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The Shiite Resistance Against the British Occupation in Iraq 1914-1921

Dashti, Eissa

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The Shiite Resistance Against the British Occupation in Iraq 1914-1921

Eissa Dashti

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Bangor University
School of History, Welsh History and Archaeology
2017

September 2017

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to those who have helped and supported me throughout the Ph.D. programme

My Supervisor:

Dr Peter Shapley

Declaration of Authorship

I, Eissa Dashti, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: Eissa Dashti

Date: 19.12.2017

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Note on the Transliteration System

In this paper, I follow the style of the *International Journal of the Middle East Studies* (IJMES), which is a well-known system that most Middle Eastern scholars adopt in conducting research that contains Arabic, Persian and Turkish words. In this thesis, I adopt only the Arabic system due to the sources used. However, I have removed the diacritics on the letters to simplify the text for the reader. This is particularly important as this thesis is a historical study, and these diacritics are not usually used nowadays by historians. Those letters and words that do not have a commonly accepted form in English have been transliterated according to their Arabic forms. Examples of a few Arabic letters and words that are used in this study are set out below:

‘ = ع	عطيه = ‘Aṭiya
’ = ء	الغطاء = al-Ghiṭā’
ṭ - Ṭ = ط	الطيطبائي = Ṭabāṭabā’ī
ṣ - Ṣ = ص	الأصفهاني = ‘Aṣfahānī
ḥ - Ḥ = ح	حسين = Ḥussein
’I = إ	إبراهيم = ‘Ibrāhīm
Ā = آ	آل فتله = Āl Fatla
ẓ = ظ	كاظم = Kāẓim
ḍ = ض	فياض = Al- Fayāḍ

It should be noted that I also converted all *hijri* dates (Arab calendar) on the Iraqi documents to the Gregorian calendar by using the following electronic website:
www. Islamicfinder.org

Abstract

The Shiite resistance against the British occupation of Iraq is an important event and a turning point in the modern history of Iraq. In order to understand it, there is a need for a thorough examination of the short-term changes that happened during this period. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to examine the role that the Shiite community played in resisting the British occupation of Iraq during the period 1914-1921. It also considers their contribution to the formation of the modern State of Iraq under the rule of Faisal b. Al-Sharīf Ḥussein. Further, it analyses the role of this resistance in the emergence of the signs of nation building. The hypothesis that this study is testing is the role that the supreme cleric in Najaf, as an individual or belonging to an organization, and his *fatwa* in 1914 played in supporting the Ottoman Empire. In addition, the study involves the examinations of complex factors and overlapping elements such as those reflected in the relationships between the major powers (Ottoman and British forces) and regional rulers as well as entities and individuals such as; Kha‘zal in Al-Muhammarah, Ibn Sa‘ūd in the Arabian peninsula, Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ in Kuwait, the tribes in the south of Iraq and the coalitions of tribes, the jihadi movements during the First World War in the south and middle of Iraq, the national movement and political parties in Baghdad.

This thesis is limited to studying the role of Shiites in the resistance of the British occupation of Iraq, and in the formation of modern Iraq in the period between 1914-1921. Limiting the exploration to this period and to the role of only the Shiites, which constituted about fifty-two percent of the Iraqi population in the period of the study, afforded the research a degree of specificity that allowed an in-depth exploration of a topic that has, hitherto, received little attention. Despite a fairly extensive and diverse literature that the study depended on, most of these sources lack analytical depth about the institutional and intellectual construction of *al-Marja‘iyya* (the Shiite religious authority). In particular, the latter is known to be limited to the religious and social aspects in the life of the followers, while it issued a *fatwa* on jihad addressed Muslims in general and non-Muslims living within the borders of the three *vilayets* to defend the land.

To enable the researcher and readers to garner a thorough understanding of all these complicated relationships makes it imperative to use a suitable approach. Therefore, the continuity and change concept is used to understand the Shiite resistance against the British. In addition, this thesis uses the transnational history approach. This approach allows for exploring the circulation process of the *fatwa(s)* from its original place of issuance to other areas in Iraq. It also helps identify how the spiritual thoughts moved and were dispatched to other areas in different provinces.

