrain instead of to 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 Syrian national anthem. His other main criticism was the lack 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.

Belgrave, who appreciated Vallance's views and proposals for education in Bahrain, described their political implications to the Agent as follows:<sup>48</sup>

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.

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 'history of their own State', i.e. Anglo-Bahraini relations, and spoke of his support for the writing of such a history.<sup>49</sup> He described the plan to the India Office as 'distinctly attractive, and would have an excellent political effect from our point of view. In general, therefore, it has my support'.<sup>50</sup>

In November 1939, the Government of Bahrain engaged the services of Adrian-Vallance as the 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>51</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>52</sup>

Once in office, Vallance submitted to Shaikh Hamad a formal report on the state of education in Bahrain, based on his observations during his 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, leaving prematurely<sup>53</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>54</sup>

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 on the writing of a local history, he stated:

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.

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', which he said had been imported into Bahrain 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.

In a letter to the Agent in Bahrain, Colonel Prior, who had succeeded T.C. Fowle<sup>55</sup> as Resident in September 1939, attempted to assess some of Vallance's ideas. He concurred with him in encouraging the boys to take up technical education since most of them were destined to work with the oil company. But he expressed reservations about the relevance of some of Vallance's remarks, especially:<sup>56</sup>

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 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.

Prior correctly saw no use in teaching English to 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 in

the Administration in Bahrain. He drew attention to Vallance's recommendations and warned of the great expenditure their implementation would entail, far beyond what had hitherto been anticipated by officials in Bahrain.

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 of introducing a 'Hebrew teacher', the Agent enquired:<sup>57</sup>

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.

The Agent also counselled caution in 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 car drivers. Teaching them English, he wrote, 'will only serve to focus their gaze on the rosy goal'. 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>58</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 issue of 15 February 1940, 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, and that very few Bahrainis attained the standards of training to qualify for these posts. Nevertheless, as Director of Education, he assured the people of the Government's 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 boys to take it up since there was nothing demeaning about it. The Department of Education had recently 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>59</sup>

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, namely in teachers' working hours, salaries, grades, annual increments, and compulsory participation in the Government Provident Fund Scheme.<sup>60</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>61</sup> Two years later it was renamed Manamah Boys' Secondary School. Its introduction transformed the school system into three stages, each involving three years of schooling at elementary, intermediate and secondary levels.<sup>62</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 previously the case.<sup>63</sup>

Vallance also drew attention to the inadequacy of the school health service, with emphasis on village schools which lacked dispensaries and were visited by doctors barely 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, mixing of medicine and X-ray work for a period of two years. During 1940, a new State Medical Officer (SMO), Dr Snow, was appointed and one of his earliest preoccupations was with school health. He paid regular visits to schools and extended school medical supervision over the whole country.<sup>64</sup>

Lack of trained Shi'ah headmasters for village schools was

another problem 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'ah teachers to take over the running of the schools.

It 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>65</sup> An experiment was conducted at Budayya' 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 from two local Mullas, the traditional teachers who formed the entire staff of the School. Two efficient teachers were sent from Manamah to Budayya' School; one was made headmaster, and the other who arrived shortly afterwards, 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 on to the existing structure. The number of boys in the school subsequently rose from 18 to 74.<sup>66</sup>

A grave and chronic problem which had affected the Department's work from the outset 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. The Administration then applied to the Palestine Government through whose good offices eight qualified Palestinian teachers were recruited for work in Bahrain as from October 1940.<sup>67</sup>

Vallance's plan for the reorganisation of education also involved Bahrainisation of both administrative and academic posts in schools. This was in line with his express aim of reorienting the outlook of the boys from one of dependence upon the other Arab countries to one 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 objective of the Department of Education was to appoint only Bahrainis as headmasters and assistants in all schools, Vallance hoped to curtail what he called 'the undesirable ascendancy of Syrian masters over Bahraini masters'.<sup>68</sup>

The changes effected by Vallance in the field of education in Bahrain were lauded as 'an excellent beginning',<sup>69</sup> nevertheless, he resigned in July 1941 after 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 materialised. 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 budgeted at Rs. 90,000, of which Rs. 12,000 was allocated for the development of technical education and the expansion of the Shi'ah schools.<sup>70</sup> Carpentry schools were the forerunners of technical education in Bahrain. Thereafter it developed gradually to include basic engineering and welding in 1938,<sup>71</sup> and a year later the Technical School in Manamah was extended to accommodate a larger number of applicants.<sup>72</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. 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 expensive for Bahrain to afford. The Agent commented:<sup>73</sup>

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 ¼ Lakhs and recurring expenditure not very far short of Rs. 50,000 annually.

The number of students who registered for the Technical School in 1939 was a mere 17 with three teachers to instruct them.<sup>74</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 students.

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>75</sup> This proposal was not acceptable to the Resident for the following reasons:<sup>76</sup>

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.

Mr Hutchings was eventually engaged as Principal of the new school, which was opened in September 1941.<sup>77</sup> He was now in a position to implement his plan, recently 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>78</sup>

Training in the new school was not restricted to Bahrainis. Students also came from Kuwait and in 1942 five, who were financed by the Kuwait Oil Company, successfully completed their technical training in Bahrain.<sup>79</sup> Despite the improvements, the number of students at the school fell from 50 in January 1944 to 36 in December. The drop was occasioned by:<sup>80</sup>

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 opened in October with vacancies for over 50.

In 1945 technical education was further expanded to embrace training in elementary electricity and weaving. On 19 May Mr Hutchings's agreement with the Department of Education expired. He relinquished his post, after having served for four years in war-time Bahrain, and was succeeded by Mr Said Tabbāra who took over as Principal of the Technical School from 20 May 1945.<sup>81</sup>



## **Educational affairs before the end of the war**

Government efforts to improve education continued throughout the war and the public, aware of the benefits to the country, appreciated them. The Agent commented:<sup>82</sup>

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.

During 1943, the Administration experienced great difficulty in recruiting teachers.<sup>83</sup> A year later, the problem was solved when the Residency allowed the engagement of Egyptian teachers.<sup>84</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>85</sup> They were employed on terms identical to those agreed with Kuwait, whereby the Egyptian Government subsidised half their salaries.<sup>86</sup> The secondment of Egyptian teachers to Bahrain inaugurated a period of co-operation which has continued to the present. In addition, 1944 also saw the sending of nine Bahraini students to Cairo for further education,<sup>87</sup> and a year later another three graduates of the Technical School were despatched.<sup>88</sup>

In 1944, the oil company 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 potential.<sup>89</sup>

In 1945 Mr Wakelin, the Director of Education since October 1941, failed to return to Bahrain from 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 30 June until 8 August, when he fell ill and gave up his post. Thereafter, the Directorate of Education reverted to a Bahraini, Ahmad al-'Umrān.<sup>90</sup> He officiated as Director and assumed responsibility for a Department whose budget estimate for 1364 (1945-6) exceeded four Lakhs of rupees. The Department now controlled 15 schools, 127 teachers

and 2,619 students. The policy of Bahrainisation of posts, started during Vallance's time, was kept up under al-'Umrān, and despite increased dependence upon Arab capabilities, self-sufficiency, especially at the primary level, continued to be the chief aim of the Directorate throughout the rest of the 1940s.

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'ah Arabs were denied equal rights in matters of education, and when the first school was built for Shi'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>91</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.

Centralisation was achieved in 1932 when both Sunni and Shi'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 Education Committees, and the public and in the field, on the toil of a number of expatriate Arab teachers and headmasters, prominent amongst whom were Hafiz Wahbah, 'Uthman and 'Omar al-Hawrani, Faiq Adham, etc., and not least '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. This appointment came as the result of (a) public disapproval of the school system in the late 1930s and (b) British concern about the spread of nationalism, which, having hit Egypt, Syria and Iraq, was beginning to influence the young in Bahrain.

Vallance's plan for reorganisation aimed at general improvement of the education services, and also at tempering the rising tide of Arabism which had penetrated the classrooms 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 as schools, and an enhanced interest in education, were all conducive to the shaping of the boys' thinking. Popular political awareness was on the increase especially in the late 1930s when 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.

### Notes

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.

2. 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 14 February 1922. I.O.R. 15/1/327.

3. R.B. Winder, 'Education in Al-Bahrain' in J. Kritzeck and R.B. Winder (eds), *The World of Islam: Studies in honour of Philip K. Hitti*, p. 310.

4. A.Y. Al-Hamar, *An Analytical Study of the System of Education in Bahrain 1940-65*, pp. 8, 104.

5. C. Belgrave, Education. I.O.R. 15/2/296, 23 February 1927.

6. 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 December 1923. Note that the total monthly allocation on Bahrain's first Civil List drawn up by Daly in December 1923 was Rs. 36,000.

7. A.R.P.A. 1925.

8. A.R.P.A. 1927. Note that the word 'Syrians', at this time, subsumed both nationals of present-day Syria as well as Lebanon.

9. Belgrave, Education. I.O.R. 15/2/296, op. cit. 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).

10. No. 564/9A. Rev. B.D. Hakken was head of the American Mission School founded around 1905.

11. 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'ad Shamlan, Rashid bin Abdur Rahman Zayani, Adbur Rahman bin Qasim Ma'awda, Mohammad Kamal bin Shaikh Jasim. See letter from Major Barrett, P.A. to the

## *The Politics of Education*

Registrar, AUB, Beyrout, Syria. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, 28 June 1928. Although the decision to send the boys to Beirut was approved by the Administration in Bahrain and by Shaikh Abdullah, it was none the less carried out 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.

12. A.R.P.A. 1928.

13. No. 208/C/9/2.

14. No. 564/9A.

15. A.R.P.A. 1928.

16. A.R.P.A. 1929. It is interesting to note that a modern Shi'ah School also called al-Madrasah al-Ja'fariyah had existed in Baghdad prior to the outbreak of the First World War. 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.

17. C. Belgrave, Notes on Expenditure 1347 (1928–9). I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044.

18. For Annual Budget estimates — not actual accounts — in respect of education, see Table 7.7.

19. A.R.P.A. 1928.

20. Captain Prior's No. C/84. In 1929, the Sunni Education Committee consisted of the following merchant members: Abdul Aziz al-Qusaibi, Haji Abdur Rahman az-Zayani, and Yusuf Abdur Rahman Fakhroo, the treasurer of the Committee.

21. Col. Barrett, P.R., to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 385-S, 28 August 1929.

22. Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 409/2E, 26th Rabi I, 1348 (31 August 1929).

23. Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 1339/2E, 11th Ramadan, 1348 (10 February 1930).

24. Telegram from P.A. Bahrain, to P.A. Muscat. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 210, 6 February 1930.

25. No. 1339/2E.

26. 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 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.

27. Petition addressed to Shaikh Hamad, attached to Adviser's No. 1366/2E.

28. C.G. Prior to Shaikh Hamad, Deputy Ruler of Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 112/V.O., 15 February 1930.

29. State expenditure on education during 1348 (1929–30) was budgeted at Rs. 90,000. See Prior to Col. H.V. Biscoe, P.R., I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 789, 12 May 1930.

30. No. 1366/2E.



## *The Politics of Education*

31. *al-Ayyām* Newspaper, No. 26, 11 March 1930. I.O.R. 15/2/1231. Also see Memorandum from P.A. to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 554, 26 March 1930.

32. Col. H.V. Biscoe, P.R., to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 167-S, 9 April 1930. Also, Translation of an article from *al-'Ahd al-Jadīd*, 28th Shawwal 1348 (29 March 1930), attached to the Adviser's Memorandum to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 1903/2E, 9th Dhul Haj, 1348.

33. Col. Biscoe to Col. Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 72-S, 20 February 1930.

34. A.R.P.A. 1929.

35. A.R.P.A. 1930.

36. Resident to I.G. Acheson, Deputy F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. P.S.-8, 14 December 1929.

37. Belgrave to H. Weightman, P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/373, 20 July 1939.

38. No. 789.

39. During 1931, the Inspector entered into partnership with Khalil Kanoo, a leading merchant, to produce tiles, which 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.

40. Adviser's Annual Report on Education, 1350 (1931-2). I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044, No. 105/SF, 5 Safar 1350. The President of the Shi'ah Council was a local 'Alim, Shaikh Mohammad Ali al-Jish-shi, with whose performance the Adviser was unhappy.

41. Ibid.

42. A.R.P.A. 1932. I.O.R. 15/2/297. In his Annual Report for 1933, the Adviser stated: 'An independent school in Manamah managed by a Bahrain Shia was started about a year ago and is doing well'. (Belgrave's No. 923-9A of 6 January 1934). The reference is apparently to al-Madrasah al-Ahliyah started by Abdur Rasoul Al-Tajir and others.

43. Adviser to the agent. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1846/SF, 8 February 1938.

44. P.A. to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. 895-6/18, 16 April 1937.

45. A.R.P.A. 1938. I.O.R. 15/2/298.

46. A.R.P.A. 1939. I.O.R. 15/2/298.

47. Despatch from Adrian-Vallance to C. Belgrave. I.O.R. 15/1/373, para. 4, 26 June 1939.

48. Belgrave to H. Weightman, P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/373, 20 July 1939.

49. Col. T.C. Fowle, P.R., to H. Weightman. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/356, 15 August 1939.

50. Fowle to R.T. Peel, India Office. I.O.R. 15/1/373, NO. C/354, 15 August 1939.

51. A.R.P.A. 1939.

52. R.T. Peel to the Secretary-General, The British Council, I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. P.Z. 6658/39, 1 November 1939.

53. During 1935-6 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 about the boys' fate once the work

## *The Politics of Education*

had been completed and they were no longer needed. See Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 1303/9A, 7 February 1937.

54. Report on Government Education in Bahrain with Proposals for Reform. I.O.R. 15/1/373, 1 September 1939.

55. 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 December 1939.

56. Prior to H. Weightman, P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/831, 2 December 1939.

57. Weightman to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. C/807-1.b/5, 6 December 1939.

58. Adviser's No. 1846/S.F.

59. I.O.R. 15/2/208.

60. 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.

61. Belgrave's Annual Report on Education for 1942. I.O.R. 15/2/299.

62. H. Weightman to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/418-4/16, 15 May 1940.

63. Progress Report.

64. Dr R.H.B. Snow succeeded Dr Ian Davenport Jones as SMO on 24 April 1940. The latter resigned the post on 6 November 1939 to join the Royal Army Medical Corps in Egypt. For some time, Dr M.M. McDowall, the lady Medical Officer, officiated as SMO. See A.R.P.A. 1939 and 1940. I.O.R. 15/2/298, 299 respectively.

65. Progress Report.

66. Ibid.

67. Adviser to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 56-9A, 3 February 1941.

68. Progress Report.

69. Weightman to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/435-4/17, 26 May 1940.

70. Belgrave to C.G. Prior, P.A. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044, No. 160, 29th Muharram, 1348.

71. A.R.P.A. 1938.

72. Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/298, No. 2369/9A, 3 February 1940.

73. Weightman to Prior. I.O.R. 15/1/373, No. C/348-4/16, 23 April 1940.

74. No. 2369/9A.

75. Weightman to Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. C/536-4/16, 28 June 1940.

76. Prior to Weightman. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. 480-S, 9 July 1940.

77. Belgrave to Mr E.B. Wakefield, P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 81-9A, 31 January 1942.

78. Annual Report by Belgrave for 1942. I.O.R. 15/2/299.

79. A.R.P.A. 1942. I.O.R. 15/2/299.

*The Politics of Education*

80. Adviser to Major T. Hickinbotham. I.O.R. 15/2/300, No. 427-9A, 8 February 1945.
81. A.R.P.A. 1945. I.O.R. 15/2/301.
82. A.R.P.A. 1943. I.O.R. 15/2/299.
83. Belgrave to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 240/9A, 3 February 1944.
84. Telegram from the Resident to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. 1270, 30 May 1944.
85. No. 427-9A.
86. Telegram from the Agent to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/208, No. 466, 18 May 1944.
87. No. 427-9A.
88. A.R.P.A. 1945.
89. Letter from W.P. Anderson, BAPCO's Local Representative, to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/1231, No. C/PA-147, 28 June 1944.
90. Note that just before his appointment as Officiating Director in August 1945, Mr al-'Umran was Secretary of the Moharraq Municipality.
91. A.R.P.A. 1928.

## Agriculture, Oil, Trade and Finances of Bahrain, 1920-1945

### Agriculture

Agriculture has been one of the traditional pursuits of the Baharnah Arabs since earliest times. In the early twentieth century, the main island had over twenty square miles of date-groves covering its northern parts. These provided dates, date-juice, and 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 to 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 al-Hasa, has 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>3</sup> Owing to the 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>4</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 turned its attention to agriculture. The Agency Report for 1930 provides this description:<sup>5</sup>

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.

During March 1930, the Agent urged the Adviser to speed up the appointment of an agricultural expert.<sup>6</sup> In reply, the Adviser wrote:<sup>7</sup>

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.

Shortly afterwards, the Government of Bahrain engaged 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. Also during 1930 the Government of Bahrain, in response to a suggestion from Major Holmes ordered the boring of a well on the plain at 'Āli. After a few abortive attempts, water was finally discovered at 300 feet below 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. Meanwhile, 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 'Āli for practical lessons in the preparation of the ground for cultivation and the sowing of seeds, etc. He also supervised Senaiyan Garden, described by the Adviser as one of Shaikh Hamad's finest gardens with over 2,000 date-trees. In addition, 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 some members of the Al Khalifah family and a few merchants to increase their date-groves and to experiment with new crops. The interest in agriculture was partly occasioned by a drop in local produce and a corresponding rise in the import of dates into Bahrain.<sup>8</sup>

In 1931 the agriculturist conducted an experiment in cotton growing for which seeds were obtained from the British Cotton Growing Association in Baghdad.<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, the famous fourteenth-century Arab traveller, recorded the growing of cotton in Bahrain:<sup>10</sup>

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.

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>11</sup> Cotton as a crop was not, however, lucrative.<sup>12</sup>

Until cotton can be grown on a larger scale it will not be very profitable, and local landowners have been unwilling to 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.

In August 1932 the Iraqi agriculturist left Bahrain after his post had been abolished as a result of insufficient funds.<sup>13</sup> In 1933 orange trees, which had been planted earlier, produced good fruit. Mesquite seeds, a quick growing tree suitable for firewood were also tried during the year, 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. This experiment failed as the land on which they were planted was open to the strong winds which abound in Bahrain.<sup>14</sup>

In 1934 the Adviser estimated the area of Bahrain at 138,000 acres, one-twelfth of which, i.e. roughly 11,000 acres, was suitable for cultivation, though the area actually cultivated amounted to only one-twentieth of the entire area, i.e. roughly 6,000 acres. Cultivation was dependent on irrigation, but lack of water limited agricultural expansion.<sup>15</sup> In 1935 the firm of Yateem tried to grow tobacco but with little or no success.<sup>16</sup> As far as the Government of Bahrain was concerned, nothing 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>17</sup> and a year later the Government decided to obtain the services of an Indian agricultural Advisor.<sup>18</sup> He arrived in March 1938, and stayed in Bahrain until mid-May of that year 'surveying the possibilities for agriculture'.<sup>19</sup> More than a year after he had left Bahrain, he finally produced his report described by the Agent as 'almost entirely valueless'.