Although the period the study addresses may seem very short, it witnessed many changes that affected Iraq and the aforementioned major countries. By the outbreak of the First World War, Iraq had become an arena for warring forces and was involved in the war. The arrival of British troops in the Faw region on 6 November 1914 and their occupation of Basra in November 1914 began a causal chain of events and change, which affected Iraqi society. These events also led to the penetration of religious thought in the Iraqi society through *fatwas* issued by Shiite clerics in various parts of the country.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Studying the history of Iraq between 1914 and 1921 is of crucial importance since little attention has been paid to the British occupation of the country in 1914, and to the resistance movements to this occupation. According to Burke, the Shiite resistance against the British occupation of Iraq is an important event and a turning point in the modern history of Iraq.¹ By 1914 Iraq had become a land for belligerent forces, and as a result resistance movements emerged in Iraq against Britain.² This period also witnessed the fall of the Ottoman Empire in Iraq, which had existed for almost 600 years, and the formation of the modern state of Iraq in 1921.

This study addresses the Iraqi resistance against the British occupation of Iraq between 1914 and 1921; specifically the scope of this study is confined to the resistance undertaken by the Shiite community. This is mainly because while Iraq was socially diverse, including different religious, ethnic and political groups, the religious regime of the Shiites was able to confront the challenges that they had faced through their system, religious institutions, clans, tribes and the people's loyalty to the chief Shiite religious authority. The chief of the Shiite religious authority (*al-Marji'*) created an intellectual atmosphere and space for numerous intellectual groups, such as nationalists, and he encouraged them to work collectively against the British authorities. Likewise, the Shiites were linked to Iraqi society through ancestry, geography and other elements. As a consequence, many sects and groups from across Iraq agreed to face the British authorities under the leadership of a chief of the Shiite religious authority.

The significance of this topic lies in its contribution to extending existing knowledge, as there have been few studies that address the Shiite resistance. This is

¹ Burke, Peter, *The New Cambridge Modern History* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Vol. 13, p.1.

² In fact, the country witnessed major changes that had happened during this period. As Iraq was a battle field during the First World War between two international alliances, Britain and France on one side, and Germany with the Ottoman Empire on the other side. The British forces succeeded in taking control of Baghdad in 1917.

particularly because a majority of previous studies have focused on the Iraqi revolution in 1920, and have considered 30 June 1920 as the date that Iraqi resistance started in the al-Rumaitha region. Thus, this project is significant in that it seeks to document the history of Iraqi resistance, especially the Shiite resistance from 1914 to 1921 and what role this played in the formation of the modern state of Iraq. However, this issue has not been clarified previously, as it has not been addressed in any of the previous studies. Therefore, this project sheds light on the nation building of Iraq through the Shiite resistance. In this study, reliance is placed on both Arabic and English documents and the thesis provided new perspectives. This is an aspect where previous studies fell short because they relied on Arabic documents.

The introduction of this study reviews previous studies of Iraq, particularly those that deal with the resistance to British occupation in the period between 1914 and 1921. The thesis highlights their arguments about the events of this period and the theories that they deployed to analyse them. In addition, the methodology and theoretical framework of the present study are presented. Finally, the organization of the chapters of this study is outlined.

1.2. Contextual analysis

This section looks at how historians have approached the topic of Iraqi resistance in the period (1914-1921). In doing so, it first examines the opinions of historians who have argued that the nationalists in Baghdad led the Iraqi resistance.³ Secondly, it discusses the opinions of authors who argue that Iraqi resistance was a religious resistance under the leadership of clerics in the holy cities (Najaf, Karbala, Samarra and Kadhimain).⁴ It also analyses the views of those who believe that the

³ See, Ireland, Philip, *Iraq: A Study in Political Development* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1939); Antonius, George, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Florida, 2001); Atiyyah, Ghassan, *Iraq 1908-1921 A Political Study* (Beirut, 1973); Main, Ernest, *Iraq From Mandate to Independence* (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1935); Al-Bazzāz, ‘Abdu al-Rahmān, *Al-Iraq Min Al-’Ihtilāl Ilā al-’Istiqlāl*, (Baghdad, 1967); Hourani, Albert, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); Al-Bāzirkān, ‘Ali, *Al-Waqā’i ‘Al-Ḥaqīqiya Fī Al-Thawra Al-’Irāqiya (The True Facts In The Iraqi Revolution)*, (Baghdad, 1991); Jamīl, Wamīd, *Al-Juthūr Al-Siyāsiya Wa Al-Fikrya Wa Al-’Ijtimāiyya Lil Al-Ḥaraka Al-Qawmiya Fī Al-’Iraq (The Political, Intellectual and Social Roots of the Nationalist Movement in Iraq)*, (Beirut, 1983); Henry, Foster, *Making of Modern Iraq* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1972 (1935)).

⁴ See, Al-Nifīsī, ‘Abdullah, *Dawr Al-Shi‘a Fī Taṭawir Al-Iraq Al-Siyāsī Al-Ḥadīth (Shiites’ Role In The Development Of Modern Iraq’s Politics)*, (Kuwait, 1990); Al-Mafarijī, ‘Uday, *al-Najaf al-’Ashraf Wa Ḥaraka al-Tayār al-’Islāhī (Najaf And The Movement Of The Reformist Current)*, (Beirut, 2005); Mālik, Muḥammad, *Shī‘at Al-’Irāq Wa Binā’ Waṭan (The Shiites of Iraq and Build*

Iraqi resistance was a national resistance movement and that all segments of the Iraqi society participated in it.⁵ Finally, it looks at the opinions of those researchers who argue that the peasants led the Iraqi resistance, and, as will be seen, these researchers have tried to interpret the resistance through Marxist theory.⁶ However, this thesis argues that it was the clans and tribes, especially in the Middle Euphrates region, which led the resistance against the British.⁷

Ireland argued that the Iraqi officers who were working in the government of Damascus, and believed in nationalist ideas, led the resistance movement against the British between 1919 and 1920.⁸ He stated that the rule of the European countries in the Middle East was no longer acceptable after the First World War and that intellectuals in the Middle East had become believers in the theory of democracy. As a result, they believed that the people and nations of the region had a right to express their right to determine their own fate. Ireland maintained that this was the cause of the revolution in Egypt in 1919, the strikes that took place in India, the revolution in the countryside, the resistance to the Turks under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal Atatürk, and the Iraqi revolution in 1920. Adopting the same point of view, Philip argued that nationalists in Baghdad worked to co-opt the Shiite clergy and the tribes into their side before resisting the British. He further explained that they did this because they knew the extent of their power and influence within the Iraqi society.⁹ Therefore, the Shiite clerics in the holy cities believed in the nationalists' ideas and

The Country), (Karbala, 2012); Al-Ḥasanī, Salīm, *Dawr 'Ulmā' Al-Shī'a Fī Muwājahat Al-'Isti'mār (The Role of Shi'a Scholars Against the Colonization)*, (Damascus, 1994); Shubar, Ḥasan, *Al-Taḥaruk al-Islāmī 1900-1957 (Islamic Movement 1900-1957)*(Qum, 2010); 'Abbās, Al-'Imāmī, *Al-Dawr Al-Siyāsī Lil Marji'ya Al-Dīniya Fī Al-Iraq Al-Ḥadīth (The Political Role of Religious Authority in Modern Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2011); Nakash, Yitzhak, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014).

⁵ See, Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-'Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)*, (Beirut, 1982), (First published 1965); Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al-'Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969); 'Abdullah, Al-Fayāq, *Al-Tawrah al-'Irāqiya al-Kubrā (The Great Iraqi Revolution 1920)*, (Baghdad, 1975).

⁶ See, Kotlov, *The National Liberation Revolution in 1920 in Iraq* (Baghdad, 1971); Ahmad, Kamāl, *Thawrat Al-'Ishrīn Fī Al-'Istishrāq Al-Russī (Revolution of the Twentieth in the Russian Orientalism)*, (Baghdad, 1977); Kāzīm, Muzaḥfir, *Thawrat Al-'Iraq Al-Taḥaruriya 1920 (Iraq Libertarian Revolution)*, (Baghdad, 1969).

⁷ See, Mizhir, Fir'un, *Al-Ḥaqā'iq al-Nāsi'a Fī al-Thawra al-'Irāqiya 1920 Wa Natā'ijuhā (Spotless Facts in the Iraqi Revolution in 1920 and Its Results)* (Baghdad, 1952); Al-Yāsirī, 'Abd Al-Shahīd, *Al-Buṭūla Fī Thawrat Al-'Ishrīn (Heroism In The Twentieth Revolution)*, (Beirut, 2010); 'Abdu al-Zahra, Al-Fatlāwī, *'Ashiq al-Iraq 'Abd al-Wāḥid Sakar (Lover Of Iraq 'Abd al-Wāḥid Sakar)*, (Najaf, 2006).

⁸ See, Ireland, Philip.