In 1939 Captain A.C. Byard was appointed Assistant to the Adviser and put in charge of the Government's newly created experimental garden at Budayya where green vegetables, potatoes, wheat, barley, sugar cane and lucerne were grown successfully. During the year some gardens situated on the south-east coast were said to have been affected by date disease.<sup>20</sup> In 1940 Captain Byard left Bahrain, and responsibility for the running of the government garden reverted to the Public Works

Department.<sup>21</sup> An Egyptian expert, Husain Effendi, was engaged in 1941 to supervise the experimental garden and to advise landowners on cultivation. A Committee was also formed under Shaikh Ibrahim bin Shaikh Mohammad Al Khalifah to deal with agricultural affairs.<sup>22</sup>

During the cold weather vegetables like beet, celery, spinach, cabbage, lettuce, turnip, cauliflower, onion, carrot and parsley were grown successfully in Bahrain. In the summer cucumber, okra, sweet potatoes, marrows, Indian corn, pumpkins, egg-plant, and 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>23</sup>

Shortages of cereals during the Second World War led Shaikh Salman, the new Ruler, to encourage the growing of wheat.<sup>24</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>25</sup> In 1942 both Indian and Canadian wheat were grown in the experimental garden at Budayya', and also at Umm Na'sān and on the coast near Jasrah, where the annual average rainfall was 2.5 inches, sufficient for the growing of wheat. Unfortunately rainfall during the year was less than expected, and strong winds carried sand over the beds covering the growing wheat, and the experiment ended in failure. Only the Canadian wheat grown at Budayya' was successful and the two bags sown there produced a crop of fourteen bags. Its successful growth was attributed to regular irrigation and attention from the Egyptian agriculturist and his men. Nevertheless, wheat was not a lucrative crop for Bahrain because irrigation entailed a large work force and it had to be grown on land normally assigned to lucerne and vegetables, both of which were more profitable to produce.<sup>26</sup> In 1945 the Egyptian adviser left Bahrain and no successor was appointed.

### *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.

In 1925 Major Daly made two suggestions towards easing the problems. He proposed that either the Al Khalifah owners of gardens should hire their cultivators directly and collect the proceeds, or that the State should provide a group of experts to assess and determine the annual rental of a garden on the spot. Both systems were said to have been in operation in Iraq at that time.<sup>27</sup>

The system of leasing was 'unsatisfactory' and remained the source of much discontent especially during 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'ahs to investigate the matter. In cases in which the tenant's complaint was considered legitimate a proportion of the annual rent was deducted. The landlords disagreed with the Committee's decision 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>28</sup>

The problem was made worse by the fact that there were more cultivators wanting to lease gardens than there were gardens available for lease. Also, the livelihood of a cultivator depended upon securing the tenancy of a garden; the tenants competed against each other in auctions for the leases and the highest bidder acquired the lease. This in itself was sufficient to ensure inflated rentals for the owners, some of whom sent their own men to stimulate the bidding. Moreover, the conditions of the lease did not provide for 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. Tenants would often lease gardens for more than their real worth hoping that if they were unable to settle the full rents, their landlords would waive part of the amount due. 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>29</sup>

In 1931–2 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 tenants defaulted on the payment of full rents and their landlords took them to the Court. Some tenants had their houses confiscated by order of the Court and others had their belongings auctioned in settlement of their debts.<sup>30</sup>

In 1932–3 over 7,000 young date-trees were imported from Saudi Arabia and there were less cases of default referred to the Courts, partly because the rents had been reduced and also because the landlords realised that the tenants had no possible means of paying them 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.<sup>31</sup>

Cases of failure to settle rents in full abounded in the summer of 1934, creating serious unrest among the Baharnah community. The Adviser, who was co-judge with Shaikh Salman on the Bahrain Court, was on leave and Shaikh Salman alone adjudicated cases of rent default and issued harsh verdicts against those concerned. The matter caused great dissatisfaction among the Baharnah whose leaders approached the Government of Bahrain over the sentences passed (see Chapter 8).

To recapitulate, the attempts to improve agriculture during the years 1930–45 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 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 land values and divided their gardens into small plots and sold them at a considerable profit.

Agrarian reform, in effect, turned out to be a series of disconnected experiments in 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 called collectively '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**

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 (APOC) in 1909, and the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) 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 APOC for supplies of Persian fuel 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 under which certain US oil companies acquired a 23.75 per cent stake in TPC. This agreement gradually brought US companies into a new era of oil exploration in the Middle East. TPC struck oil in Kirkuk in 1927 and in 1929 it was renamed the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC).<sup>32</sup>

The earliest known contact over oil between the Shaikh of

Bahrain and the British Government took place in 1914 and in May of that year Shaikh Isa bin Ali undertook not to grant oil concessions to any person or group without prior consultation with the British Government.<sup>33</sup>

On 6 May 1923 Major Frank Holmes — a New Zealander representing the British-owned Eastern and General Syndicate Ltd — 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>34</sup> Holmes took Bahrain as his headquarters 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>35</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>36</sup>

This concession was covered by Shaikh Isa's contractual commitments to the British Government and as the Syndicate was not an oil company, Holmes tried to resell the Bahrain concession to British oil companies. These companies showed little interest in the deal, however, because their geologists were doubtful of the existence of oil in Bahrain. In November 1927, the Syndicate sold the option to the US-owned Eastern Gulf Oil Company, a subsidiary of the Gulf Oil Corporation and a shareholder in TPC. 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 31 July 1928, to which the company was committed. The Agreement required from its signatories an undertaking not to seek oil rights independent of the TPC in an area which included the whole of Arabia except Kuwait.<sup>37</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 to the Agreement. Standard 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 out certain conditions which were not acceptable to the American company and the matter was



eventually referred to the US State Department.<sup>38</sup>

Prolonged negotiations followed between the two sides and the situation was resolved by an agreement giving Britain a great measure of control over the company's Bahrain operations, including the incorporation of the new company under British law.<sup>39</sup> The Company, a subsidiary of Standard Oil, was formed under the name the Bahrain Petroleum Company Ltd (BAPCO), 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 11 January 1929.<sup>40</sup>

Drilling operations started in Bahrain in October 1931, and by 31 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>41</sup> The significance of the Bahrain discovery was thus described by Ward:<sup>42</sup>

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.

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>43</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. The Agency Report for 1932 contains the following interesting commentary which shows the continuing residuum of a desire on the part of local British officials in the Gulf to exclude external influences, this time American:<sup>44</sup>

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.

During 1934 oil tanks were constructed on Sitrah Island and a three-mile submarine pipeline was laid extending from the tanks to the deep sea moorings. On 7 June of the same year, approximately 3,300 tons of Bahraini crude were shipped aboard the Tanker *El Segundo*, thereby inaugurating Bahrain's entry into the age of oil exports.<sup>45</sup> On 29 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) 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>46</sup>

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 the Texas Oil Company which gave it access to the marketing facilities of Texas in return for a 50 per cent stake in BAPCO. The new partnership resulted in the creation of a subsidiary company, Caltex, whose refined products were sold in India, the Far East and the Middle East.<sup>47</sup>

According to Ward, Caltex owed its success worldwide to its Bahrain operations:<sup>48</sup>

Beginning with Bahrain what is now known as the Caltex Group of Companies has grown into a worldwide overseas organisation 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.

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 one million tons during 1937.<sup>49</sup> A new supplementary concession was concluded between Bahrain and

the company on 19 June 1940, whereby the exclusive area was extended from the original 100,000 acres to cover the whole of Bahrain, including the outlying islands and territorial waters.<sup>50</sup> In 1942 facilities for receiving up to 35,000 barrels of Saudi crude daily were installed at the Zallāq 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>51</sup>

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>52</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>53</sup> In 1950 the royalty rate was raised to Rs. 10 per ton, and in December 1952 a 50–50 profit-sharing agreement, similar to that signed with Saudi Arabia in December 1950, was concluded with Bahrain and the concession was extended to 29 December, 2024.<sup>54</sup>

#### *BAPCO and its Bahraini employees*

During the second half of 1938 the people of Bahrain agitated for educational, judicial and administrative reforms and the local employees of BAPCO took the opportunity to publicise their grievances against the company. The authorities blamed the protests on a youth movement, some of whose members were BAPCO employees, and on 5 November they arrested some of the movement's adherents accusing them of instigating the trouble.<sup>55</sup> The following day, the movement called for a strike and the local employees of BAPCO responded, bringing the company's operations to a partial halt for two days, i.e. 6–7 November.

The number of unemployed people increased considerably during the year because the oil company, by now the largest employer in the country, had recently completed major construction work, thereby shedding a large number of manual workers. The company's local work force was reduced from 3,350 in 1937 to 1,569 in 1938 (for total numbers of company employees, both Bahraini and foreign, see Table 7.2). 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 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>56</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>57</sup>

- (i) That the number of foreign employees of the company exceeded that of local inhabitants.
- (ii) That Asians (i.e. Indians) received higher wages than Bahrainis employed for similar jobs. The Bahraini worker received 10 annas a day, 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 a day, the previous daily wage of the Indians, the Bahrainis were offered only Rs. 2.
- (iii) Foreign employees were housed in stone-built quarters whereas Bahrainis were provided with local huts which did not provide such good shelter against dust and cold.
- (iv) Foreign employees were entitled to free transport between their living quarters and the oil camp, while national employees had to pay for it.
- (v) 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, and in particular that when two equally qualified persons, one Bahraini and the other non-Bahraini, applied for a job, the Bahraini should be given preference over the latter. In addition, 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 a Provident Fund, and the erection of two mosques for the local workers.

In early December 1938 a meeting was held at which these



grievances were examined. It was attended by the Agent and the Adviser as representatives of the Bahrain Administration, and by company officials, namely Mr J.S. Black, Chief Local Representative of BAPCO in Bahrain, and Messrs M.H. Lipp and F.A. Davies, joint managers. The discussions centred upon the following matters:<sup>58</sup>

#### *Housing*

As regards the demand from Bahrainis to be housed in the company's married quarters, company officials argued that the Bahrainis had been unwilling to take up residence with their families in the oil camp from the start, preferring to stay in their home towns. If the company had built a greater number 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, in place of the local huts in which they were then housed.<sup>59</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 safeguard the interests of the shareholders. They opposed the raising of the 10 annas limit, the daily wage of Bahrainis and others engaged to do manual work, this being the normal rate for a coolie in Manamah. They argued that if the company increased 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 a baseless allegation. On the contrary, they argued that Bahrainis were entitled to rights similar to those enjoyed by foreigners. Moreover, they had new arrangements which they claimed 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 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 minimise injuries sustained in accidents.

*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 many Persians born in Bahrain in its employ and that it was not company policy 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 recently required its job applicants to produce official certificates proving that they were Bahraini subjects.

*Paid leave and Provident Fund*

According to the company officials Bahrainis were entitled to six paid-holidays every year, though not all of them were eligible for Friday off with pay. They reported that new plans for coolie labour to get annual leave with full pay, and a scheme for a Provident Fund, were awaiting the approval of the company's New York office. Finally, they welcomed any reasonable complaint which the local workers wished to put to the company and added that the majority of the 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 wanted to see the largest possible number of the people of Bahrain benefiting 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>60</sup>

In January 1939, the Government of Bahrain named Shaikh Ali bin Ahmad Al Khalifah as the official mediator<sup>61</sup> between the company and its labourers and he was required to report any general grievance that they might have to the Adviser first. Shaikh Ali was chosen on the basis of his membership of the Ruling Family, his previous experience in public affairs and the fact that he lived in Rafaa' which was close to 'Awali.<sup>62</sup>

Shortly after his appointment Shaikh Ali was provided with a memorandum containing 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 was to be increased to 14 annas a day.<sup>63</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 was in steady decline, unemployment was on the increase, 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 (p. 103):

No community or government, indeed, has been more suddenly and timely rescued from economic disaster than those of Bahrain in 1932.

Both the Ruler and the Government began to receive oil royalties from 1935 onwards. Theoretically, one-third of the royalties was assigned for the Ruler and members of his family and the other two-thirds went to the Government of Bahrain; from this the salaries of civil servants were paid, public works and services were financed, and an annual amount was deposited in the State's reserve fund.<sup>64</sup> Further information about Bahrain finances is provided in the next section of this chapter. Suffice to mention here that the Ruler and his family actually received a much higher proportion of the State's income.

Royalties and 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>65</sup> Merchants and shopkeepers profited from the circulation of oil money, and enormous increases in imports of goods for Bahrain and its transit trade with the mainland were recorded. After 1935 the oil industry established itself as the mainstay of the economy. Both the Ruler and members of his family now controlled greater amounts of money than the pearlers or the merchants.

The company's contribution to welfare 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 realised they were part of the wider world when on 19 October 1940 the Italians dropped bombs on the refinery; many of them failed to explode, and those that did caused little damage. This action generated a certain amount of anti-Italian feeling in Bahrain and on 13 November of that year the Reverend Father Irzio Luigi Magliacani, who had recently opened the Roman Catholic Sacred Heart School in Bahrain, was deported because of fear for his personal safety.<sup>66</sup>

The oil industry brought major economic and political changes. For the first time, unemployed divers and cultivators found alternative employment with the company. As the years went by a professional class of workers — both Sunni and Shi'ah Arabs — with common interests emerged. Both their sharing of employment with the oil company and the earlier amalgamation in 1932 of Sunni and Shi'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 BAPCO 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 Rulers and a few merchants, benefited from the situation by developing construction on the lands which they owned.

Some Western influence was reflected in changes in modes of



# Agriculture, Oil, Trade and Finances of Bahrain, 1920–1945

*Table 7.1: Oil production and royalties 1934–45*

Year	Daily average (US barrels)	Total annual production of crude oil (US barrels)	Royalties received annually by the Government 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>

*Note: (a) Royalty figures in respect of the years 1937, 1943 and 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 Report 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.*

*Source: A.R.P.A.*

*Table 7.2: Company employees 1933–45 (data extracted from A.R.P.A.)*

	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	1,283
1936	157	323	153	—	658	1,291	3,747
1937	308	472	126	—	688	1,594	3,350
1938	224	422	90	—	286	1,022	1,596
1939	192	374	67	—	399	1,032	1,878
1940	143	352	55	19	346	915	1,837
1941	134	270	34	24	254	716	1,291
1942	119	237	29	29 <sup>a</sup>	—	414	1,624
1943	114	220	32	23	359	748	2,096
1944	150	707	770	50	1,350	3,027	6,389
1945	292	681	261	82	792	2,108	3,580

*Note: (a) Canadians plus others.*

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 organised Administration and, above all, a Customs House, which had been 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.

## **Trade and finance**

### *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 the effects oil-revenues had on the progress of Bahrain. Tables 7.3–7.6 show total Customs revenue, import/export trade, the value of cargo transhipped at Bahrain for the Arabian mainland, and the chief items of expenditure in the annual budget estimates.

Income from the Customs Service was the chief source of revenue before the receipt of oil royalties began in 1935. The reorganisation of the Customs under a British Director was discussed with Shaikh Isa when Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, visited Bahrain in 1903; but the Shaikh viewed the offer as threatening his independence and refused to proceed with it.<sup>67</sup> In the meantime, Shaikh Isa continued to lease the Customs to a Hindu firm (see Chapter 3).

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 Ltd stimulated trade with India and Europe, however. Only Indians and Europeans, who were acquainted with banking operations in their countries of origin, initially benefited from the banking services. Many local inhabitants opposed the Bank on religious grounds, and some merchants saw it as a threat to their own money-lending operations. Gradually, local Arabs, having realised how easy it was to import goods from Europe and elsewhere, began to take advantage of the Bank's foreign and domestic services.<sup>68</sup>

During 1920 Shaikh Isa charged the full rate of customs duty,

i.e. 5 per cent, on goods consigned to Najd, Hasa and Qatif instead of the former 2 per cent. At the request of his subjects, Ibn 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:<sup>69</sup>

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.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 5, the pearl trade 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 3) shortly after the retirement of Shaikh Isa. The new Director terminated what Daly described as: 'the horrible state of accounts under the late Director and evidence of considerable embezzlement'.<sup>70</sup> Due to Bower's efforts, Bahrain's revenues improved markedly. 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>71</sup> Bahrain's Customs tariffs were as follows:<sup>72</sup>

#### *Customs duty*

All imports into Bahrain were charged a 5% *ad valorem* tax, with the exception of certain imports shown as 'Exemptions'.

#### *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.

#### *Transshipment at sea*

Cargo transhipped at sea was free of charge.

*Tobacco tax*

There was a municipal tax of 2% on tobacco and cigarettes.

*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. Monthly receipts were estimated at Rs. 87,000 and expenditure at Rs. 67,150.<sup>73</sup>

On 14 January 1924, Mr de Grenier (see Chapter 3) took over as Director of Customs shortly after his predecessor's period of secondment to the Government of Bahrain had expired.<sup>74</sup> During the year the Agent drew up Bahrain's first annual budget for the Arabic year starting 1st Moharram 1343 (3 August 1924–5).<sup>75</sup> It anticipated receipts of Rs. 15,23,000 chiefly from the Customs,<sup>76</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 items of expenditure are given in Table 7.3.

*Table 7.3*

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>77</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



1924 and 1925 were bad years for the pearl trade for the reasons mentioned in Chapter 5. 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:<sup>78</sup>

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 among 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.

No new budget was produced for the year 1344 (1925–6) owing to Daly's absence from Bahrain during May–November 1925. In budgeting 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, a post to which Charles Belgrave was appointed by Colonel F.B. Prideaux, the then Resident.<sup>79</sup> Prideaux specified the following reasons for the engagement of a financial adviser:<sup>80</sup>

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.

Total revenue from the Customs rose from less than nine lakhs of rupees in 1344 (1925–6) to over nine and a half lakhs in 1345, and exceeded ten and a half lakhs in 1346 (see Table 7.3). 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-powered type.<sup>81</sup> Earlier in 1925, a system of licensing for new drivers had been introduced.<sup>82</sup>

During 1346 (1927–8) 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 per cent and coffee by 30 per cent; the drop was caused by competition between beet sugar and Java sugar, and by an abnormally good global coffee crop. Local consumption of oil increased during the year as a result of the 50 per cent increase in the import of Anglo-Persian Oil Company oil, with the company's agent allowing credit facilities to his customers for the first time.<sup>83</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>84</sup>

In his commentary on the State budget for the year, i.e. 1346, the Adviser drew attention to the allowances to 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:<sup>85</sup>

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.