⁹ Ibid.

were also aware that the nationalists were seeking to establish an Islamic state wherein clerics would have authority and power.¹⁰

However, the tribal leaders were involved in the resistance against the British for their own interests because the British authorities between 1917-1920 had imposed several measures upon them that reduced their standing within their communities. This, then, was their primary motive for resistance rather than it being a consequence of the issuing of religious *fatwas*, which were issued by Shiite clerics, or a desire to establish an Islamic state.¹¹

Atiyah also maintained that nationalists in Baghdad led the resistance movement against the British in Iraq between 1919 and 1920. He suggested that the Iraqi officers who had been educated in Constantinople during the reign of the Turks had been affected by ideas of Western thought. During the First World War, these officers had established the *Al-'Ahd* Party in Syria and Iraq and had worked to spread their ideas within Iraqi society. In doing so, they had succeeded in winning Shiite clerics in the holy cities over to their side after agreeing among themselves on the key points; these were the rejection of British occupation and the rejection of Britain's mandate and any other foreign interference in Iraq's affairs.¹² They led the Iraqi resistance against the British and demanded the full independence of Iraq.¹³

Al-Bazzāz claimed that the Iraqi resistance and the revolution, which was launched on 30 June 1920 in the Rumaitha area, was a nationalist resistance movement in which all Iraqi people participated.¹⁴ He believed that there was no contradiction between Islam and nationalism,¹⁵ a fact, according to his view; Islam is the main component of the Arab nationalism.¹⁶

Al-Bāzirkān asserted that nationalist parties in Baghdad, such as *Al-'Ahd* Party (Covenant Party) and *Jam'iyat Ḥaras Al-'Istiqlāl* (the Iraq Guards of Independence Association), played a major role in the resistance movement against the British in Iraq.¹⁷ Al-Bāzirkān pointed out that the *Al-'Ahd* party in Iraq and Syria was led by former Iraqi officers and *Jam'iyat Ḥaras Al-'Istiqlāl* in Baghdad. The latter planned

¹⁰ See, Antonius, George, pp.314-324.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² See, Atiyah, Ghassan.

¹³ See, Main, Ernest.

¹⁴ See, Al-Bazzāz, 'Abdu al-Raḥmān, *Al-Iraq Min Al-'Ihtilāl Ilā al-'Istiqlāl (Iraq From Occupation to Independence)*, (Baghdad, 1967).

¹⁵ See, Hourani, Albert.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ See, Al-Bāzirkān, 'Ali.

to carry out an armed revolution against the British. When the revolution began on 30 June 1920, they faced British troops in different areas of Iraq such as Diyala, Shahrbar, and Middle Euphrates region.¹⁸ It is important to note that al-Bāzirkān did not assign any importance to the role of the Middle Euphrates region or clerics in the holy cities in the resistance against the British.¹⁹

In the same vein, Wamīd suggested that the Iraqi resistance against the British occupation was an embryonic nationalist movement, which was led by those Iraqi officers who refused to join the movement of the Hejaz.²⁰ He believed that the Iraqi revolution was a nationalist revolution because all the factions involved in the revolution, raised slogans about full independence and Arab rule with the aspiration of Arab unity.²¹ In addition, during the revolution, newspapers expressing nationalist thoughts were published. These interacted with the nationalist movement in the Hejaz, Syria, and Egypt, and demanded the installation of an Arabic King. The newspapers also rejected all foreign candidates for the ruler of Iraq.²²

Wamīd considered that the nationalist movement was at its embryonic stage, for a number of reasons. First, the movement had been unable to form any united factions. Secondly, the movement had been unable to form a central authority to manage the leading factions of the revolution and the areas liberated from the British forces. Thirdly, some tribes had succeeded in freeing their areas from British forces, but did not fight the British forces outside the borders of their territory. Finally, the movement did not have unified leadership with a nationalist orientation.²³ On the other hand, Wamīd believed that the *fatwas*, which were issued by Shiite clerics in the holy cities, had no impact on the creation of the resistance movement against the British, as the revolution, which was launched on 30 June 1920, began before the issuance of the *fatwa* of the chief of the Shiite religious authority.²⁴ However, he stressed that the *Al-'Ahd* party and the *Jam'iyat Ḥaras Al-'Istiqlāl* played a significant role in the resistance and the leadership of the independence movement.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See, Al-Bāzirkān, 'Ali; Al-Bāzirkān, Ḥasan, *Min Ahdāth Baghdad and Diyala Athnā' Thawrat al-'Ishrīn Fī al-Iraq (From the Event of Baghdad and Diyala During the Twentieth Revolution in Iraq)*, (Baghdad, 1999).

²⁰ See, Jamīl, Wamīd.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Foster asserted that the events in Iraq during the period of the British occupation showed the triumph of new ideas announced by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. He noted that those who believed in these ideas were nationalist members of the *Al-‘Ahd* party and the *Jam‘iyat Ḥaras Al-‘Istiqlāl*.²⁵

Al-Nafīsī suggested that the Iraqi Shiites in the south led the resistance movement against the British. He explained that the cities of Kufa and Karbala were the two centres of success, where the issues of the Alawites had been important since the death of ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭālib in the year 41 AH. Following his death, the south of Iraq had become a permanent revolutionary centre during the reign of the Umayyad and Abbasid. After the twelfth Imam of the Shiites had entered his time of absence and suggested his later return, the Shiites in southern Iraq became a revolutionary group and refused to recognise any other authority.²⁶

It can be said that many reasons led the Shiites to become a revolutionary group. First, constant visits to the holy cities by the Shiites created harmony between them. Secondly, the Shiites refused to work in foreign or national governments, which lacked religious authority. Thirdly, obedience and loyalty to the religious authority of the Shiites in Najaf is different than the experience of the Sunnis of Iraq who are loyal to the authority of the state and work in government jobs and do not have religious leaders; it is the government that appoints the cleric and pays his salary.²⁷

Al-Ḥasanī,²⁸ and Shubar,²⁹ suggested that the Shiites in Iraq confronted the British invasion of the country and stood with the Ottoman Empire because of their belief that the empire represented operated within an Islamic framework. They thought that they had to support the Ottoman Empire to confront the western colonial powers that sought to control the Arab countries. The nationalists, however, sided with the British against the Ottoman Empire. Al-Ḥasanī and Shubar also explained that the interrelationship between the Shiite religious authority and the masses

²⁵ See, Henry, Foster.

²⁶ See, Al-Nifīsī, ‘Abdullah. (The twelfth Imam of the Shiites is Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan (Al-Mahdī) and he had entered his time of absence in 329 AH. The Shiite believes that al-Mahdī will return and will rule the world and he will fill the earth with justice and righteousness).

²⁷ See, Al-Nifīsī, ‘Abdullah; Al-Mafarījī, ‘Uday; Mālik, Muḥammad.

²⁸ See, Al-Ḥasanī, Salīm.

²⁹ See, Shubar, Ḥasan.

provided strength to the Shiite entity, which helped them face and address the challenges that they had faced.³⁰

Kotlov asserted that Iraqi resistance and the revolution were carried out by peasants against the British forces under the leadership of the clerics and tribal leaders.³¹ He also explained that the Iraqi revolution was based on the intellectual foundations of Marxism.³² He believed that the actions taken by the British after the occupation of Iraq in 1914, such as imposing taxes, reducing the ownership of farmland of farmers, enforcing mandatory business regulations, using force against the population and making other demands, were the main reasons for the launch of the peasant revolution under the leadership of clerics and tribal leaders to liberate Iraq and to gain independence.³³

Similarly, Muḏafar maintained that the Iraqi revolution was carried out by the Iraqi peasants against the British forces because of the arbitrary and repressive measures taken by the British in Iraq, which had negative consequences for the peasantry.³⁴ He also believed that the national bourgeoisie class, which led the revolution, was the cause of its failure, because they were not resolute in the struggle against colonialism. In his view, the religious leaders in the cities of Najaf and Karbala were only spiritual leaders, not capable of taking the military command of armies and directing military moves.³⁵

Fir‘ūn contended that the Iraqi tribes in the Middle Euphrates region played the major role in resisting the British.³⁶ The clans worked together to prepare for the Iraqi revolution, and when the revolution began, the clans fought against the British in different areas of Iraq.³⁷ The clans in the Middle Euphrates region received support in the holy cities from the Shiite clerics who issued *fatwas* calling for a holy war and resistance against the British.³⁸ On the other hand, Al-Ḥasanī, Al-Wardī and Al-Fayāḏ argued that the Iraqi resistance was a national resistance against the British

³⁰ See, ‘Abbās, Al-’Imāmī; Yitzhak, Nakash.

³¹ See, Kotlov.

³² Ibid.

³³ See, Ahmad, Kamāl.

³⁴ See, Kāẓim, Muḏafir.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ See, Mizhir, Fir‘ūn.

³⁷ See, Al-Yāsiri, ‘Abd Al-Shahīd.