The second largest item of recurrent expenditure was State protection (defined below) which consumed 17 per cent of the total revenue in 1346. For the first time the State allocated two lakhs of rupees during the year as the start of a Reserve Fund deposited at 4 per cent interest in Bombay.<sup>86</sup>

The actual total expenditure for 1347 (1928-9) 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 budgeted at Rs. 4,59,064, but the actual expenditure was Rs. 5,04,489 — an increase of Rs. 45,425 over the budget estimate. In addition, some members of Al Khalifah derived salaries from the government posts which they held. A further sum of about Rs. 16,000 was paid to Shaikh Hamad for additional building to his houses in Moharraq and Şakhīr, and also for

purchase of new equipment for the fish market. The existing market was the Shaikh's private property, 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 budgeted at Rs. 25,500, and 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.

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' Court  
The Shi'ah Shara' Court  
Majlis al-Tijarah  
The Diving Court  
The Small Joint Court

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 consisted of 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 of them were divers who were given leave during the diving season and were replaced by others while they were absent.

During 1346 (1927-8) expenditure on education amounted to Rs. 32,119. The Resident wanted this increased 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 rose to Rs. 57,883, owing to increased numbers of boys and girls attending the schools and to the sending of eight students to Beirut at the expense of the State (see Chapter 6).<sup>87</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 the Manamah-Moharraq sea road, both items appeared under Special Projects, but the actual expenditure for 1347 makes no mention of either.

Trade prospects during 1348 (1929–30) looked gloomy due to the disturbed conditions on the mainland and the dull state of the Paris pearl market. During the year both revenue and expenditure were budgeted at Rs. 16,32,576. The State's cash assets as shown in Table 7.4 were shown to be healthy at the beginning of the year.

*Table 7.4*

Fixed deposits — Bombay — excluding Reserves	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. Allowances on the Civil List also increased as the result of an additional grant to Shaikh Isa, and the restoration of allowances to certain members of Al Khalifah hitherto in exile.

Revenue for the year showed recoverable loans totalling Rs. 27,098 from previous years. These loans were extended by Shaikh Hamad to a few merchants and relatives. Rs. 15,000 was loaned to Mohammad bin Subāḥ, 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>88</sup>

According to the Adviser the year 1349 (1930–31) was '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>89</sup> The revenue deficit forced the State to draw Rs. 1,70,000 from its investments in Bombay. The total balance of State funds at the end of 1348 was Rs. 3,40,365, with an additional Rs. 3,00,000 in reserve. By the end of 1349 the deficit exceeded the estimated sum by over three lakhs of rupees, and the Adviser attributed this to 'the present worldwide trade depression'.<sup>90</sup>



The depression continued to affect Bahrain's trade and finances in the following year 1350 (1931-2). The Customs revenue fell to Rs. 5,09,000 owing to the drop in commodity prices and the bad pearl trade, and also the decline in the prices of dates.<sup>91</sup> In budgeting for the year, the Adviser needed an extra lakh in revenue to cover the normal recurrent expenditure, and to obtain this he proposed the raising of the Khanchia to one anna per maund on all bag cargo, his justification for the increase being:<sup>92</sup>

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.

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 increased. The allocations on the Civil List were reduced by 10 per cent 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. The allocations for Government Departments were also 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 American University of Beirut and by another Rs. 9,000 when it was decided not to send the hospital boat to the pearl banks for the whole of 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 on 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>93</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 Nejdi and Persian merchants and Shaikhs have been moving their valuables to its gilt-edged shores.

On 6 May 1932, the Government of Bahrain raised the duty on luxuries from 5 to 7½ per cent and to 10 per cent from 31 December. The duty on liquor and tobacco was also increased to 15 per cent.<sup>94</sup>

Commenting on the State's finances at the close of 1351 (1932-3) the Adviser wrote: 'the financial position of the State causes me very grave concern; both the new Budget (1352) and the figures for the last year reveal a very disastrous condition of affairs'.<sup>95</sup> He went on to compare the finances 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, owing mainly to dwindling imports and to the diminishing purchasing power of the population. Expenditure in 1351 exceeded revenue by Rs. 93,672. Although actual expenditure in 1351 was less than the amount forecast in the Budget, the revenue fell short of the budgeted 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 trade. Hence the revenue from Customs was estimated in 1352 (1933-4) at Rs. 5,50,000,

i.e. one and a half lakhs reduction from that of 1351. Estimated total expenditure was also reduced by 72,100 rupees. As regards the Civil List, the Shaikhs were made to realise that a cut in its allocations was inevitable. The cut, originally suggested at 5–6 per cent, eventually amounted to 2.5 per cent only, i.e. Rs. 6,000 out of a total allocation to the Civil List of Rs. 3,86,000. Even so, it cost the State more than half the total expenditure for the year. The Adviser warned:

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.<sup>96</sup>

He provided this comparison given in Table 7.5.

*Table 7.5*

		<i>Total Revenue</i>	<i>Civil List</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1345	Rs.	11,91,810	4,50,094	45.3
1346		12,40,056	4,62,599	37.3
1347 <sup>97</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

This assessment brought a prompt reply from the Government of India to the effect that:<sup>98</sup>

The Government of India cannot view such a state of affairs with equanimity . . . 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 in his State should be explained to the Shaikh in unequivocal terms and a substantial reduction effected in his Civil List.

The actual revenue of the State in 1352 (1933-4) was slightly higher than in the previous year. There was an increase of Rs. 8,000 in Customs receipts due to the introduction of a higher Customs tariff in May 1932, plus rents from government land, the BAPCO oil concession, and the payment of rent for Moharraq aerodrome. Total expenditure was less than in 1351 by about Rs. 47,000. There was a saving of Rs. 24,600 in the Civil List owing to the death of Shaikh Isa which occurred on 9 December 1932, and also of certain other persons included on the list. The cost of State protection increased owing to the reinforcement of the police force during the year and the purchase of new uniforms and equipment. Actual expenditure outstripped revenue by Rs. 4,000.<sup>99</sup>

Customs revenue improved by about half a lakh of rupees in 1353 (1934-5) due, mainly, to large imports of Japanese rice and the general expansion of trade following the establishment of BAPCO.<sup>100</sup> Eight instalments of Rs. 5,769, i.e. totalling Rs. 46,152, were received from BAPCO during the year in accordance with the Supplementary Agreement signed earlier. Five instalments totalling Rs. 28,845 were also 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. Rs. 20,000 was also received from the company under the minimum royalty clause of the Supplementary Agreement. Revenue included two instalments paid during the year by Imperial Airways for the lease of Manamah aerodrome for a period of 18 months. The decline in interest rates reduced income on the Reserve Fund from Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 5,000.

During the year three pieces of land were sold to the British Government, two in Manamah (Jufair)<sup>101</sup> and one in Moharraq. The deal fetched Rs. 1,96,031. Of this sum Rs. 33,352 was paid into the Privy Purse, and 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 on all the open land in the neighbourhood of Jufair. Net government receipts from the whole transaction amounted to Rs. 1,10,367. In addition to the



financial arrangements, a large amount of government land was given to the previous occupants.<sup>102</sup>

Early in 1935 there was popular agitation 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 because of the recession. Since then the State's financial position had improved mainly as a result of the oil money, which 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 a further 80,000 rupees.<sup>103</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 road, thus providing work for the unemployed.<sup>104</sup>

During March-April 1935, talks were held between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain which brought a reduction in the transit duty on cargo for the mainland from 2 to 1.75 per cent *ad valorem*.<sup>105</sup> In his annual report for 1353 Belgrave described the financial position of Bahrain as 'distinctly better' than it had been 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 (1935-6) began with the State owning a reserve fund of two lakhs and a balance from the previous year of Rs. 1,38,000.<sup>106</sup> Towards the end of 1935, the austerity measures which had been adopted earlier were abolished and at the Agent's request full payments were restored to civil servants and to the Civil List, totalling roughly Rs. 55,000 a year.<sup>107</sup> Actual revenue for 1354 exceeded that of the previous year 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; this 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>108</sup>

On 30 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; Shaikh Hamad wished to add their names to the Civil List instead.<sup>109</sup> The Agent replied:<sup>110</sup>

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.

Customs revenue increased in 1355 (1936-7) by more than Rs. 1,80,000. The oil industry stimulated the country's trade which recorded a notable improvement. The number of BAPCO's local employees reached 3,747, the highest figure since the company started operations in Bahrain. Their earnings were spent in the local bazaars. The influx of Europeans and relatively highly paid Asians created a market for expensive luxury articles. The State's income from liquor alone amounted to Rs. 14,841 during the year. The actual revenue for 1355 surpassed the budget estimate by seven lakhs owing to unexpectedly higher receipts from the oil royalties and from Customs. Recurrent expenditure for the year which covered, 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 Rs. 56,000 spent on the new Customs House, Rs. 88,000 on completing the Manamah-Moharraq road, Rs. 15,000 on road construction including the new Manamah-Budayya' road, and Rs. 49,000 on building shops on government land in the main bazaar. Government subsidies to the Municipalities were restored to the original rate of Rs. 2,000 monthly. This amount had been reduced at the time of the cuts in public expenditure in 1350 to Rs. 1,000 per month.<sup>111</sup>

In his budget estimates for 1356 (1937-8) 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 had exceeded Customs receipts since 1936. He anticipated a steady growth in oil revenue and in Customs receipts. Accordingly, he budgeted total revenue for the year at Rs. 22,10,000 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>112</sup>

The largest item of expenditure was the Civil List and the Ruler's one-third of the total oil revenue, estimated at Rs. 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 government staff. Rs. 3,23,000 was allocated for Special Projects which included 1,00,000 for the new hospital;<sup>113</sup> Rs. 1,00,000 for the proposed new palace for the Shaikh; Rs. 50,000 for the Manamah-Moharraq bridge; Rs. 35,000 for the Court House; Rs. 32,000 for a fire engine; and Rs. 6,000 for a 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 Rs. 4,79,000, in addition to the four lakhs in the Reserve Fund. Out of that balance Rs. 4,11,752 were invested in British War Loan at 3.5 per cent interest, thereby increasing the Reserve Fund to about Rs. 8,12,000.

The 1356 budget estimates drew critical remarks from the Agent who pointed out three main defects: (a) a considerable increase in expenditure over the estimated figures, (b) a tendency to depart freely from the budgeted figures in the matter of expenditure, (c) a lack of distinction between recurring and non-recurring expenditure.<sup>114</sup>

Although the Resident agreed to most of the Agent's views, he nevertheless drew his attention to the following:<sup>115</sup>

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.

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:<sup>116</sup>

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.

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 3.5 per cent interest, of which five lakhs were in fixed deposits and the remainder in British War Loan and other Government stocks at 3.5 per cent. In addition, there was a sum of 10 lakhs in the Consolidated Fund.<sup>117</sup>

The 1357 budget (1938-9) estimated revenue and expenditure at Rs. 42,02,000. For the first time Bahrain's annual revenue was forecast at over 42 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 Rs. 1,30,000 for the construction of the new palace, and Rs. 80,000 for the new hospital. The total estimate for public works and repairs to roads and buildings was computed at Rs. 5,68,000 lakhs.<sup>118</sup> In drawing up the new budget the Adviser took the Agent's earlier suggestions into consideration, especially the one for building up the reserves. Having examined the budget, the Agent wrote to the Resident:<sup>119</sup>

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.

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. Expenditure on public protection was increased as a result of reinforcements to 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, expenditure (excluding the Reserve) exceeded estimates by one lakh, and the State's invested Revenue amounted to Rs. 40 lakhs.<sup>120</sup>

Customs revenue dropped from 11,58,547 lakhs in 1938 to 10,56,532 in 1939 owing to a decline in receipts from transit duty on shipments to the mainland from Rs. 2,19,942 in 1938 to Rs. 1,03,650 in 1939. This was occasioned by the opening of a port at Rās Tannūra and the direct shipment there of equipment for the California Arabia Standard Oil Company.<sup>121</sup>

Total expenditure in 1358 (1939–40) exceeded estimates; actual expenditure was Rs. 36,75,000 whereas the estimate was Rs. 31,41,000. The excess was attributed mainly to the donation of Rs. 4 lakhs by Shaikh Hamad to the British Government as a contribution to the cost of the War. In addition, 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 held in State custody.<sup>122</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 had been originally provided in the budget. In spite of increased expenditure, it was possible to augment the Reserve Fund by a further Rs. 10 lakhs. Allowances to the Ruling Family totalled Rs. 15,16,662, of which Rs. 10,78,427 was the Ruler's one-third share and Rs. 4,38,235 was the payment to the Civil List. The cost of public works was estimated at Rs. 7,70,600 but actual expenditure amounted to Rs. 6,35,300. Rs. 59,000 were paid in 1358 towards the cost of the Manamah-Moharraq swing bridge, whose contract price was Rs. 3,82,000. In the budget estimates, only three lakhs were allocated for the bridge. Expenditure on the hospital buildings amounted to Rs. 2,35,000. The extension of the Manamah pier cost the State Rs. 1,01,588. In addition, there were various other smaller items carried out under public works.<sup>123</sup>

In the 1359 budget (1940–41) revenue was forecast at Rs. 45,07,000, but the actual revenue amounted to Rs. 49,01,499, an excess of approximately Rs. 4 lakhs over the estimated amount. The actual revenue in 1358 was Rs. 45,78,765, Rs. 3,22,734 less than in 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 for the additional area and the price derived by the Government from the sale of rice bought in 1358. Customs revenue dropped by more than Rs. 1½ lakhs in 1359 in comparison with 1358, and oil royalties were Rs. 82,843 less than in 1358, due to shortage of tankers during the War. During the year over Rs. 16½ lakhs were added to the Reserve Fund and invested in War Loan. The actual total expenditure for 1359 was Rs. 29,14,372. The Civil List and the Ruler's one-third of the oil revenue amounted to about 50 per cent 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 25 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 Rs. 1,32,000. The nurses' lodgings and the flats of the lady Medical Officer and the Matron cost approximately Rs. 86,000. The two hospitals provided beds for 100 patients and had the capacity to absorb more in case of emergency. The building of the Technical School workshop, which was still in progress, cost the State Rs. 13,000.<sup>124</sup>

In March 1940, the Adviser communicated with the Agent over the allowances of the Shaikh's two sons, Du'a'ij and Ahmad. Shaikh Hamad wanted to have their names added to the Civil List instead of drawing their salaries from the Privy Purse.<sup>125</sup> Shortly afterwards the Agent raised the matter with the Resident noting that:<sup>126</sup>

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.

Early in 1941 Shaikh Hamad asked for an increase in his allowance, justifying his demand by his growing expenditure. Reporting the matter to the Agent, the Adviser wrote:<sup>127</sup>

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.

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.

In April the Resident communicated with the Shaikh reminding him that his income in 1351 (1932-3), before the advent of oil royalties, was Rs. 1,65,000 and that it had kept growing since then until it reached Rs. 12,93,000 in 1359, i.e. an increase of more than seven times. He added:<sup>128</sup>

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.

Earlier, during March of the same year, the Resident cabled the Government of India to tell them that he had only recently 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. The Shaikh's private fortune of 12 lakhs was also in sterling deposits. He considered that reserve in a currency which was subject to exchange-rate depreciation was undesirable, and he went on to say that the Shaikh would hold the Government of India, at whose insistence the Reserves had been built up, responsible for any losses that might occur as a result.<sup>129</sup> 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>130</sup>

The revenue for 1360 (1941-2) was estimated at about Rs. 10 lakhs less than in 1359. Royalty from oil was estimated at 25½ lakhs, and receipts from Customs at about two lakhs less than the previous year. The reasons for this cautious budgeting were, according to the Adviser, (a) the reduction in the activities of the California Arabian Standard Oil Company, (b) the increased import trade of Kuwait, and (c) the rise of unemployment in Bahrain, factors which were potentially damaging to the import trade of Bahrain. The Civil List plus the Ruler's one-third of the oil royalty was forecast at Rs. 12,90,000. 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>131</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.<sup>132</sup> Over six lakhs of rupees were allocated for the Reserve Fund. 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 18 December 1941, and the new Technical School. In brief, priority was given to what the Adviser called the building up of the reserve.<sup>133</sup>

When Shaikh Hamad's death occurred on 20 February 1942,



*Agriculture, Oil, Trade and Finances of Bahrain, 1920–1945*

his eldest son Shaikh Salman became Ruler.<sup>134</sup> He continued to receive one-third of the oil royalty in the same manner as his father before him.<sup>135</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>136</sup> In reply the Adviser submitted the following comparison and notes<sup>137</sup> given in Table 7.6 and Table 7.7:

*Table 7.6: Revenue*

	1360	1361	1362
Oil Royalty	25,50,000	26,00,000	26,00,000
Customs	6,75,000	7,00,000	6,10,000
Interest on 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
Total	35,64,000	37,00,000	44,30,000

*Table 7.7: Expenditure*

	1360	1361	1362
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
Total	35,64,000	37,00,000	44,30,000

He explained the variations in Customs revenue on account of uncertain trade due to war conditions and to the almost 50 per cent reduction in receipts from pearling licences 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

Rs. 55,000 were expected to accrue to the State from hospital fees in 1362, and Rs. 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 Rs. 25,000 less than the budgeted amount. This increase in cost was taken into consideration when budgeting for administration in 1361. During 1362 the amount was increased as a result of war allowances, the higher cost of transport fares, stationery, etc., and the maintenance of the Food Department, recently started under the Customs Department.

Expenditure on public health was expected to cost more and therefore the estimate for 1362 was increased by Rs. 54,000 to cover the rise in the cost of food, drugs, etc. In 1361 the actual amount spent on public protection was Rs. 4,31,000. 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 Rs. 65,000 for new equipment.

The allocations for education were Rs. 1,32,000 in 1360, and the actual expenditure was Rs. 1,57,000. In 1361, the allocation was increased with a view to the purchase of tools and equipment for the Technical School at Rs. 35,000 and furniture and equipment for Boys and Girls' Schools at Rs. 18,000. The allotment for 1362 was increased owing to the 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 textbooks and materials used in the schools.

The revenue for 1363 (1944-5) was estimated at Rs. 40 lakhs and the actual revenue in 1362 amounted to Rs. 47 lakhs. The expenditure for 1363 was estimated at Rs. 35,30,000, and the actual expenditure in 1362 was Rs. 33,29,000. A surplus of Rs. 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 budgeted at Rs. 26¼ lakhs, and revenue from the Customs at Rs. 8½ lakhs. Recently, the income from the Reserve Fund had become the third largest source of revenue for the State amounting to Rs. 2¾ lakhs. Although Customs receipts were estimated at Rs. 8½ lakhs in 1362, the actual receipts amounted to about Rs. 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 caused shipping difficulties and trade restrictions. Contrary to his expectations, however, Customs revenue increased during the year as a result of the rise in the prices of 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 Rs. 91,41,000 at 3 per cent. In addition, there were smaller receipts from the medical services, land registration fees, judicial fees, etc. There was also 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 Rs. 35 lakhs and the actual expenditure in 1362 was 33 lakhs. Allowances to the Ruling Family absorbed Rs. 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 the entire superstructure and machinery for the Manamah-Moharraq Bridge, also called Shaikh Hamad's Bridge. Expenditure in the 1363 budget was expected to be utilised 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 all of which contributed to the rising cost of the Administration. The allotment for education was increased by one lakh over 1362. Defence and protection cost the State about 6½ lakhs, and were likely to cost even more. In 1362 the State sustained a loss of Rs. 56,500 over the sale of food supplies to the public at cost price.<sup>138</sup>

The 1363 budget elicited a number of remarks from the Agent, Major T. Hickinbotham, 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 materials 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 Rs. 8,60,000 in Customs revenue, apparently expecting a decrease on the previous year's actual of Rs. 5,36,500. 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 budgeted revenue at 38 per cent less than the actual for the previous year and this, he wrote, was unnecessarily cautious. He agreed, however, with the Adviser that there was a general rise in expenditure owing to war allowances and other factors induced by the unsettled state of the world in general.<sup>139</sup>

During December 1944, the Secretary to the Government of India communicated the Government's satisfaction with the 'successful manner' in which the affairs of Bahrain had been handled during the year and added:<sup>140</sup>

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.

The Resident believed that the time was not right for suggesting any reductions in the Privy Purse. In a letter to the Government he wrote:<sup>141</sup>

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 and 1928 . . . 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.

. . . 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.

Receipts for the year 1364 (1945-6) were estimated at Rs. 48 lakhs and expenditure at Rs. 38 lakhs. There was a surplus in revenue of Rs. 10 lakhs, allocated to the Reserve Fund. Royalty from oil was estimated at Rs. 27 lakhs, and Customs receipts at Rs. 15,60,000. Interest on the State Reserve Fund was expected to reach Rs. 3,20,000. Estimates of lesser receipts included medical Rs. 45,000, land revenue Rs. 31,000, education Rs. 19,000, vehicle taxes Rs. 25,000, passports Rs. 10,000, judicial fees Rs. 20,000 and bridge tolls Rs. 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 Rs. 13,20,000, Government Departments Rs. 3,03,000, education Rs. 4,19,000, and public health Rs. 4,72,000. The latter two items were increased by about one lakh each over the 1363 estimates. Expenditure on defence and protection amounted to Rs. 8,00,000. The public works allocation was Rs. 1,95,000 and for the Municipalities Rs. 87,000.<sup>142</sup>

The budget attracted criticism from the Agent who wrote that the Adviser's chief objective was to save money regardless of the needs of the State and the requirements of 'forward planning to meet post war conditions'. He wrote:<sup>143</sup>

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.

In his recommendations the Agent emphasised the need for employing a qualified European engineer for the Public Works Department, aided by an adequate staff, to plan the chief towns Manamah and Moharraq, and to improve the narrow thoroughfares, carry out repairs to the roads and provide a water-borne sewerage system. He even advocated the replacement of the 'anti-quated 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.

Owing to the selection of Bahrain as a centre for air travel and the anticipated increase in these services, he also recommended the construction of a modern hotel to be built jointly by the State and the British Overseas Airways Corporation.

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 Rs. 100 lakhs, he wrote. His final recommendation to the Government was that they should ask the Adviser to initiate a more forward policy. To this effect he noted:<sup>144</sup>

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.

After the Customs reorganisation in 1923, Bahrain's finances were planned in a co-ordinated manner for the first time in the country's modern history. The import-export trade expanded as a result, and the annual Customs receipts, which were the chief source of State revenue before the arrival of oil, improved considerably. From about Rs. 9 lakhs collected in 1344 (1925–6), Customs receipts increased to more than Rs. 10½ lakhs in 1347 (1928–9). The only time revenue dropped was during the recession of the early 1930s, and particularly in 1931 when receipts fell to Rs. 5 lakhs, the lowest income recorded throughout the period of this study.

The global depression adversely affected Bahrain's general trade and left the economy in a bad state. Job opportunities were sharply reduced giving rise to high unemployment among the country's working population. With revenue falling short of

expenditure for a number of years, the country had to offset its deficits by drawing from the Reserve Fund which by the end of 1351 (1932-3) had shrunk to Rs. 2½ 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 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 Japanese cultured pearls and the collapse of sales. As a result many bankruptcies occurred among pearlers 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 Rs. 18 lakhs, while receipts from Customs were just over Rs. 8 lakhs 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 one-third of the royalties directly had unforeseen results for the State. As the royalties increased over the years, the allocations to the Civil List grew accordingly, quite apart from the fact that some members of the Ruling Family also received salaries from their government posts. In reality their share of the oil wealth went far beyond what was originally intended. In this way the industry provided them with financial power which had previously been the domain of the pearlers 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 realised and the new wealth poured into the coffers of the Rulers. True, the industry provided employment for 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 budgeting



policy was put into practice with the aim of building up the Reserves to ensure the country's future needs. The predictions were erroneous, however, and royalties multiplied from over Rs. 6 lakhs in 1935 to Rs. 31 lakhs in 1945. The financial reserves grew from Rs. 4 lakhs at the end of 1935 (1936–7) to over Rs. 100 lakhs by 1945. In 1937 (1938–9) alone, Rs. 12 lakhs were allocated to the Reserve Fund out of an estimated annual revenue of Rs. 42 lakhs. When the War ended and the target of Rs. 100 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 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 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 revenues, the importance of traditional commerce should not be forgotten.

## Notes

1. P.A. to the Manager of the British Cotton Growing Association. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 946, 2 August 1931.

2. On 'The Water Supply of Bahrain', the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* stated 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'. 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 15 July 1942. I.O.R. 15/2/207.

3. A.R.P.A., 1926.

4. A.R.P.A., 1941.

5. A.R.P.A., 1930.

6. C.G. Prior, P.A., to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 27-C, 24 March 1930.

7. Belgrave to Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. C-50, 18 April 1930.

8. Belgrave: Agriculture — 1349 (1930–31). I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044.

9. 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 November 1931.

10. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta (A.D. 1325–1354)*. Translated by H.A.R. Gibb (1962), Vol. II, p. 409.

11. Belgrave to Mr A. Eastwood of the British Cotton Growing Association, Baghdad. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, no number, 12 November 1931.

12. A.R.P.A., 1931.

13. A.R.P.A., 1932. For a record of annual State allocations for agriculture see Table 7.6 on annual budget estimates.

14. A.R.P.A., 1933.

15. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 916–23, 3 January 1934.

16. A.R.P.A., 1935.

17. A.R.P.A., 1936.

18. A.R.P.A., 1937.

19. A.R.P.A., 1938. The author was unable to locate his report in the relevant files.

20. A.R.P.A., 1939.

21. A.R.P.A., 1940.

22. A.R.P.A., 1941.

23. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 1661/42, 10 September 1942.

24. A.R.P.A., 1942.

25. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 1125/42, 18 June 1942.

26. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/1241, No. 1305/42, 15 June 1943.

27. A.R.P.A., 1925.

28. Belgrave to P.A.: Agriculture 1349 (1930–1).

29. Ibid.

30. Belgrave: Agriculture 1350 (1931–2). I.O.R. 15/2/195.

31. Belgrave: Agriculture 1351 (1932–3). I.O.R. 15/2/195.

32. For a detailed account see S.H. Longrigg: *Oil in the Middle East. Its Discovery and Development* (1968). Also R.W. Ferrier: *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1982).
33. 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, *A Collection of Treaties . . .*, Vol. XI, No. XVI, p. 239.
34. Longrigg, *Oil in the Middle East*, pp. 98–100.
35. Daly to Under-Secretary to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/327, No. 242/2/3, 24 November 1924.
36. T.E. Ward: *Negotiations for Oil Concessions in Bahrain, El-Hasa (Saudi Arabia), The Neutral Zone, Qatar, and Kuwait* p. 25.
37. C. Tugendhat: *Oil: The Biggest Business*, pp. 84–5.
38. H.F. Liebesny, 'International Relations of Arabia: The Dependent Areas', *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. I (1947), pp. 157–60.
39. R.F. Mikesell and H.B. Chenery, *Arabian Oil — America's Stake in the Middle East* (1949), pp. 49–50.
40. Ward, *Negotiations for Oil Concessions*, p. 138.
41. R.M. Burrell and K. McLachlan, 'The Political Geography of the Persian Gulf' in A.J. Cottrell (ed.), *The Persian Gulf States*, p. 121.
42. Ward, *Negotiations for Oil Concessions*, p. 182.
43. A.R.P.A., 1931.
44. A.R.P.A., 1932.
45. A.R.P.A., 1934. See Mikesell and Chenery, *Arabian Oil*, p. 69.
46. Longrigg, *Oil in the Middle East*, p. 103.
47. F.I. Qubain, 'The Impact of Petroleum Industry on Iraq and Bahrain', pp. 308–9.
48. Ward, *Negotiations for Oil Concessions*, p. 188.
49. A.R.P.A., 1937. For oil production levels see Table 7.1.
50. Ward, *Negotiations for Oil Concessions*, p. 4.
51. A.R.P.A., 1942.
52. A.R.P.A., 1944. For the Company's work force, local and foreign, see Table 7.2.
53. A.R.P.A., 1945.
54. Ward, *Negotiations for Oil Concessions*, p. 138.
55. Belgrave, Causes and Objects of Recent Agitation, I.O.R. 15/2/176, 22 November 1938.
56. Telegram from the Resident to the Agent, Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 358, 16 November 1938.
57. Translation of a letter addressed to the Adviser by Yusuf Fakhroo, Mansour al-'Urayiedh, Saiyed Sa'id, Mohsin bin Ahmad Al-Tajir. I.O.R. 15/2/176, 29th Ramadan 1357 (22 November 1938).
58. H. Weightman to T.C. Fowle. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. C/753 — 1.6/5, 10 December 1938.
59. Note that by 1938 '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, *Oil in the Middle East*, p. 103). In 1940 the company undertook to build 26 stone houses at 'Awāli and at Rafā' 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.

60. Weightman's No. C/753-1.6/5.

61. Letter of appointment from Belgrave to Shaikh Ali bin Ahmad Al Khalifah. I.O.R. 15/2/846, 22 January 1939.

62. Weightman to Belgrave. I.O.R. 15/2/846, No. C/87-1.6/5, 11 February 1939.

63. Memorandum on Conditions of Employment with BAPCO. I.O.R. 15/2/846.

64. Col. Loch to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/604-4/1, 12 December 1935. The royalties paid annually to the Government are shown in Table 7.1.

65. F.I. Qubain, 'The Impact of the Petroleum Industry on Iraq and Bahrain', Table 32, p. 330.

66. A.R.P.A., 1940.

67. Col. Haworth to F.S.G.I., No. 295-S.

68. 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 on 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.

69. Colonel Trevor to Shaikh Isa. I.O.R. 15/2/123, No. 303, 14 June 1920.

70. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/123, No. 42/8/4, 18 October 1923. From 1919 to mid-1923 the Customs was farmed out to the Hindu firm of Mr Gangaram Tikarndas. Before that Seth Rao Sahib Tirathdas Maharaj, headman of the Hindu community in Bahrain, was Director of Customs until 1919, when he died in Karachi. See A.R.P.A., 1919, 1920.

71. A.R.P.A., 1923.

72. Col. Barrett, P.A., to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/1313, No. 291, 27 March 1929.

73. 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 December 1923.

74. He served as Director of Customs until 20 March 1943.

75. 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 July 1924.

76. Customs revenue came from various sources, the 5% Customs duty being the most important. Other Customs income derived from supervision fees, sales of forms, weight certificates, amendment fees, certificate fees, Khanchia (i.e. warehouse dues or demurrage), Hammāli



(portage), pier fees, royalty charges, taxes on motor cars and divers' licences, pearling licences and boat registration fees.

77. 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, an unofficial municipal committee had existed since 1921.

78. A.R.P.A., 1925.

79. Prideaux to the Secretary, Political Department, India Office, I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044, No. P. 3190, 15 September 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'.

80. Prideaux to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044, No. 378-S, October 1925.

81. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/296, 23 February 1927.

82. A.R.P.A., 1925.

83. A.R.P.A., 1927. From 1934–9, 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.

84. Belgrave to P.A. No. 594/9A. Steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company and the German Hansa Line called bi-weekly at Manamah Port.

85. Belgrave: Notes on Expenditure under budget headings for 1346. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044.

86. Ibid.

87. Notes on Expenditure 1347. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044.

88. State Budget for 1348. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1044. In March 1933, Yusuf Kanoo mortgaged his 'Amārah (building) in Manamah to the Eastern Bank Ltd for a loan of Rs. 75,000 (see the Bank's letter of 19 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 a 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 June 1941.) Other loans from 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).

89. The electric power station in Manamah was opened by Shaikh Hamad on 12 May 1930, and electricity was extended to Moharraq in 1931. A.R.P.A., 1930–31.

90. 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. 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 forfeited. See Prior to Biscoe. I.O.R. 15/2/102, No. C-23, 14 March 1931.

91. A.R.P.A., 1931.

92. Belgrave: Budget for 1350, attached to No. 105/S.F. Khanchia was the fee collected on imported goods whose owners wanted 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.

93. Ibid.

94. A.R.P.A., 1932.

95. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/196, No. 17/SF, 29 April 1933.

96. Ibid.

97. In 1347 Shaikh Isa's monthly stipend was increased from Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000. The Adviser's figures represent actual expenditures, not the estimates shown in Table 7.6.

98. F.S.G.I. to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/196, No. F. 261-N/33, 24 October 1933.

99. Belgrave: Notes on Revenue and Expenditure 1352. I.O.R. 15/2/195.

100. A.R.P.A., 1934.

101. In April 1935 the British Naval Stations at Henjam and Basidu were transferred to Bahrain. The construction of the buildings for 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. Also A.R.P.A., 1935.

102. Belgrave, Report on the Revenue for 1353. I.O.R. 15/2/195.

103. Belgrave to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/196, No. 706/13 L.D., 7 February 1935.

104. Belgrave to P.A.: State Budget for 1354. I.O.R. 15/2/195, No. 326/S.F., 30 June 1935.

105. A.R.P.A., 1935.

106. No. 326/S.F.

107. Colonel Loch to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/604-4/1, 12 December 1935.

108. Belgrave: Notes on Revenue and Expenditure 1354. I.O.R. 15/2/197.

109. Belgrave to Loch. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. 1163-2A, 30 January 1936.

110. Loch to Belgrave. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/77-41, 16 February 1936.

111. 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 May 1937.

112. Ibid.

113. Note that the medical services were provided chiefly by the American Mission Hospital and the Victoria Memorial Hospital before

the opening of the new Government Hospital in 1940.

114. Captain Hickinbotham to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/485-4/1, 26 June 1937.

115. T.C. Fowle to Hickinbotham. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. 567-S, 2 August 1937.

116. H. Weightman: Formation of a Reserve Fund for Bahrain. I.O.R. 15/2/197.

117. Belgrave to Weightman. I.O.R. 15/2/197, no number, 22 November 1937.

118. Government of Bahrain Budget for 1357. I.O.R. 15/2/197.

119. Weightman to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/323-4/1, 19 May 1938.

120. Weightman to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/456-4/1, 26 July 1939.

121. A.R.P.A., 1939.

122. For control and supply of foodstuffs during the Second World War see Chapter 8.

123. Belgrave: Note on Expenditure 1358. I.O.R. 15/2/197.

124. Belgrave: Revenue and Expenditure 1359. I.O.R. 15/2/198.

125. Belgrave to Weightman. I.O.R. 15/2/197, 25 March 1940.

126. Weightman to Colonel Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/197, No. C/285-4/1, 6 April 1940.

127. See Translation of the Shaikh's letter dated 13th Šafar 1360, attached to Belgrave's communication to Major Alban, P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/198, 7 February 1941.

128. Colonel Prior to His Highness Shaikh Sir Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifah. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 183-S, 10 April 1941.

129. Telegram from Prior to the Government of India. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. T/113, 23 March 1941.

130. Belgrave to the Reserve Bank of India. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 784/W.L., 10 May 1941.

131. The A.R.P.A. for 1942 mentions facilities for the British Royal Air Force 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'.

132. 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. 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. 81-9A.

133. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 619-21, 17 April 1941.

134. Salman acceded to the Rulership of Bahrain by the will of his

father who died at the age of about seventy. On 6 April 1942 a public Durbar was held at the Palace in Manamah during which Colonel W.R. Hay, the then President, 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.

135. Agent to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/187, 11 February 1943.

136. Hickinbotham to the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/1363, 15 October 1943.

137. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/1990-21, 21 October 1943.

138. Belgrave: Budget 1363. I.O.R. 15/2/198.

139. Hickinbotham to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/525, 23 March 1944.

140. W.E. Richardson to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. D/18261-ME/44, 21 December 1944.

141. Sir G. Prior to the Secretary to the Government of India. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 172-S, 6 February 1945.

142. Belgrave: Note on the 1364 Budget. I.O.R. 15/2/198.

143. Hickinbotham to Prior. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. C/393, 21 March 1945.

144. Prior to Secretary to the Government of India. I.O.R. 15/2/198, No. 395-S, 20 April 1945.



*Agriculture, Oil, Trade and Finances of Bahrain, 1920–1945*

*Table 7.8 Total Customs revenue 1925–45 (Rs.)*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Value</i>
1344	
1925	8,82,894
1345	
1926	9,62,041
1346	
1927	10,58,660
1347	
1928	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.*

*Table 7.9 Total value of cargo transhipped at Bahrain for the mainland in selected years (Rs.)*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Duty collected</i>
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	42,44,750	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*

*Agriculture, Oil, Trade and Finances of Bahrain, 1920–1945*

*Table 7.10 Total trade of Bahrain 1926–39 (Rs.)*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Exports</i>
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.)(a)	17,25,720 (Sic.)(a)
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 were 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.*

*Table 7.11: Annual budget estimates 1345-64 (1926-46), main allotments — expenditure (Rs.)*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Allowances to Ruling Family</i>	<i>Public Protection</i>	<i>Public (e) Health</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Municipalities</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Public Works</i>	<i>Government Depts.</i>	<i>Reserve Fund</i>	<i>Total Expenditure</i>
1345										
1926-7	4,28,664	2,29,600	4,000	36,000	36,000	—	64,000	1,71,500	—	17,72,926
1346										
1927-8	4,69,344	1,89,470	21,500	46,000	48,000	25,000 <sup>(b)</sup>	1,00,000	1,45,200	2,00,000	14,85,000
1347										
1928-9	4,59,064	1,72,000	22,000	40,000	56,000	—	12,000 <sup>(c)</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>(d)</sup>	1,53,500	1,00,000	16,32,576
1349 <sup>(e)</sup>										
1930-1										
1350										
1931-2	4,26,000	1,32,000	16,416	50,000	24,000	8,000	9,800	1,44,500	—	8,32,516
1351										
1932-3	3,96,183	1,11,742	23,833	36,667	22,000	2,750	5,500	1,19,625	—	7,89,600
1352										
1933-4	3,80,000	1,20,000	25,000	30,000	24,000	1,200	6,000	1,27,300	—	7,25,500
1353										
1934-5	3,80,000	1,20,000	24,000	30,000	24,000	—	6,000	1,37,000	—	7,26,000
1354										
1935-6	4,35,000 <sup>(f)</sup>	1,27,250	22,500	33,550	26,400	—	6,500	1,43,800	—	8,00,000
1355										
1936-7	5,17,000	1,40,000	25,000	35,000	50,400	—	6,600	1,58,000	—	9,37,000
1356										
1937-8	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

Table 7.11: Continued

Year	Allowances to Ruling Family	Public Protection	Public (a) Health	Education	Municipalities	Agriculture	Public Works	Government Depts.	Reserve Fund	Total Expenditure
1357										
1938-9	14,70,000	2,00,000	1,73,000	1,06,500	50,400	21,300	5,68,000	2,93,680(g)	12,00,000	42,02,000
1358(h)										
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										
1940-1	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										
1941-2	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										
1942-3	12,92,000	4,00,000(i)	2,64,000	2,40,000	61,000	15,000	69,000	3,34,000	9,80,000	37,00,000
1362										
1943-4	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										
1944-5	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										
1945-6	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

(a) Until 1355 called Medical Services, Medical Department in 1356 and from 1357 Public Health.