³⁸ See, Mizhir, Fir‘ūn; ‘Abdu al-Zahra, Al-Fatlāwī.

occupation of Iraq.³⁹ Also, they asserted that all segments of the society, from nationalists and religious leaders to clans, participated in the resistance against the British.⁴⁰

Kadhim contends that the revolutionary character of the population of the Middle Euphrates region was caused by the emergence of Iraqi resistance against the British. He argues that the 'revolutionary theory' was the main driver for the resistance and that this came about because of the authoritarian rule of the British.⁴¹ In addition, Kadhim believes that the economic and national factors were not the reasons for the launch of resistance against the British. In his opinion, the clans simply responded to the economic pressures with resistance to get rid of this system and return to the previous system.⁴² He also observed that the supporters of the 'national theory' tried to prove the role of Baghdad, Mosul and Basra in the resistance, suggesting that the resistance was confined to these cities, where the citizens enjoyed the culture and education, unlike other areas of Iraq, where the level of education and culture was weaker comparatively.⁴³

From the above discussion, it becomes clear that there is a gap in the literature in dealing with the Shiite resistance and its role in confronting the British occupation of Iraq during the period 1914-1921. Therefore, the original contribution of this thesis is to address this gap by providing a thorough examination of this historical period that led Iraq to form its modern state.

1.3. Thesis Question

The aim of this thesis is to examine the role that the Shiite community played in resisting the British occupation of Iraq during the period 1914-1921. It also considers their contribution in the creation of the Iraqi State under the rule of Faisal b. Al-Sharīf Ḥussein. Therefore, the main question this thesis is asking is:

³⁹ See, Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al- 'Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)*, (Beirut, 1982); Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al- 'Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social from the Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005); 'Abdullah, Al-Fayād.

⁴⁰ See, Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al- 'Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)*, (Beirut, 1982) Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al- 'Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social from the Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005); 'Abdullah, Al-Fayād.

⁴¹ See, Abbs, Kadim, *Reclaiming Iraq: The 1920 Revolution and the Founding of Modern State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

- What was the role-played by the Shiite community in resisting the British occupation, and founding the modern state of Iraq between 1914 and 1921?

In order to answer this question, some sub-questions must be answered:

- What were the reasons for the British occupation of Iraq, and the role of Britain's allies in the Persian Gulf during the occupation of Iraq?
- How was the Shiite resistance against the British occupation of Iraq in 1914 established, and what was the role of Shiite clerics in encouraging the Iraqi people and the rulers of the neighbouring countries, to participate in this resistance?
- What were the main events of the resistance, and its nature and impact on the British occupation between 1914 -1917?
- Why did the second stage of the Shiite resistance (the Najaf revolution) spring up, and when did it begin? To answer this question, the thesis will explore the causes of the revolution and it will describe how *Jam'iyat al-Nahḍa al-'Islāmiya* (League of the Islamic Awakening) was established. It will also analyse its goals, principles and its role in the Najaf revolution.
- What were the reasons that led to the transformation of the armed resistance to be passive, and what were the passive methods carried out by the resistance against the British occupation, specifically, the role of Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī during the stage of passive resistance between 1918-1920?
- How was a coalition that included the nationalists in Baghdad, the Shiite clerics in the holy cities and the clans (especially in the Middle Euphrates region) established to resist the British despite their differences in ideology?
- How did the idea of appointing Faisal as a ruler of Iraq appear during the passive resistance?

Accordingly, this thesis discusses the causes of the Iraqi revolution and also explains the role of the coalition before and during this revolution. In addition, it deals with the effects of the Iraqi revolution on the British policy in Iraq, and Britain's future plans for Iraq and, its reasons for choosing Faisal as a ruler of Iraq. Meanwhile, it will show how Faisal b. al-Ḥussein sought to obtain support from the Shiite clerics for his appointment as a governor of Iraq. This study contributes to the Iraqi historical literature and fills the lacuna in existing scholarship on the Shiite resistance against the British occupation.

In order to achieve these aims, the primary sources that have been used in conducting this research are profoundly varied and numerous, especially those related to the Shiites, few of which have hitherto been consulted by academic researchers. Further, this project draws on an interdisciplinary background and makes use of historical, religious, sociological sources to understand the Shiite resistance. This research relies on primary and secondary sources in both Arabic and English.

This study has consulted the British government records, including the Indian Office Records (IOR) at the British Library and Foreign Office (FO), Colonial Office (CO), War Office (WO) and Cabinet Papers (CAB) at the National Archives in order to discover the documents that are related to Iraq as well as the Shiite of Iraq between 1914-1921. The most important sources are the *Iraq Administration Report 1914–1932* and the *Record of Iraq 1914–1966*. These are the main sources that provide detailed descriptions about Iraq because the British were the only power controlling it. These sources also include annual reports, secret reports, intelligence reports, police reports, confidential reports, administration reports, military operations and correspondence that describe and explain the internal political, social, religious, economic and tribal affairs of Iraq. This study analyses these documents and compare it with Iraqi documents. This allows us to look at the Shiite resistance and its role in nation building from a range of different angles.