(b) Agriculture plus boring of wells.

(c) Special Projects, Electricity Rs. 1,00,000 and Manamah-Moharraq Road Rs. 2,00,000 (see main text).

(d) See main text for Special Projects from 1348 onwards.

(e) The author could not locate the 1349 Budget estimates. However, see information provided in main text.

(f) 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.

(g) The estimate includes Rs. 9,000 earmarked for the Transport Dept. started in 1937. From 1357 Govt. departments were renamed 'Administrative Services'.

(h) Based on actual figures.

(i) From 1361 onwards Public Protection was renamed 'Defence and Public Protection'.



## 8

### The Background to the Years 1930-1945

#### **The Administration and 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 deadlock by 1932, the year during which the Imperial Airways route was transferred from the Persian to the Arabian littoral (see Chapter 1).

In 1929 Tehran alleged that the Persians in Bahrain were being subjected to maltreatment by the authorities there. This allegation was in fact rooted in earlier relations between the two countries. 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 the Persian claim, and also to challenge the British position in Bahrain. In rebutting the Persian pretensions to Bahrain, British officials invariably stressed the independent status of the Shaikh, and argued their case along geographical and ethnic lines, 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: 'the islands are not part of Persia, nor are the inhabitants of Persian race'.<sup>3</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>4</sup> Also, during 1928 boys from the Persian School marched through the streets of Manamah with a band and flags singing their national anthem. The local authorities regarded the parade as provocative and tending to create ill-feeling between Persians and Arabs, and they ordered the headmaster of the school to stop these demonstrations, which he did. However, the Persians reported the matter to Tehran and representations were made to the Resident by the Governor of the Persian Gulf ports in Bushire.<sup>5</sup>

The Persian passport regulations of 1928 required all Bahrainis who settled in or were travelling to Iran to carry Persian travel documents. It was in response to this action that the Administration in Bahrain retaliated by imposing visas upon Persians travelling to Bahrain. Early in 1929, several Persians were refused entry on account of their failure to obtain visas.<sup>6</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>7</sup>

The Persian community in Bahrain comprised both Sunnis and Shi'ahs. The former, though a smaller group, 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. Relations between the Persians and the local Arabs were to a large extent influenced by the religious sect to which they belonged, in that the Persian Sunni maintained closer links with the Ruler and the Sunni Arabs of Bahrain and the Shi'ah similarly sympathised 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 in the Majlis al-'Urf, the Municipalities, and the Police. They were allowed to acquire property, to have their own schools, to conduct trade and to hold their religious processions during the month of Moharram. Their only real grievance was the passport restrictions which caused disruption to their trade, according to the Agent.<sup>8</sup>

In 1930, Tehran protested against the granting of the oil concession by the Shaikh on the grounds that since Bahrain was Persian territory neither the Shaikh nor His Majesty's Govern-

ment had the right to grant concessions.<sup>9</sup> Two years later the Persian Government again protested to the British Government against the issue of British Indian postage stamps surcharged 'Bahrain', and repeated its protest at the League of Nations.<sup>10</sup>

Also, during the same year the Baharnah of Mohammarah sent two petitions to the Administration in Bahrain complaining that they were being forced to renounce their nationality, were threatened with forcible conscription into the Persian army, and were made to wear a foreign head-dress.<sup>11</sup> Following these petitions 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 Pahlavi hats in Bahrain.<sup>12</sup> On being informed about these measures, the Resident expressed misgivings about their outcome, adding that 'All things that are lawful are not expedient'.<sup>13</sup>

On 30 March 1933, the Government of Bahrain reissued the proclamation of February 1929, which defined the status of Persians in Bahrain as:<sup>14</sup>

in every way similar to that of other foreigners such as Iraqis, Nejdis, 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.

In March 1934, the Resident informed the Government of India that the Shaikh's subjects in Iran were still being subjected to threats of conscription into the Persian army, their passports were confiscated by the Persian authorities and 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 remainder, who did not own property, 1,700 lived in Mohammarah and about 4,000 in Gusbah and adjoining suburbs. The property owners were regarded as Persian subjects under Persian law and were not entitled to British protection, but the rest were entitled to it. The Resident mentioned the futility of earlier protests made to the Persian Government and that reprisals

against the Government had resulted in even harsher measures applied against Bahrainis. He concluded:<sup>15</sup>

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.

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 it was facing in persuading the Persians to accept the 'separate existence of Bahrain nationality'. Only the signing of a general treaty with Iran, it believed, could bring about such an admission which in the political climate then prevailing was difficult to achieve. Finally, it concurred with the British Minister in Tehran that, apart from protests, nothing much could be done.<sup>16</sup>

During November of that year the Resident reported to the 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 owned land there to acquire Bahrain nationality within a period of two years or 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 prohibiting foreign nationals from ownership of land in Persia. Should the Persians decide to ease their ill-treatment of Bahrainis, the Administration in Bahrain would reciprocate in 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 was harming the Shaikh. The British Government could do very little about Bahrainis who owned landed property in Persia by reason of the Persian Nationality Law (PNL). It could act only on behalf of those Bahrainis who were born in Bahrain and who did not own property in Persia but were employed there in casual occupations



such as shopkeepers, coolies, etc.<sup>17</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 PNL. None the less, it wished to protest against ill-treatment of Bahrainis born in Bahrain and who did not own land in Persia and were therefore not affected by the PNL. This it wanted to do in order 'to avoid the appearance of acquiescing in the Persian claim to Bahrain'.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, in May 1937, the Government of Bahrain issued two separate notices signed by Shaikh Hamad promulgating the Law Regarding Ownership of 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. Under Article Two, the Government of Bahrain pledged to notify foreign governments whose nationals would be affected by this prohibition. Such 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 to assess the value of the property and report to the District Court, etc.<sup>19</sup>

The Bahrain Nationality Law consisted of five articles. Article Two specified the persons who under the Law were considered Bahrain nationals, namely (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, namely 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 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 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>20</sup>

On 1 November 1937, the Iranian Government was notified about its nationals in Bahrain to whom the rulings of the Property Law applied. On 16 January 1938, the Adviser issued a proclamation reminding Iranians resident in Bahrain to submit lists of their immovable property to the District Court.<sup>21</sup> Only one Persian national had submitted such a list; the majority did not, believing that the Property Law was a bluff on the part of the Bahrain Government to persuade Persians to acquire Bahrain nationality. A major gap in the Law was that it failed to provide penalties for failure to abide by its rulings.

During July 1938, an amendment was made to the Property Law which read:<sup>22</sup>

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.

Although Shaikh Hamad set his seal on the Amending Law on 29 September 1938, its publication was delayed for some time.<sup>23</sup> In October 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 retaining their property instead of selling it. Under the Shara' Law only parents administered the property of minors and therefore continued to benefit from it 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 future become either 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>24</sup>

Shortly afterwards, the Agent communicated with the Adviser

reminding him that such practices by Persian parents could not be legally prevented and drew his attention to the fact that:<sup>25</sup>

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.

He disagreed with the Adviser's suggestion for the Minors Department to assume control of the property of minors of Persian parentage unless, he wrote, all minors' property was subjected to the control of the Department.

The Nationality and Property Laws normalised the position of Persians in Bahrain and consolidated the position of the Government of Bahrain. Many Persians found it in their own interests 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 3)**

In 1927 Shaikh Salman bin Hamad was appointed Magistrate of this Court, 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. In this way Shaikh Salman gained judicial experience.

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, later re-named the Bahrain Court.<sup>26</sup> The Agent found it useful and with certain modifications adopted 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 written in Arabic and based on the Sudan and Indian Codes for use by the Shaikh and all the parties concerned. These would then be expected to serve as the basis for the administration of justice in Bahrain.<sup>27</sup> The way the Shaikhs administered justice in the Courts was the subject of the following comment by the Resident:<sup>28</sup>

The Al Khalifah 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.

## (2) *The Lower Bahrain Court*

This was instituted in September 1927 as a subsidiary Civil Court, with the purpose of alleviating the growing burden of 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 it. In 1930, Shaikh Mubarak bin Hamad Al Khalifah replaced Shaikh Mohammad bin Jabur as joint magistrate.

## (3) *The Shara' Court*

The Qādis, Sunni as well as Shi'ah, were appointed to their posts by the Shaikh. The three Sunni Qādis, mentioned earlier, remained in charge of the Shara' Court. In 1927 they opposed government interference in the affairs of the Sunni Waqfs (see Chapter 4) and thereafter their relations with the Shaikh's



Administration were far from cordial. The Ja'fari (i.e. Shi'ah) Shara' was conducted by two Shi'ah Qādis, Shaikh Abdullah bin Mohammad Ṣāleḥ and Shaikh Ali bin Hasan al-Musa. All personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc., were dealt with by the Qādis. Criminal justice was exclusively administered by the secular Courts.

(4) *The Majlis al-'Urf* (see also Chapter 3)

In 1930 it was presided over by Shaikh Rashid bin Mohammad Al Khalifah, father-in-law of Shaikh Hamad. He replaced Shaikh Ḥumūd bin Ṣubāḥ who had been relieved from the presidency of the Majlis after his trial in 1929, as mentioned earlier. In addition to the Majlis al'Urf, Shaikh Rashid also presided over the Diving Court.

It emerges from the above account that the Ruling Family had 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-'Usfour, the influential Shi'ah 'Ālim, agitated for his return from Iraq. 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 'Ālim, who was an admirer of Daly, deteriorated. The Resident's remarks made in February 1927 throw light on the whole affair:<sup>29</sup>

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.

As the 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'ah Qadis who feared 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>30</sup>

Government interference in the religious affairs of the country which had begun in 1927 continued. In late January 1932 the

Administration issued a proclamation making executors of wills accountable to the Shara' Court, and requiring 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 and Hedd, and in Manamah the bazaar was shut from 9 to 11 February. The three Sunni Qadis sympathised with this opposition but the Shi'ah Qadis did not oppose the proclamation. Great embarrassment was caused to the Government by the whole affair and the proclamation was eventually withdrawn.<sup>31</sup>

### **Baharnah leadership in the 1930s**

The 1930s witnessed the emergence of new urban Baharnah leaders who lived in Manamah but some of whom also had links with the villages where they commanded a large following. They included a few wealthy and influential landowners who were widely travelled and well informed about religious and secular matters. They had the unequivocal backing of their followers and were determined to pursue their community's interests. They were partly encouraged by the improvement in the position of the Baharnah following the administrative reforms of the 1920s. Unlike the Shi'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. The following is a brief account of the Baharnah leaders as provided by the Adviser in 1935:<sup>32</sup>

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 . . .

Abdul Rasuul bin Rajab: . . . illiterate old man . . . 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 . . .

*The Background to the Years 1930–1945*

Ahmad bin Nasr: The headman of the village of Barbar

...

Abdel Aziz bin Hajar of Buri: The headman of Buri, . . . a member of Shi'a Waqf Committee, a respectable and influential man . . .

Ali bin Abbas of Āli: The leader of one of the two factions which exist in Āli, a strong supporter of Shaikh Khalaf (al-'Usfour).

Husain al-Madhoub of Bilad al-Qadim: The headman of the village of Bilad, a landowner and a comparatively wealthy man . . .

During the summer of 1934 the Adviser was on leave and Shaikh Salman adjudicated cases in the Bahrain Court on his own. These cases were filed by Al Khalifah landlords against Baharnah tenants of date-gardens who had defaulted on the payment of rents (see: Agriculture, Chapter 7). The annual cash from the yield of some gardens was said to have dropped by 50 per cent over the previous years. The income from the sale of dates alone was insufficient to meet the full rents. In addition, the tenants complained of the damage caused by the Shaikh's camels which were allowed free pasturage.<sup>33</sup> This was an old problem about which very little had been done in the past. In September 1923 the Resident had described the large herds of stray camels as 'an economic evil to Bahrain' and the reason for keeping them as 'some shadowy sentimental notion of maintaining the fiction that the Al Khalifah are Lords of the Desert'.<sup>34</sup> He then made a number of suggestions towards controlling the harm caused by the camels but these had been forgotten over the years.

On 14 October 1934, the Adviser returned to Bahrain from leave. He investigated the complaints against the Court and ascertained the authenticity of the following claims:<sup>35</sup>

- (i) The detainees were exposed to harsh treatment and to protracted and unlawful detention.
- (ii) No written record was kept of the evidence furnished by witnesses in the cases.
- (iii) In certain cases the Court refused to call upon witnesses asked for by the litigants.
- (iv) Sentences passed were not based on any recognised civil or criminal codes.

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 Rs. 200. One of the detainees was in the service of Shaikh Mohammad bin Abdur Rahman Al Khalifah, who lived in Saar and showed his sympathy with the villagers by becoming a Shi'ah. His conversion to Shi'ism was announced by Shaikh Khalaf al-'Usfour before a large gathering at the Friday mosque at 'Āli.<sup>36</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>37</sup>

On 30 December 1934, the Baharnah leaders addressed a petition to Shaikh Hamad listing their complaints and suggesting measures of redress:<sup>38</sup>

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 '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.

On 28 January 1935, the Baharnah leaders held a meeting at Mātam<sup>39</sup> Madan in Manamah. Prior to the meeting 'Ali bin Mansour of Abū Ṣaibi' village, who was a member of the Shi'ah Waqf Department and brother-in-law of Mohsin al-Tajir, had



called on 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 of them were jobless. On the day of the meeting a large crowd came from Manamah and the villages, including the leaders Mansour al-'Uraiyedh, Mohsin al-Tajir, 'Abd 'Ali al-'Ulaiwat, 'Abd-ur Rasoul bin Rajab, and Saiyed Mustafa bin Saiyed Ahmad 'Alawi, head of the Shi'ah Waqf Department. During the meeting the names of the unemployed were recorded 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 their leaders.<sup>40</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, he wrote:<sup>41</sup>

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' 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.

With regard to their demand for greater representation on the Municipal Courts, Shaikh Hamad asked them to wait until the next elections. And as to their contention that there were more foreigners on Majlis al-Tijarah (formerly Majlis al-'Urf) than their own people, he 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, he promised to open more schools when the State's finances improved.

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 29 January the leaders, Mansour al-'Uraiyedh,

‘Abd ‘Ali al-‘Ulaiwat, ‘Abd ‘Ali al-Jishi, ‘Abd al-Rasoul bin Rajab and Mohsin Al-Tajir, met in Mātam Bin Rajab to discuss Shaikh Hamad’s reply. They asserted their conviction as to the legitimacy of their demands and were unanimous about pursuing their case with the Government of Bahrain. During this gathering both Mohsin al-Tajir and ‘Abd ‘Ali al-‘Ulaiwat advocated the adoption of ‘all measures which will bring force to bear upon the Government’.<sup>42</sup>

At their own request, the four Manamah leaders met the Adviser on 30 January. They complained about the Administration’s failure to respond to their grievances, and threatened to publicise 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>43</sup>

On 31 January, Shaikh Hamad met the four leaders, who put a set of new demands to him. They asked that the Baharnah should be allowed to form the majority 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‘ah Qadi should be appointed; that Ibrahim al-‘Uraiyyedh, a nephew of Mansour al-‘Uraiyyedh, should be made headmaster of the Manamah Boys’ School; and that Abdul Karim,<sup>44</sup> son of the late Haji Salman, should be made head of the Police. The interview ended 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 action that their community might contemplate such as the closure of the Manamah bazaar.<sup>45</sup>

On 1 February, the Agent granted the leaders a brief interview during which he made it clear that the matter concerned the Ruler alone and that he 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 ‘markhūshīn’, i.e. you may leave.<sup>46</sup>

In his exchanges with the Agent, the Adviser admitted that most

of the Baharnah demands were sensible apart from that for 'proportionate representation' on the 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, since 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 other than Sūq al-Khamīs and the Manamah Ja'fariyah School, which were largely funded by the Baharnah community, no other State schools were built in their villages.<sup>47</sup>

Reporting the matter to the Resident, the Agent wrote:<sup>48</sup>

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 Al-Khalifah to the Shi'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 Bahrain Court<sup>49</sup> and other smaller matters.

The improvement in their position and the impact of modern ideas in Bahrain has rendered the Baharnah 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.

In the meantime, the Agent explained to 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. 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>50</sup>

On 9 March 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 and Hajji Mansour al-'Uraiyedh, who was now in India and whose inclusion in the Committee was calculated to appease the Baharnah. Two more members were to be added, should this become necessary in the future.<sup>51</sup>

In a major despatch to the Government of India, dated 18 March and entitled 'The Baharinah in Bahrain', the Resident described them as follows:<sup>52</sup>

original inhabitants . . . are Shi'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 Bahrain 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 Nejdis and other Arabs, but some of whom are Persian Shi'ahs, Baharinah 60%. Whatever



*The Background to the Years 1930–1945*

amount of guess work there may be in this computation it is agreed that the Baharinah number well over half of the total inhabitants.

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 in the countries of the Middle East and India with whom Bahrain had close connections. Commenting on 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. Colonel Loch informs me that in his opinion these complaints are not without foundation.

The Adviser's attendance in the Bahrain Court as co-judge with the Shaikh was, in the Resident's view, beneficial to ensuring the proper administration of justice. Nevertheless, he believed the practice was 'definitely undesirable' from administrative and political points of view and added:

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.

He concluded by saying:

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 '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 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 . . .

Replying to the Resident's letter, the Government of India cautioned:<sup>53</sup>

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.

It 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, it was unwilling to do away with the Adviser's presence in the Bahrain Court, despite his diverse duties. It 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. It was in favour of the introduction of a simple criminal code based on the Indian Penal Code, such as the Sudan Code, which it cited as an example. It was also in favour of increased Baharnah representation on various Councils along the lines suggested to the Baharnah by the Shaikh. With regard to new schools for Baharnah villages, it recommended the

expansion of existing private or mosque schools. It concluded by reiterating its 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.

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>54</sup> The argument 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 it prescribed to those problems, as suggested in its despatch of 6 November 1935, showed that it was 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. In addition, it had little to offer in the way of judicial reforms. It failed to understand the transformation 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.

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 centralisation 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. It acted and reacted on the spur of the moment. It treated each incident or crisis more or less as it happened. Sometimes it bided its 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'ahs.

### **Agitation 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 now new to Bahrain for in 1920 there was a club in Manamah called Nādi Iqbāl Awāl, some of whose members contributed articles to Rashīd Riḍa'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 later renamed the Bahrain Club. The two most influential clubs of Manamah were the al-Ahli and 'Uruba, created in 1938 and 1939 respectively. Their founding members, Sunnis as well as Shi'ahs, included intellectuals like Abdur Rahman al-Bākīr, Abdul Aziz al-Shamlān, Ibrahim al-'Uraiyyedh, Ibrahim Hasan Kamāl, Ali al-Tajir, Hasan Jawād al-Jish-shi, Taqi Mohammad al-Baharnah, etc.<sup>55</sup>

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 falling school standards, inefficient Courts, the rising cost of living,<sup>56</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>57</sup> In the absence of legal avenues of communication, grievances were voiced through anonymous articles and other clandestine means of communication, such as posters and circulars. At this time, i.e. 1938, few people had



access to Shaikh Hamad whose health was failing.

The affairs of Bahrain were now receiving greater publicity from the Arab press than ever before. On 27 July 1938, an Egyptian weekly noted that the British base at Jufair contained both naval and air facilities built and financed by the Bahrain Government.<sup>58</sup> On 14 September, the same magazine published another article entitled: 'Gloomy Despair in Bahrain', which was signed: 'an Arab'. Belgrave suspected certain Bahrainis<sup>59</sup> of the authorship of this article which, *inter alia*, was critical of foreign intervention in the affairs of Bahrain, and cited the Customs, trade, and Eastern Bank, education and justice as areas under foreign control. The article blamed the sad state of affairs in 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 on 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>60</sup>

The call for reforms was partly motivated by the Reform Movement of Kuwait, and to a lesser extent by that in Dubai, both in 1938.<sup>61</sup> Also at this time, Shaikh Hamad's health was causing serious concern and the question of the 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, 31 July-13 September 1938, a Regency Council consisting of Shaikh Abdullah, Shaikh Salman and the Adviser, was entrusted with the affairs of State.

At this juncture, several meetings were reported to have taken place in support of Shaikh Salman's probable accession to the Rulership. Yusuf Fakhroo, a well-known merchant, was gathering support for Shaikh Salman among both leading Sunnis and Shi'ahs.<sup>62</sup> Apparently, Shaikh Salman was keen on securing Baharnah support as his father did during Daly's time in 1921-2, when Shaikh Abdullah, Shaikh Hamad's half-brother, stood in opposition to Hamad's succession to the rulership. Current reports revealed the likelihood of the uncle challenging his nephew.

During August 1938, Baharnah leaders from Manamah, namely Saiyed Sa'eed Saiyed Khalaf, Saiyed Ahmad 'Alawi, Mohammad Ali al-Tajir and Mohsin al-Tajir, attended a meeting

convened in the house of Hajji Ahmad bin Khamis in Sanābis, and 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'ah Qadis, Shaikh Ali bin Hasan, and Shaikh Ali bin Ja'far, and 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>63</sup>

The Adviser was now on leave and when he returned to Bahrain early in October, 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 sufficient following and organised a petition in support of their continuation in office.

There followed two more meetings in Mansour al-'Uraiyedh's garden, and again in Mātam Saiyed Ahmad 'Alawi in Manamah. The leading persons<sup>64</sup> who attended them approved the previous decisions and added two more, namely (i) that the nationals of Bahrain should be given preference over foreigners in matters of employment with the oil company, and (ii) that members of the Legislative Committee should consist of three Sunnis and three Shi'ahs with Shaikh Salman as its President. The dismissal of the two Qadis was not raised in the latter meetings.<sup>65</sup>

Although no official petition had yet been submitted to the Government of Bahrain by either Sunnis or Shi'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>66</sup> During October, 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 up in government offices. These were attributed to a nascent Youth Movement whose members were identified as junior clerks and students.<sup>67</sup>

While agitation for reforms was in progress, the Government of Bahrain decided to concede to the Baharnah their demand for reform of the Shi'ah Shara' Court, which had been closed since June 1938 after criticisms were levelled by the Shi'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'ahs to forge joint demands. The Government Notice of 31 October announced the reorganisation of the Shi'ah Shara' Court on the following lines:<sup>68</sup>

The Public are informed that with effect from 8th Ramadan 1357 (1 November 1938) the Shi'a Shara' Court will be opened. It has been decided that the following persons will be the Qadis:

Shaikh Baqir al-'Usfour, Shaikh Ali bin Hasan and Shaikh Mohammad al-Qāri. 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.

Both Shaikh Ali bin Ja'far, the Shi'ah Qadi, and the Court clerk, whose removal from office was earlier requested by the Manamah leaders, were dismissed. Shaikh Abdul Husain al-Ḥilli, a qualified Qadi recently obtained from Iraq, was appointed as Appeal Judge on the Shi'ah Shara' Court.<sup>69</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>70</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, and the 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.

On 5 November 1938 the Government arrested Sa'ad Shamlān and Ahmad Chirawi accusing 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 for work. The workers obeyed the call and the strike almost paralysed the Company's operations. (See also Chapter 7, under Oil.) Further arrests were made and in Manamah the Movement's supporters assembled in the Friday Mosque and demanded an audience with the Agent. They organised themselves in a large demonstration which proceeded to the bazaar in Manamah and closed the shops there. The police

dispersed the crowds, some casualties were reported, and Ibrahim Kamāl and Khalifah al-Fādhil, the latter was one of the leaders of the Movement, were arrested.<sup>71</sup> The Government of Bahrain then issued a Notice calling on 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>72</sup> In the meantime, attempts by the demonstrators to persuade either the divers from Moharraq or the Baharnah of Manamah to join them failed as the Baharnah leaders restrained their followers at the request of the Administration.<sup>73</sup>

On 8 November, peace was finally restored to Manamah and to the oil company, but on the following day circulars were distributed by 'The National Youth' demanding the release of those arrested, the formation of Councils to oversee reform of education and the Courts, and the creation of a labour Union.<sup>74</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 12 November five merchants, two Sunnis and three Shi'ahs, acting as mediators between the people and the Government, submitted a memorandum containing a number of demands:<sup>75</sup>

- (i) Education: Appointment of a Committee of eight persons, four Sunnis and four Shi'ahs, to supervise educational reform.
- (ii) Courts: Replacement of present magistrates by a bench of three judges, two from the public, one Sunni, one Shi'ah, and a third to be appointed by the Government. Creation of a criminal court and the appointment of a qualified Iraqi national as judge.
- (iii) Labour Committee: Formation of a recognised body to look after the interests of workers.
- (iv) Municipalities: Replacement of foreign employees of the Municipality by nationals of Bahrain.<sup>76</sup>
- (v) Selection of six persons, half Sunnis half Shi'ahs, to represent the people.

Shortly after the submission of the above memorandum the tribal groups from Hedd sent a letter to Shaikh Hamad which read:<sup>77</sup>



### *The Background to the Years 1930–1945*

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.

On 13 December, the Youth Movement issued a circular calling upon the 'free youth of Bahrain' to renounce sectarianism and to work for national unity.<sup>78</sup> In January 1939, deputations of rural Baharnah submitted a petition to Shaikh Hamad pledging loyalty to him and to his Government.<sup>79</sup>

In reporting the events in Bahrain, the Administration imputed popular resentment to a number of factors, namely:

#### *National awakening*

By the late 1930s the number of school-leavers had risen considerably. Some of them were the 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 6 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. This 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.

#### *High unemployment*

In 1938 the number of jobless increased for the reasons discussed in Chapter 7, under Oil.

#### *The reform movements of Kuwait and Dubai*

People in Bahrain were under the illusion that the Executive Councils of Kuwait and Dubai had been created with British

support, and that British support was forthcoming for the movement in Bahrain. After all, earlier in 1923 it was the British Government which had retired Shaikh Isa and prepared the way for the reforms.

In addition to the above, both Sunnis and Shi'ahs had specific grievances about the judicial system as follows:

*The Shi'ah Shara' Court*

During May 1935, the Shi'ah community approached the Government with a demand for the appointment of a third Shi'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 sit together as was done in the Sunni Shara' Court. Shaikh Ali agreed to the suggestion but Shaikh Abdullah bin 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 two other local 'Alims. None of them supported the view of Shaikh Abdullah who belonged to a Shi'ah faction which held different views on the issue from the majority of the Shi'ahs of Bahrain. Meanwhile, Shaikh Abdullah's supporters agitated against the suggestion and also petitioned the Government. The matter created a degree of tension between the two factions but was eventually settled peacefully.<sup>80</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'ah Qadi on the Shi'ah Shara' Court, which was established during the year.<sup>81</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'far and Shaikh Ali bin Hasan from the villages.<sup>82</sup> The seat of a third Qadi remained vacant until April 1936, when Shaikh Baqir bin Ahmad al-'Usfour was appointed to the Shi'ah Shara' Court.<sup>83</sup>

Thereafter, Shi'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. On this issue the Agent wrote:<sup>84</sup>

### *The Background to the Years 1930–1945*

It was the disgraceful condition of the Shi'a Shara' 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.

#### *The Bahrain Court*

It was established British policy to entrust Al Khalifah with magisterial posts in State Courts. Work in the Courts provided opportunity for direct contact with the people and the British authorities wanted to involve the Rulers in public affairs. To this effect the Agent wrote:<sup>85</sup>

In the circumstances of Bahrain there are great advantages in selecting the magistrates from the Al Khalifah 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 were making advances in many fields, procedures at the Courts remained 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 contested 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.

#### *The Sunni Shara' Court*

Complaints against the Sunni Shara' Court mainly affected the three Qadis who were too slow in their procedural methods, in addition to seeking compromises instead of giving judgements. The Adviser rather rashly described them as 'ignorant, narrow

mind and unprogressive'.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to the above, there were two other specific grievances related to education and the oil company, discussed earlier in Chapters 6 and 7. 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 7), and improvements to the judicial system. As regards the latter, the Shi'ah Shara' Court was reorganised in October 1938, making it a much more efficient Court than 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 reform of the Sunni Shara' Court, against which the complaints were not as serious as those levelled by the Shi'ahs against the Shi'ah Court.

As regards the codification of laws, the Committee in charge began its work in 1935. By the end of 1938 it had accomplished the following: the compilation and codification of relevant proclamations and the drafting of a number of rules on various subjects, such as diving laws, pearl sales, fish-trap 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. Shaikh Hamad therefore decided to hire the services of an expert to deal with the more specialised part of the Committee's work. As a temporary measure, the Adviser was restored as joint-judge on the Bahrain Court.<sup>87</sup>

In his final assessment of the events of 1938, the Resident blamed the Bahrain Administration for lack of foresight. He wrote:<sup>88</sup>

It seems to me that to a large extent the Bahrain Government are responsible for the present situation. They were extremely 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.



The Adviser, on the other hand, whose dominance of the Administration was resented by the people, blamed the agitation for reforms on nationalist sentiments:<sup>89</sup>

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 Al Khalifah.

According to the Agent, the reform movement in Kuwait and Dubai provided inspiration for the movement of Bahrain, but there was no resemblance between them:<sup>90</sup>

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.

The Resident's advice to the Shaikh was to form an Advisory Council, appointing its members himself. He wrote:<sup>91</sup>

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.

It remains to be said that the four representatives,<sup>92</sup> who submitted the Memoranda of 12 and 22 November 1938 to the Government (the latter was cited in Chapter 7 under Oil) continued their good efforts on behalf of the people. The Youth Movement, on the other hand, was weakened by the arrest of its members. With the tribal element professing loyalty to its traditional allies the Rulers, and 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 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>93</sup> Earlier in 1936 he introduced the first printing press in Bahrain.<sup>94</sup> Throughout the war, the British authorities used the paper as a vehicle for presenting the Allied point of view. 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 4 November 1940.<sup>95</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. 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 whence they were subsequently sent to India in great secrecy. On 19 October of the same year the Italians bombed the Bahrain refinery, perhaps in retaliation for the loss of the submarine. By the end of 1942 the Manamah Municipality had erected ninety air raid shelters.<sup>96</sup>

On 8 May 1941, the Agent wrote to the Resident about the state of public opinion in Bahrain and the complaints made against the Administration, as follows:<sup>97</sup>

- (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.

On 25 May 1941 the Resident corresponded with the Government of India over the state of affairs in Bahrain. He cited the Agent's letter and attributed the people's dissatisfaction to a 'deep-seated discontent with the local administration'. He believed that the people had legitimate complaints against the Bahrain Courts, and stated 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 had 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 had rarely attended the Bahrain Court and had only functioned in 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>98</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 over-worked, 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.

The Resident regarded the Customs Department as 'efficient', but 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 the Resident had recently 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, found nothing wrong with the technical side of the Department's work, but that accounting and administration were 'inefficient in the extreme'. Commenting on this, 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.



The Resident gave a favourable impression of the Department of Education which as a result of reorganisation had 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 felt sorry for the people of Bahrain who were deprived of access to responsible officials, and of the right to air their 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 owing to financial stringency he had 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'.

The Resident informed 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.

*Rationing and control of foodstuffs*

Bahrain's chief concern during the war was to ensure sufficient food supplies for its 90,000 or so inhabitants.<sup>99</sup> India was the chief 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 and 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 the 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>100</sup> During the year unemployment soared owing to reduction in the oil company's labour force, and to a poor diving season and also to absence of state-financed projects. On 14 May the Agent suggested to Shaikh Salman that food distribution centres should be set up for those who had no means of livelihood. The suggestion was made with a view to averting any possibility of disturbances.<sup>101</sup> The Shaikhs agreed. Commenting on the same the Adviser noted:<sup>102</sup>

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.

In 1942 temporary shortages of rice, wheat and sugar were experienced. This was largely due to merchants transshipping to Saudi Arabia foodstuffs originally ordered for Bahrain. They were lured by chances of greater profits, since price controls did not exist there. The Government of Bahrain responded by banning the export of all foodstuffs to other countries, except for sugar and tea which were allowed to go to Persia in return for meat, vegetables and fruit. In June a system of ration cards for rice, flour and wheat was introduced under the supervision of Manamah and Moharraq municipalities. Retail centres were opened in both places, and a Food Control Committee was appointed in August

to assist the Food Controller.<sup>103</sup>

Also, during the summer of 1942 a philanthropic project, Relief of the Poor Fund, was launched under the auspices of Shaikh Salman. Two Committees, one Sunni one Shi'ah, were formed for the purpose. Donations amounting to Rs. 32,000 were collected from members of the Ruling Family, merchants and others. In addition to the above sum, BAPCO contributed Rs. 1,500 to the Fund. The money was used for the purchase of foodstuffs which were then distributed to the needy and poor of Bahrain.<sup>104</sup> Towards the end of 1942 shortages of rice, wheat and flour were experienced in India, forcing the Indian Government to restrict their export.<sup>105</sup> This led to severe shortages of cereals in Bahrain, where the authorities applied to the Middle East Supply Centre (MESC), about which E.M. Lloyd wrote as follows:<sup>106</sup>

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 normal diet of rice, dates and fish, the pearl-fishing fleet, which normally starts operations in May . . ., might stay at home and create trouble.

During 1943 a Merchants Advisory Committee was formed to consider the problems of supplies and shipping, and the number of authorised shops for the sale of rationed goods was increased. The rationing of rice, wheat and flour continued for the second year running and an individual's monthly quota was fixed at 20 lb of cereals divided into 8 lb of rice, reduced in March to 4 lb and in September to 2 lb, plus 12 lb of wheat. Whenever the quota of rice was reduced, the quota of wheat was raised. 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 lb of wheat, 4 lb of flour, and 4 lb of barley. Hence rice, a staple

diet of the majority of the people, ceased to be the standard dish of the day.<sup>107</sup>

Sugar was rationed at 4 lb per person per month, but from April 1943 this quota was reduced to 2 ½ lb 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:<sup>108</sup>

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.

Apart from cereals and sugar, imported exclusively by the Government of Bahrain, local merchants were allowed to bring in tea, coffee, ghee, piece goods and cigarettes. In mid-1943 shortages of tea and coffee 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.

The medical authorities regarded the individual quota of cereals and sugar as sufficient for 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 subsidised the sale of essential foodstuffs to the public.<sup>109</sup>

Despite strict measures to control the export of all types of goods, cases of smuggling occurred in 1943 and many arrests and convictions were made.<sup>110</sup>

In 1944 the Government of Bahrain spent 80 lakhs of rupees on the purchase of wheat, flower, barley, rice, sugar and dates. This money was subsequently recovered from the sale of these essential items to the public. During the year, the MESC allocated 1,500 tons of Iraqi rice to the Gulf Shaikhdoms and Bahrain's quota amounted to 400 tons.<sup>111</sup> Extra rice was smuggled into Bahrain from India and Iraq by owners of local dhows.<sup>112</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 lb per person per month was maintained throughout, but the individual quotas were subject to alteration depending on availability. Early in 1944, the individual quota of sugar was set at 2 ½ lb for town-dwellers, but only half a pound for villagers, on account of the higher consumption of sugar in the towns where there was a large community of foreigners. Export of sugar and tea to the Persian Coast was allowed in return for livestock, onions, potatoes and fruit. The smuggling of tea to 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 four days per week.<sup>113</sup>

In 1944 there were unprecedented rises in the rents of shops and premises and the Government was forced to intervene to protect tenants by issuing a Rent Control Order which made it harder for landlords to increase rents or to demand vacation of premises for the sole purpose of reletting at a higher rent.<sup>114</sup>

During 1945, the monthly cereal quota of an adult was maintained at 20 lb, 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 lb of wheat, 3 lb of mixed barley and millet flour, and 4 lb of rice per person. Throughout Ramadan an extra ration of rice was issued and the quota was adjusted to 6 lb of rice, 3 lb of millet and 11 lb of wheat. After Ramadan the quota was modified to 4 lb of rice, 12 lb of wheat and 4 lb of millet. In total a sum of 118 lakhs of rupees was spent in the purchase of wheat, millet, rice, tea, sugar and dates, reported to the Controller.<sup>115</sup>

During the war Persian exports of rice averaged 30,000 tons per year, but owing to a bumper harvest 40,000 tons were despatched in 1945. The MESC negotiated a consignment of 1,800 tons on behalf of Bahrain which arrived towards the end of the year.<sup>116</sup> Both rice and wheat continued to be sold to the public at subsidised prices. Tea and coffee were in abundant supply and were no longer rationed. Sugar was rationed at 3 lb per adult in

the towns, and 1 lb per adult in the villages. Throughout the year there were abundant meat supplies, despite the fact that the Government of Bahrain incurred severe losses as a result of the destruction of their herds of goats through 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>117</sup>

The war involved the Government of Bahrain in a series of new measures such as the population count of early 1941, the import of essential foodstuffs for local consumption, the introduction of controls on the export of foodstuffs, checks on prices, rents, and also anti-hoarding and anti-profiteering regulations. The Municipalities had to cope with the opening of food centres, and the organisational and supervisory duties of retailing rationed food to the public. As Food Controller, the Director of Customs had to plan imports of essential foodstuffs months ahead and to consult with importers over shipping and supplies. The Food Control System apparently functioned to the satisfaction of the people. Shortages occurred from time to time, and cases of malnutrition and of ordinary people finding it difficult to afford food even at subsidised 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 reinforced the process of government involvement in a wider sphere of affairs which had been begun in the earlier period.