Moreover, this study examined the books written by a number of British officials who were working in Iraq at that time. The most important of these books are the *Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia, Iraq Civil Commissioner*; *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*; *Loyalties of Mesopotamia 1917–1920*; *Mesopotamia 1917–1920*; *A Clash of Loyalties: Personal and Historical Record*; *Administration in the Making*; *Iraq 1900 to 1950: A Political and Economic History*; *Insurrection in Mesopotamia*; *Excursions in Arabia and Desert Hell*; and *The Britain Invasion of Mesopotamia*. They are the most important books because they show the different views of the politicians, military rulers and the commanders in Iraq with regards to the Shiite resistance. The books written by political rulers, such as Captain Mann and Bertram Thomas, focused on the events and situations that occurred in their areas through their personal perspectives. In addition, books written by politicians, such as Sir Arnold Wilson (a civil commissioner) and Gertrude Bell (a political officer),

describe the important events and British policy in Iraq through correspondence with the British government, India Office, Shiite clerics, tribal leaders and others. The books that were written by military commanders, such as Sir Aylmer Haldane, addressed issues pertaining to the battles between the British forces and the rebels in the Middle Euphrates region. It can be observed that the books written by British officials presented a different perspective about the Shiite resistance. Further, this study examined the British Newspapers Archive because they offered valuable information regarding the events of the British occupation of Iraq in 1914, the battles between the British and Turkish forces in different areas of Iraq, and the British policy in Iraq during 1914–1921.

In addition to the English sources, this study also used Arabic sources. These sources came, predominantly, from the Iraq National Library and Archive in Baghdad, and included, personal memoirs, Iraqi Newspapers and five volumes of documents that were collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī. Some of these documents have not been discussed before in academic research; therefore, a new story related to the Shiite resistance against the 1914–1921 British occupation, from various perspectives, which are unavailable in the British sources, is revealed within this thesis.

1.4. Methodology

In order to answer the thesis question, this thesis will use the transnational history approach. As Hofmeyr explains ‘the key claim of any transnational approach is its central concern with movements, flows, and circulation, not simply as a theme or motif but as an analytic set of methods which defines the endeavor itself’.⁴⁴ Thus, it can be said that central to transnational history approach is the movement of people, ideas, and goods across national boundaries. The importance of this approach to this study is that it allows one to explore the circulation process of a *fatwa* from its original place of issuance to other areas in Iraq. It also helps identify how the spiritual thoughts moved and were dispatched to other areas in different provinces. In particular, the hypothesis that this study is testing concerns the role that the supreme cleric in Najaf, as an individual or belonging to an organization, and his *fatwa* in

⁴⁴ Bayly C. A., et al., *AHR Conversation: On Transnational History*, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 111, No. 5 (December 2006), p.1444.

1914 played in supporting the Ottoman Empire. In addition, the study involves the examinations of complex factors and overlapping elements such as those reflected in the relationships between the big powers (Ottoman and British forces) and regional rulers as well as entities and individuals such as; Kha‘zal in Al-Muhammarah, Ibn Sa‘ūd in the Arabian peninsula, Mubārak Al-Şabāḥ in Kuwait, the tribes in the south of Iraq and the coalitions of tribes, the jihadi movements during the First World War in the south and middle of Iraq, the national movement, and the political parties in Baghdad. Thus, enabling an understanding of all these complicated relationships makes it imperative to use a suitable approach. Indeed, as explained by Beckert, transnational history ‘focuses on uncovering connections across particular political units’.⁴⁵ Besides, this approach helps illustrate the major role played by some individuals (such as clerics *Marja‘* in Iraq) or groups (such as the tribes in their societies or cross the Iraqi provinces) along with the national movements in forming the national identity of Iraq since the issuance of the *fatwa*, in 1914, and thereafter during the war and the end of the 1920 when the British mandate was decreed.

In addition, the Shiite resistance against the British occupation of Iraq is an important event and a turning point in the modern history of Iraq.⁴⁶ A thorough examination of the short-term changes that happened during this period is required.⁴⁷ Therefore, the continuity and change concept is used to understand the Shiite resistance against the British. This concept sheds light on the causes and stages of the resistance and the transition from armed to passive resistance. According to Gerschenkron, continuity, understood in terms of causal chains, means more than the existence of any complex events at any given time, in fact it should be conceived as occasioned by events preceding it in time.⁴⁸

Finally, historical materialism theory views the history of all societies as the history of struggles among classes in permanent opposition and seeking position over

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.1454.