## Notes

1. L. Oliphant to U.S.S.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1041, No. E 3974/67/91, 20 April 1923.
2. Telegram from Resident to the British Minister, Tehran. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1041, No. 147/711, 18 July 1923.
3. *The League of Nations Official Journal*, No. 5, May 1928, pp. 605–7.
4. Shaikh Isa to the P.A. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1041, 22nd Ramadan 1346 (15 March 1928).
5. Barrett to Sir R. Clive. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1045, 8 November 1929.
6. Telegram from Clive to the F.O. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1041, No. 66, 11 February 1929.

*The Background to the Years 1930-1945*

7. Government of Bahrain, Proclamation. I.O.R. 15/2/150, No. 1101/17/1347, 17th Ramadan 1347 (27 February 1929).
8. Prior to Barrett. Note on the Persian Communities at Bahrain. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1045, 4 November 1929.
9. Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs to His Majesty's Minister at Tehran. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1045, No. 11650/750-1214, 23 July 1930.
10. Fowle to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. L/P + S/10/1045, No. 784-S, 17 October 1932.
11. 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 October 1932).
12. Belgrave to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. 579-9A, 8 October 1932.
13. Fowle to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. 842-S, 3 November 1932.
14. Belgrave to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/150, No. C/92, 17 May 1933.
15. Fowle to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. 2-T, 20 March 1934.
16. F.S.G.I. to U.S.S.I. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. F 101-N/34, 7 April 1934.
17. Fowle to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. 308-C, 17 November 1934.
18. M.J. Clauson, I.O., to H.L. Baggallay, F.O. I.O.R. 15/2/486, No. PZ3431/35, 12 August 1935.
19. Government of Bahrain Notice: Law Regarding Ownership of Immovable Property in Bahrain by Foreigners. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. 19/1356, 8 May 1937.
20. Government of Bahrain Notice: Bahrain Nationality Law. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. 20/1356, 8 May 1937.
21. Bahrain Government, Land Department. I.O.R. 15/2/151, Notification No. 957/2, 14th Dhul Qa'da 1356 (16 January 1938).
22. H. Weightman to Acting Adviser to the Bahrain Government. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. C/483-1.a/24, 27 July 1938.
23. Government of Bahrain Notice. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. 1357, 4th Sha'ban 1357 (29 September 1938).
24. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. 782/29/1357, 1st Ramadan 1357 (25 October 1938).
25. P.A. to Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/151, No. C/672-1.a/24, 1 November 1938.
26. Trevor to Daly. I.O.R. 15/2/133, No. 224-S, 30 March 1924.
27. Daly to Trevor. I.O.R. 15/2/133, No. 97/9/6, 16 April 1924.
28. Barrett's No. 385-S, August 1929.
29. Colonel Haworth to F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/2/127, No. 86-S, 27 March 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'.
30. A.R.P.A. 1931.
31. A.R.P.A. 1932.
32. Belgrave to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. C-129, 28 January 1935.

*The Background to the Years 1930-1945*

33. Belgrave to Colonel Loch. I.O.R. 15/2/176, number illegible, 12 November 1934.
34. S.G. Knox to the Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/83, No. 527-S, 24 September 1923.
35. Belgrave's letter of 12 November, 1934.
36. Belgrave's No. C-129.
37. Ibid.
38. Translation of a letter dated 23rd Ramadan 1353 (30 December 1934) from eight Baharnah leaders to H.E. Shaikh Sir Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifah, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Ruler of Bahrain. F.O. 371:18920.
39. A Mātām is a religious Shi'ah institution maintained by endowments, and is used as a meeting place both for religious mourning and for secular occasions. See also definition provided in Chapter 1.
40. Adviser to Agent. I.O.R. 15/2/176, 29 January 1935.
41. 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 January 1935.
42. Adviser to Agent, 29 January 1935.
43. Belgrave to Loch. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. C-130, 4 February 1935.
44. Abdul Karim first received training with the 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.
45. Adviser's No. C-130.
46. Address by P.A. Bahrain to the Eight Leaders of the Baharnah. F.O. 371: 18920, 1 February 1935.
47. Adviser's No. C-130.
48. Loch to Fowle. F.O. 371: 18920, No. C/112-1.b/5, 18 February 1935.
49. The A.R.P.A. for 1930 contained a comment 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'.
50. Loch to Fowle. F.O. 371: 18920, No. C-160, 6 March 1935.
51. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. 1038-6A, 9 March 1935.
52. Resident to F.S.G.I. F.O. 371: 18920, No. C-43, 18 March 1935.
53. O.K. Caroe, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, to the Resident. F.O. 371: 18920, No. F230-N/35, 6 November 1935.
54. No. C-43.
55. *Ālam al-Kutub*, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 506, February 1938.
56. 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 foodstuffs, notably tea, sugar and coffee'.
57. 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 November 1938.



*The Background to the Years 1930–1945*

58. *Al-Rābitah al-‘Arabiyah, The Arab Bond*, Cairo. I.O.R. 15/1/344, 27 July 1938.

59. These were: ‘Abdullah al-Zāyed, proprietor of Bahrain Printing Press; Ibrahim al-‘Uraiyedh, Petroleum Concessions Limited’s (P.C.L.) Interpreter; Hajji Mohammad al-‘Uraiyedh, Bahraini merchant; Ali al-Tajir, Mr Lermite’s clerk, P.C.L.; Mohammad Duwaigher, Superintendent Minor Estate’s Department; Saiyed Mahmoud ‘Alawi, Adviser’s Head Clerk; Mohammad Saleh Chirawi, an employee of BAPCO’. Note by the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/176.

60. For a translation of the article of 14 September, see I.O.R. 15/1/343.

61. See R.J. Said, ‘The 1938 Reform Movement in Dubai’, in *al-Abhāth*, 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.

62. Note by the Adviser. I.O.R. 15/2/176.

63. Ibid.

64. These were Mansour al-‘Uraiyedh, Shaikh Baqir bin Ahmad al-‘Usfour, Mohsin al-Tajir, ‘Abd ‘Ali al-‘Ulaiwat, Saiyed Sa‘eed Saiyed Khalaf, Saiyed Ahmad ‘Alawi, Hajji ‘Ali bin Marhoun, Hajji Ahmad bin Sallum, Abdur Rasoul bin Rajab, Shaikh ‘Abdullah bin Mohammad Saleh — ex Shi‘ah Qadi — 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 information about the Qadi is provided under the Shi‘ah Shara’ Court below.

65. Note by the Adviser, I.O.R. 15/2/176.

66. Ibid.

67. People like Ali bin Abdullah Abol, Ibrahim Jodar, Ali bin Khalifah al-Fādhil, Mohammad al-Fādhil, were reported to be the organisers of the Movement. See Adviser’s Notes in I.O.R. 15/2/176.

68. Government of Bahrain Notice No. 29/57. I.O.R. 15/2/176, 7 Ramadan 1357 (31 October 1938).

69. P.A. to P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. C/680–1.b/5, 5 November 1938.

70. Note from the Adviser to the P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/176, no number, 3 November 1938.

71. Ali was convicted of sedition and 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 May 1941.

72. Government of Bahrain Notice. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. 31/1357, 6 November 1938.

73. P.A. to P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. C/691–1.b/5, 12 November 1938.

74. Translation of a circular signed: The National Youth. I.O.R. 15/2/176, 16th Ramadan 1357 (9 November 1938).

75. Translation of a Memorandum containing demands submitted to H.H. Shaikh Sir Hamad AlKhalifah, by five merchants of Bahrain, dated

## *The Background to the Years 1930-1945*

19th Ramadan 1357 (12 November 1938). I.O.R. 15/2/176. Agent's No. C/704-1.b/5. The five merchants were Yusuf Fakhroo, Mansour al-'Uraiyyedh, Mohsin al-Tajir, Saiyed Sa'eed Saiyed Khalaf, Isa bin Saleh Hindi: The latter left the group later on.

76. About the Minicipalities 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 November 1938.

77. Translation of a petition from the people of Hedd to H.H. Shaikh Sir Hamad AlKhalifah received on 24th Ramadan 1357 (17 November 1938). I.O.R. 15/1/343.

78. Arabic circular dated 20th Shawwal 1357 (13 December 1938). I.O.R. 15/2/176.

79. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/344, No. 2095/26, 18 January 1939.

80. Adviser to Officiating Agent. I.O.R. 15/3/176, No. 195/6A, 22 May 1935.

81. Assistant P.A. to H.E. Shaikh Hamad. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 268/V.O., 15 August 1935

82. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 781/6A, 2 November 1935.

83. P.A. to the Secretary to the Resident. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 157-G/6, 19 April 1936.

84. Agent's No. C/704-1.b/5.

85. Ibid.

86. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/176, No. 1822/9, 16 Shawwal 1357 (9 December 1938).

87. Ibid.

88. P.R. to P.A. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. 597-S, 17 November 1938.

89. Causes and Objects of the Recent Agitation.

90. P.A. to P.R. I.O.R. 15/1/343, No. C/720-1.b/5, 26 November 1938.

91. Resident's No. 597-S.

92. i.e. Mansour al-'Uraiyyedh, Mohsin al-Tajir, Saiyed Sa'eed and Yusuf Fakhroo.

93. *'Alam al-Kutub*, Vol. III, p. 506.

94. 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.

95. A.R.P.A. 1940.

96. Adviser's Annual Report for 1942. I.O.R. 15/2/299.

97. Major Alban to Colonel Prior. I.O.R. 15/1/344, no number, 8 May 1941.

98. Colonel Prior to O.K. Caroe, F.S.G.I. I.O.R. 15/1/344, No. 343-S, 25 May 1941.

99. This figure was established on the night of 22 January 1941 when the Government 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.

100. Adviser to P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. 81-9A, 31 January 1942.

*The Background to the Years 1930–1945*

101. Major Alban to Belgrave. I.O.R. 15/1/344, No. C/449, 14 May 1941.
102. Belgrave to Alban. I.O.R. 15/1/344, No. C/833, 17 May 1941.
103. A.R.P.A. 1942.
104. Adviser to Assistant P.A. I.O.R. 15/2/846, No. 1568/23, 30 August 1942.
105. A.R.P.A. 1942.
106. E.M.H. Lloyd, *Food and Inflation in the Middle East 1940–5*, pp. 66–7.
107. Director of Customs Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/299, No. PA/HL/10/88, 23 January 1944.
108. Ibid.
109. A.R.P.A. 1943.
110. No. PA/HL/10/88.
111. Director of Customs Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/300, No. PA/HL/1/139, 7 February 1945.
112. Lloyd, p. 67.
113. No. PA/HL/1/139.
114. A.R.P.A. 1944.
115. Director of Customs Annual Report. I.O.R. 15/2/301, No. PA/C/22, 20 January 1946.
116. Ibid. Also Lloyd, *Food and Inflation*, pp. 247–52.
117. A.R.P.A. 1945.

## 9

### Conclusion

This study has considered twenty-five years in the modern history of Bahrain. During that time this small state underwent some important transformations in 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 at that time 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 reforms, the Ruling Family of Bahrain wielded unrestricted powers, and 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' Qadi whose impartiality was open to question. 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 institutionalised 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 affairs in Bahrain. There followed a period of misgovernment, and subsequent events and public protests reminded Britain of its obligations concerning the introduction of reasonably good government. Shaikh Isa had ruled by custom and tradition long



## *Conclusion*

enough for this to have induced in him a disinclination for any change. Change as he perceived it implied the alteration of the prevailing situation 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; 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 son, 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 enlist the support of Ibn Saud against the Administration in Bahrain was taken seriously by the British authorities. For the first time, during 1922-3 one of their contentious leaders was fined and they were penalised 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 the 1920s inevitably affected the structure of power in Bahrain, and culminated in the reduction of the excessive authority of the Shaikh and in curbing the autonomy of the tribal elements. During their implementation 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 actual execution of the 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 far beyond the powers legally invested in him by the Bahrain Order-in-Council.

## Conclusion

Under the reforms judicial practices were standardised, secular courts were established and proper procedures were introduced. The main problem that plagued the judicial reforms was the absence of 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 book. The Shara' 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 resulted in greater efficiency and a notable reduction in malpractice. Seizure of land from the natives, 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'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 lack of unity between Sunnis and Shi'ahs in the 1920s to the latter's unwillingness to co-operate. 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. They had long 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 have been 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.

## *Conclusion*

The unity of the Sunnis and Shi'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'ite relations remained a sensitive matter throughout the period of this study.

The three main constituents of Bahraini society, the Rulers and their tribal allies, the town-dwelling Sunnis, and the urban and rural Shi'ahs, certainly retained their identities after the reforms. The Ruling Family, who at first resisted the reforms, eventually reconciled themselves to the new system of authority and accepted power in its attenuated form. Their influence was noticeable, however, in almost every new institution. They presided over the Municipalities, 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'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 reform was 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. It urged only basic reforms and left their planning, finance and execution to its representatives in the area. It also wanted to see the Shaikh actually taking part in the reforms and not merely responding to government pressure. 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 a reversal of



## *Conclusion*

the changes that had been made. This sudden shift in attitude was occasioned by a feeling of unease over Britain's ties with the other Trucial Shaikhs who were apprehensive about 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 the 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 malpractices 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. It was envisaged as emancipating 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 attempted 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 working conditions of the divers, but international factors were soon to bring a devastating decline in the



## *Conclusion*

pearl trade, and this 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, the lack 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, thus 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 achieve quick returns. Landlords always preferred to turn their attention to seasonal crops which needed small investments with generally predictable and rapid profits. Moreover, 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, as 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 few possessions, including the tenancy of the garden, his only means of livelihood.

A great deal 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 infrastructure of Bahrain. Growing revenue from oil helped to reorganise 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 date-cultivators and provided them with

## Conclusion

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, brought new prosperity to the merchants. The annual royalties which the Government of Bahrain received increased from over Rs. 6 lakhs in 1935 to over Rs. 30 lakhs in 1945, a five-fold increase in a decade. Annual income from the Customs in the same period rose from over Rs. 6 lakhs in 1935 to nearly Rs. 26 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 financial power which moved from the merchants and pearlers in the pre-oil period, to the Ruler and his family. There was now more 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 increased 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 postal and quarantine services to the Iranian Government 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 of Bahrain, which could not do anything for them until 1937, the year the Bahrain Government promulgated its own

### *Conclusion*

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'ahs. Mixed Sunni-Shi'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 pay and working conditions at the oil company, and adequate technical training to enable Bahraini school boys to apply for jobs requiring technical skills. The education system which had undergone certain changes failed to satisfy the parents 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.

The Government of Bahrain was not willing to shoulder direct responsibility for education prior to 1929-30, apart from paying out some subsidies towards the cost of 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'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 a 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



## *Conclusion*

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 increased from Rs. 60,000 in 1356 (1937-8) to over Rs. 1 lakh in 1357 (1938-9), and to over Rs. 4 lakhs in 1364 (1945-6). The whole system was overhauled, a new Technical School was opened, primary education was reorganised, 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 1941-5, under a new British Principal with previous experience in Iraq. Among the problems encountered were difficulty in 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 the country 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 the Arab world. 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 new ideas and new contacts. It is arguable that Bahrain was fortunate in having begun the process of change before oil revenues started to flow. For when they increased sharply after the Second World War, it already had some experience of change and had begun to abandon traditional ways of government. The power of the Ruling Family was certainly preserved — indeed it may even have been enhanced because of the oil revenues — but the benefits of modernity were being shared by many citizens, and because the population was so



### *Conclusion*

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.

### **Notes**

1. *Social and Political Change*, pp. 195–6.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

# Bibliography

## Unpublished primary sources

### *Public Record Office, London*

#### *Foreign Office papers*

Foreign Office Files 371, Volumes 8947, 18920.

#### *Cabinet papers*

Cabinet 16, Committee of Imperial Defence Papers, Volumes 54, 93 and 94.

Cabinet 51, Committee of Imperial Defence Papers, Volumes 1 and 2.

### *India Office Records, London*

#### *Political and secret — memoranda*

L/P + S/18 — B 408. Persian Complaints of Smuggling in the Persian Gulf — J.G. Laithwaite, 1 October 1928.

L/P + S/18 — B 422. Exercise of Jurisdiction in Cases Affecting Foreign Subjects in Bahrain by the British Political Authorities — J.G. Laithwaite, 3 March 1930.

L/P + S/18 — B 436. Historical Memorandum on Bahrain — J.G. Laithwaite, 14 July 1934.

L/P + S/18 — B 437. The Wahhābi Amirs and Ibn Saud: Their Relations with Eastern Arabia and with the British Government — J.G. Laithwaite, 1 September 1934.

L/P + S/10/1041. Bahrain 1908–28 — J.G. Laithwaite, 8 October 1928.

#### *Other political and secret files*

L/P + S/10/1039

L/P + S/10/1041

L/P + S/10/1042

L/P + S/10/1044

L/P + S/10/1045

L/P + S/10/1273

L/P + S/11/193

#### *Administration reports of the Political Agency*

R 15/2/951 for 1920

R 15/2/296 for 1921–30

R 15/2/297 for 1931–4

## *Bibliography*

R 15/2/298 for 1935-9  
R 15/2/299 for 1940-3  
R 15/2/300 for 1944  
R 15/2/301 for 1945

### *Records of the Political Residency — Bushire*

R 15/1/299	R 15/1/343
R 15/1/319	R 15/1/344
R 15/1/327	R 15/1/373

### *Records of the Political Agency — Bahrain*

R 15/2/1	R 15/2/176
R 15/2/6	R 15/2/195
R 15/2/12	R 15/2/196
R 15/2/23	R 15/2/197
R 15/2/71	R 15/2/198
R 15/2/72	R 15/2/207
R 15/2/73	R 15/2/208
R 15/2/83	R 15/2/241
R 15/2/87	R 15/2/296
R 15/2/88	R 15/2/297
R 15/2/93	R 15/2/298
R 15/2/102	R 15/2/299
R 15/2/104	R 15/2/300
R 15/2/121	R 15/2/301
R 15/2/122	R 15/2/343
R 15/2/123	R 15/2/486
R 15/2/127	R 15/2/846
R 15/2/129	R 15/2/848
R 15/2/130	R 15/2/951
R 15/2/131	R 15/2/1231
R 15/2/132	R 15/2/1241
R 15/2/133	R 15/2/1313
R 15/2/150	R 15/2/1349
R 15/2/151	

## **Theses**

- M.A. Daud, *British Relations with the Persian Gulf, 1890-1902*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1957.
- T.T. Farah, *The Question of the Transfer of the British Residency*, M.A. Dissertation, American University of Beirut, 1970.
- *Protection and Politics in Bahrain 1869-1915*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1979.
- A.Y. al-Hamar, *An Analytical Study of the System of Education in Bahrain, 1940-65*, M.A. Dissertation, American University of Beirut, 1968.