⁴⁶ Burke, Peter, *The New Cambridge Modern History* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Vol. 13, p.1.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Gerschenkron, Alexander, *On the Concept of Continuity in History*, Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 106, No. 3 (Jun. 29, 1962), pp.195-209, 205. (This connection between historical events is inherent in the very concept of historiography. Without it, history and the historian’s task have no meaning).

the others.⁴⁹ Historical materialism sees the production of goods to meet material needs as the basis for evolution driven by class struggle.⁵⁰ Marx believed that a sudden change in the evolution of society, or what we call a revolution, consists of both gradual quantitative change and the simultaneous rapid disappearance of old political, economic, and social situations and emergence of new situations.⁵¹ According to Marx, society should be organised on a constitutional basis as a true community, or as the common essence serving the general.⁵² This normative view of the state can be achieved only by eliminating the differences between civil society and the state or between private and general interests.⁵³ This theory might be applicable to Iraqi society during the period studied. According to Hanna Batatu, Iraqi society consists of various classes, such as clerics, intellectuals, clan and tribe heads, landowners, peasants and ordinary people, and there was a long period of struggle among these classes under Ottoman rule.⁵⁴ The *fatwas* issued by the Shiite clerics managed to penetrate the various classes and unite them in a common essence and general interest; that is the independence of Iraq. These classes established a coalition under the leadership of Shiite religious authority to face the British. This coalition led the revolution that began on June 30, 1920 in al-Rumaiha area against the British.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, nationalism was founded as a doctrine in Europe;⁵⁵ it saw the sovereign state as the highest form of organized activity.⁵⁶ There are many theories and manifestations of this doctrine, including

⁴⁹ Khlīl, ‘Imād Al-Dīn, *Al-Tafsīr al-‘Islāmī Liltārīkh (Islamic Interpretation of History)*, (Beirut, 1991), p.42.

⁵⁰ ‘Uthmān, Muḥammad, *Al-Tārīkh al-‘Islāmī Wa al-Mathhab al-Mādī Fī al-Tafsīr (Islamic History and Doctrine in the Materialist Interpretation)*, (Kuwait, 1969), pp.17-18.

⁵¹ Al-Shīkh, Ra’fāt, *Falsafat Al-Tārīkh (Philosophy of History)*, (Cairo, 1988), p.162.

⁵² Marx, Karl, *Selected Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.47.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.73.

⁵⁴ See, Batatu, Hanna, *The Old Classes and the Revolutionary Movement of Iraq* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978).

⁵⁵ Kedourie, Elie, *Nationalism* (London, 1994), p.56.

⁵⁶ Hutchinson, John, Smith, Anthony, *Nationalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.162.

civic,⁵⁷ ethnic,⁵⁸ anti-colonial,⁵⁹ romantic,⁶⁰ territorial,⁶¹ authoritarian,⁶² and linguistic nationalisms.⁶³ Typically, nationalist movements combine some or all of these elements to varying degrees. In Iraq, in particular, several of these elements of nationalism influenced national identity and nation-building, including language, ethnicity, religion, tribal identity, and anti-colonialism.

First, language, which is not simply the arrangement of lexical items to talk, but a reflection of hidden experiences, was central to Iraqi nationalism.⁶⁴ Language is not only a vehicle for proposition; it is the outer expression of an inner, the outcome of particular history, the legacy of a distinctive tradition.⁶⁵ The world is a world of variations in which language became the link that highlights these variations of human nations and allows any group of people who share the same language to establish a nation on their own. This nation proceeds to form a state.⁶⁶ In Iraq before the British occupation, seventy-five to eighty percent of the population consisted of native speakers of Arabic. So, the Arabic language contributed to identity formation and nation-building in Iraq.⁶⁷

The second factor in Iraqi nation-building was ethnicity, the formation of a group that shares a common of heritage, faith, ancestry, culture, language or other

⁵⁷ See, Kohn, Hans, *Prelude to Nation State: The French and German Experience* (New Jersey: Princeton, 1957).

⁵⁸ See, Smith, Anthony D, *The Ethnic Origin of Nation* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1986); Roshwald, Aviel, *Ethnic Nationalism and the fall of Empires: Central Europe, the Middle East and Russia, 1914-1923* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Denith, Bogdan *Ethnic Nationalism: Tragic Death of Yugoslavia* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 1996).

⁵⁹ See, Humphreys, R.A, Lynch, Johan, *The Origin of the Latin American Revolution 1808-1826* (New York: Knopf, 1965) and Rotberg, Robert, Ali, Mazrui, *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) and Howard, Michael, *War in Europe History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) and Breuilly, John, *