## Bibliography

- N.F. Kittner, *Issues in Anglo-Persian Diplomatic Relations, 1921-1933*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1980.
- R.E. Littlefield, *Bahrain as a Persian Gulf State — With Reference to Its Relations with Great Britain and the Province of al-Hasa*, M.A. Dissertation, American University of Beirut, 1964.
- F.I. Qubain, *The Impact of Petroleum Industry on Iraq and Bahrain*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1956.
- M.G. Rumaihi, *Bahrain: Social and Political Change Since the First World War*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Durham, 1976.

## Secondary sources

- A.M. Abū Hakima, *History of Eastern Arabia 1750-1800* (Beirut, 1965).
- F. Adamiyat, *Bahrain Islands: A Legal and Diplomatic Study of the British-Iranian Controversy* (New York, 1955).
- C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, Vol. XI (Delhi, 1933).
- M.H. al-Baharna, *The Legal Status of the Arabian Gulf States* (Manchester University Press, 1968).
- C.D. Belgrave, *Personal Column* (London, 1960).
- J.H.D. Belgrave, *Welcome to Bahrain* (Bahrain, 1970).
- B.C. Busch, *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1894-1914* (University of California Press, 1967).
- *Britain, India and the Arabs, 1914-1921* (University of California Press, 1971).
- H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours* (London, 1956).
- A. Faroughy, *The Bahrain Islands 750-1951: A Contribution to the Study of Power Politics in the Persian Gulf: An Historical, Economic, and Geographical Survey* (New York, 1951).
- R.W. Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, Vol. I (Cambridge University Press, 1982).
- R. Hay, *The Persian Gulf States* (Washington, 1959).
- J.C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record 1535-1914*, 2 Volumes (Princeton University Press, 1956).
- J.B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1795-1880* (Oxford University Press, 1968).
- F.I. Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain* (University of Chicago Press, 1980).
- R. Kumar, *India and the Persian Gulf Region, 1858-1907: A Study in British Imperial Policy* (Bombay, 1965).
- E.M.H. Lloyd, *Food and Inflation in the Middle East, 1940-45* (Stanford University Press, 1956).
- J.G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, 'Omān and Central Arabia*. Calcutta, Vol. I, Historical (1915), Vol. II, Geographical and Statistical (1908).
- J. Marlowe, *The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1962).
- E.A. Nakhleh, *Bahrain: Political Development in a Modernizing Society* (U.S.A., 1976).
- J.B. Nugent and T.H. Thomas (eds) *Bahrain and the Gulf* (London, 1985).



## Bibliography

- A. Riḥānī, *Mulūk al-‘arab*, Vol. II (Beirut, 1951).  
‘Abdallah K. al-Shamlān, *Šinā‘at al-Ghawṣ*, ‘The Pearling Industry’ (No place or date of issue).  
G. Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia* (London, 1976).  
C. Tugendhat, *Oil the Biggest Business* (London, 1968).  
A. Villiers, *Sons of Sindbad* (London, 1940).  
H. Wahba, *Khamsūna ‘āman fī Jazīrat al-‘arab* (Cairo, 1960).  
T.E. Ward, *Negotiations for Oil Concessions in Bahrain, el-Hasa (Saudi Arabia), the Neutral Zone, Qatar and Kuwait* (New York, 1965).

## Special articles

- (Anonymous) ‘The Water Supply of Bahrein’, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Appendix I, Vol. LXXI (1928), p. 463.  
C.D. Belgrave, ‘Bahrain’, *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. XV, No. 4, 1928, pp. 440–5.  
———, ‘Pearl Diving in Bahrain’, *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. XXI, No. 3, July 1934, pp. 450–2.  
———, ‘The Portuguese in the Bahrain Islands’, *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. XXII, No. 4, 1935, pp. 617–30.  
J.H.D. Belgrave, ‘Oil and Bahrain’, *The World Today*, Vol. VII, 1951, pp. 76–83.  
———, ‘A Brief Survey of the History of the Bahrain Islands’, *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. XXXIX, 1952, pp. 57–68.  
T. Bent, ‘The Bahrain Islands in the Persian Gulf’, *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XCC, 1890, pp. 1–19.  
R. le Baron Bowen, ‘The Pearl Fisheries of the Persian Gulf’, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. V, 1951, pp. 161–80.  
R.M. Burrell, ‘Britain, Iran and the Persian Gulf: Some Aspects of the Situation in the 1920s and 1930s’, in D. Hopwood (ed.) *The Arabian Peninsula: Society and Politics*, London, 1972, pp. 160–88.  
R.M. Burrell and K. McLachlan, ‘The Political Geography of the Persian Gulf’, in A.J. Cottrell (ed.) *The Persian Gulf States*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, pp. 121–39.  
R. Hay, ‘The Impact of the Oil Industry on the Persian Gulf Shaikhdoms’, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1955, pp. 361–72.  
J.B. Kelly, ‘The Persian Claim to Bahrain’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 1957, pp. 51–70.  
M. Khadduri, ‘Iran’s Claim to the Sovereignty of Bahrain’, *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. XLV, No. 4, 1951, pp. 631–47.  
H.J. Liebesney, ‘British Jurisdiction in the States of the Persian Gulf’, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. III, 1949, pp. 330–2.  
A.J. Toynbee, ‘The Dispute between Persia and Great Britain over Bahrayn, 1927–34’, *Survey of International Affairs*, Part II, Section III, 1934, pp. 221–4.  
D. Wilson, ‘Memorandum Respecting the Pearl Fisheries in the Persian Gulf’, *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. III, 1833, pp. 283–6.

### *Bibliography*

- R. Bayly Winder, 'Education in al Bahrain', in J. Kritzeck and R.B. Winder (eds), *The World of Islam: Studies in honour of Philip K. Hitti*, London, 1959, pp. 283-335.
- M.E. Yapp, 'The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in A.J. Cottrell (ed.) *The Persian Gulf States*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, pp. 41-69.
- 'British Policy in the Persian Gulf', in A.J. Cottrell (ed.) *The Persian Gulf States*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980, pp. 70-100.

# Index

- Abdul Nour Sa'id 163  
 Adham, Faiq 139, 143, 145, 156  
 Akhbār, Al- 34  
 Alawi, Saiyed Adnan bin Saiyed 83  
     Saiyed Ahmad 138, 239-40  
 'Āli, village 43, 56-7, 88, 164  
 Āl-Jum'Ah, Mohammad Sa'id 138  
 Ālkhalfah, Shaikh Abdullah bin  
     Isa 2, 12, 16, 20, 26-32, 35, 37, 39, 43, 45, 59, 72, 77, 81, 83, 88, 96, 135, 139, 141-2, 144, 232, 239  
     Ali bin Khalid 67, 90  
     Hamad bin Isa 2, 5, 6, 8, 11-12, 20-1, 31-41, 45-6, 55-60, 62, 66-9, 71-2, 77, 79, 81, 83-4, 86-91, 93-4, 99, 118, 120, 138, 186, 191, 196-8, 221, 224-6, 230-3, 236, 239, 243, 248  
     Ibrahim bin Khalid 67, 69, 77, 90-1  
     Ibrahim bin Mohammad 166  
     Isa bin Ali 2-4, 8, 11-12, 20-34, 36, 39, 42, 45-6, 56, 58, 60, 62, 93, 170, 180, 190, 254  
     four requests to the Government 21  
     Government reply to the same 28  
     protest against the Agent 60, 64  
     Shaikh's Memorial to the Government 70  
     Shaikh's retirement 45-6  
     Khalid bin Ali 37, 57-8, 68-9, 76  
     Mohammad bin Abdullah 59  
     Mohammad bin Abdur Rahman 230  
     Mohammad bin Isa 2, 67, 190  
     Salman bin Hamad 11, 77, 88, 118, 166, 168, 199, 225-6, 229, 233-4, 239-40, 253  
     Salman bin Khalid 69, 90-1  
 Ālthani, Shaikh Abdullah bin Jasim 24  
 American Mission Boys School 137  
 American Mission Hospital 151, 175  
 American missionaries 27, 135  
 American University in Beirut 137, 139, 143, 146, 187  
 'Āmil 107, 112  
 Amir (of a town) 2, 25, 55, 226  
 APOC 169  
 Artesian wells 162  
 Awazi, Mohammad Sharif 17, 26, 31, 43  
 'Āzil 106, 107, 127  
 Baharnah  
     demands of February 1922 35-6  
     grievances of 1934 168, 229, 233-5  
     leadership 228  
     of Mohammarah 221  
     petition of December 1921 33  
     petitions of October 1923 60-1  
     Taqi Mohammad Al- 238  
 Bahrain broadcasting station 248  
 Bahrain newspaper 11, 150, 248  
 Bahrain Order-in-Council 4, 22-3, 25, 28, 108, 263  
 Bakir, Abdur Rahman Al- 238  
 Banyan, Seth Budha el- 26  
 BAPCO 171-3, 177-8, 190, 246, 253

## *Index*

- workers grievances 174
- Bārīḥ 122
- Barrett, Major C.C.J. 89, 99, 202
- Barwa 118-19, 121
- Belgrave, Sir Charles 11, 15, 76-7, 90-1, 96-7, 121, 130, 136-7, 139, 142, 144, 146-7, 150, 163-4, 175, 183, 186-7, 192, 198-202, 205, 221, 224, 229, 232, 235, 237, 239, 241, 247-9, 251-2, 270
  - Lady 137, 153
- Black, J.S. 175
- Bohra, Hafiz Khanbhai
  - Mohammad Ali 26
- Bower, G.N. 53, 56, 181-2
- Bray, Captain N.N.E. 20, 26-7
- Bray, Sir Denys 95
- British Council 13, 148, 153, 155
- British Overseas Airways Corporation 205
- Bruce, Captain 92
- Budayya' 39, 57, 84, 152, 165-6, 192
- Bushehri, Haji Abdul Nabi bin Ahmad 26
- Byard, Captain A.C. 165, 252
- Chirawi, Ahmad 241
  - Jasim Mohammad 20, 31-2, 62
- Civil List 6, 52-3, 136, 184, 186-9, 191-2, 195-7, 200, 202, 206
- Clarendon, Lord 92
- Clive, Sir R.H. 95
- Clubs 238
- Colonial Office 4, 170
- Congress of October 1923 61-2, 264
- Cotton growing 164
- Court, Shaikh Hamad's — The
  - Bahrain Court 16, 55, 61, 68-9, 79-80, 83, 98, 185, 225-6, 229, 233, 241, 245-6
  - Joint 16, 22, 26, 55
  - Political Agent's 55
- Salifah 2, 22-3, 36, 61, 71, 108, 110, 114-15, 117, 126-7
- Cox, Sir Percy 4, 45
- Cultured pearls 116, 123, 129, 266
- Curzon, Lord 93, 180
- Customs
  - contraband 182
  - duty 180-1
- Daly, Major C.K. 5, 16, 30-4, 38, 41, 58, 60, 62, 69, 71-2, 76, 79-81, 85, 89-91, 101, 114-15, 167, 181-2, 237
- Date-gardens, leasing of 163, 166-9
- Davies, F.A. 175
- Department of Education 139, 141, 145, 151, 153
- Dickson, Major H.R.P. 4, 16, 24-30
- Divers agitation of May 1932 120-1
- Diving Seasons 105
- Dösari, Abdullah bin Hasan
  - 25-6, 39
  - Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Hasan 57, 59-60, 62, 86
- Dòwàsir 3, 9, 25, 39-41, 43, 45, 56-7, 59-60, 65, 84-7, 94, 101, 263
- Eastern and General Syndicte Ltd 170-1
- Eastern Bank Ltd 53, 60, 180
- Eastern Gulf Oil Company 170-1
- Educational councils 144
- Egyptian teachers 155, 157
- Fadhil, Khalifa Al- 242
- Fakhroo, Yusuf 26, 60, 239, 240
- Fidawi 2, 3, 35, 69, 262
- Food Control Committee 252, 255
- Food Controller 252-3, 256
- Foreign Office 4, 5, 12, 15, 40-2, 44, 92, 10, 223, 265



## *Index*

- Fowle, Colonel T.C. 149
- Ghais 106
- Ghatam, Shaikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al- 77
- Government of India 4-5, 12, 15, 25, 34-5, 38-9, 41-2, 53, 56, 60, 78, 95, 100, 181, 189, 222, 236-7, 265
- Grenier, C.L.L. de 56, 98, 182, 250
- Gulf Oil Corporation 170
- Hajar, Abdul Aziz bin 228
- Hamar, A.Y. Al- 14
- Hasan, Shaikh Ali bin 240-1, 244
- Haworth, Colonel L.B.H. 86, 89, 92-5
- Henjam and Basidu 7, 268
- Hickinbotham, Major T. 201
- Hidayah school, Al- 16, 31, 135-6, 140
- Hilli, Shaikh Abdul Husain Al- 241
- Hirtzel, Sir Arthur 20
- Hirz, Shaikh Salman bin Ahmad Al- 54
- Holmes, Major Frank 170
- Husain Effendi 166
- Hutchings, G.E. 153-4
- Huwalah 3, 92
- Ibn Sa'ud 4, 5, 8, 12, 21, 23-4, 27, 29, 40-6, 57, 65, 84-5, 93, 96, 99, 170, 181
- Imperial Airways, route 7, 14, 219
- India Office Library and Records 9-11, 15
- Ja'far, Shaikh Ali bin 240-1, 244
- Jasim, Haji Salman bin 76
- Jinah, Mohammad Ali 70
- Jishi, Abd Ali Al- 231
- Hasan Jawad Al- 238
- Jodar, Shaikh Abdul Latif bin 83
- Kamal, Ibrahim Hasan 238, 242
- Kanoo, Y.A. 27-30, 60, 234, 240
- Khalaf, Saiyed Sa Id Saiyed 239
- Khamis, Haji Ahmad bin Ali 42, 61, 240
- Khammās 106, 121, 123, 127, 130
- Kharjieh 106
- Khums el Miḥmal 106
- Khuri, F.I. 12, 15-17
- Knox, Colonel S.G. 12, 43-6, 59, 84
- Lāḥej, Ahmad bin 39, 62, 66
- Land revenue 54
- Land Survey and Registration of Property 79-82
- League of Nations 7, 44, 219
- Levies 8, 69, 76, 79
- Lipp, M.H. 175
- Loch, Colonel G. 197
- Madani, Shaikh Mohammad Ali Al- 83
- Madhoub, Husain Al- 229
- Madrasah Al-Ja'Fariyāh, Al- 138, 233
- Madyan 107, 112-13, 130
- Mahmud, Shaikh Abdul Latif bin ash-Shaikh 83
- Majlis Al-Tijarah 231-3
- Majlis Al-'Urf 2, 21-3, 25-6, 28, 36, 117, 220, 227, 230
- Mallam, Captain G.L. 81, 114
- Manamah-Moharraq bridge 193, 195-6, 198, 201
- Manamah-Moharraq sea-road 186, 191-2
- Manamah municipality 16, 29-31, 42, 79, 234, 248, 255
- Manar, Al- 238
- Mātam 16, 230-1, 240
- Mehza, Shaikh Qasim Al- 54
- Merchants Advisory Committee 253, 255-6
- Mining lease 172
- Moayyad, Khalil 240
- Musa, Shaikh Ali bin Hasan Al- 83-4

## *Index*

- Musaqqam 105
- Najaf proclamation 219
- Najdi-Persian disturbances 43-4
- Nasr, Ahmad bin 228
- Nationality Law, Bahrain 223-5, 269
- Nòb 105
- 'Ojair 21, 29
- Parke, Captain L.S. 77, 251
- Pearling reforms 109-15
- Persian claim to Bahrain 4, 6, 219
- Persian Gulf Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence 6-7
- Persians in Bahrain 220
- Political Agency, Bahrain 4, 30
- Prideaux, Colonel F.B. 97-8
- Prior, Colonel C.G. 97-8
- Property Law, Bahrain 223-5, 269
- Qari, Shaikh Mohammad Al- 241
- Qubain, F.I. 13, 14
- Qusaibi, Abdul Aziz Al- 26, 43, 164
- Abdullah Al- 43, 45
- Raddah 105, 121
- Radif 106
- Rajab, Abdur Rasoul bin 228, 231
- Haji Abd Ali bin 25-6, 62, 91, 117
- Reza Shah 6, 251
- Rihani, Amin 11, 62
- Rumaihi, M.G. 12, 15, 62
- Sa'ad, Shaikh Abdul Latif bin ash-Shaikh Mohammad bin 83
- Salaf 106-7, 118, 120, 126, 130
- Salafieh 106-7, 123, 127-8, 130
- Saleh, Shaikh Abdullah bin Mohammad 83-4, 244
- Salman, Abdul Karim 232
- Saudi crude 173
- Seib 106
- Shamlan, Abdul Aziz Al- 238
- Sa'ad 241
- Snow, Dr R.H.B. 151
- Standard Oil Company of California 170-1, 195, 198
- Şubāh, Shaikh Homud bin 77
- Mohammad Bin 111, 186
- Syrian masters 140-1, 143, 156
- Tabbara, Sa'id 154
- Tajir, Ali Al- 238
- Haji Mohammad Ali bin Ahmad Al- 239
- Haji Mohsin bin Ahmad Al- 228, 230-2, 239
- Ṭarāz 105
- Texas Oil Company 172
- Tikamdas, Tika Gangaram 26
- Times of India, The 232
- Tisqām 106-7, 118-19, 126, 130
- TPC 169-70
- Trevor, Colonel A.P. 25, 27, 43, 60, 63
- 'Ulaiwat, Haji Abd Ali Al- 155-6
- 'Umran, Ahmad Al- 155-6
- 'Uraiyyedh, Ibrahim Al- 145, 232, 238
- Haji Mansour Al- 228, 231-2, 234, 240
- 'Usfour, Shaikh Khalaf bin Ahmad Al- 54, 227, 229-30, 244
- Shaikh Baqir Al- 241, 244
- Vallance, C.R.L. Adrian- 146-53, 157
- Wahbah, Hafiz 11, 31-2, 34, 59, 156
- Wakelin, F.J. 153
- Waqfs 82-4, 226
- schools 136, 143, 237
- Ward, T.E. 171-2
- Willey, K.M. 155

## *Index*

- Wilson, President Woodrow 27,  
30  
Winder, R.B. 14  
Yateem, Ali 170  
    Haji Ahmad Ali 25  
    Mohammad 170  
Youth Movement 243, 247  
Zād 105  
Zayani, Abdul Rahman az- 26,  
117, 240  
    Abdul Wahhab 62, 66, 70,  
76  
Zayed, Abdullah Al- 11, 248  
Zubarah 21, 28

ISBN 0-7099-5122-1

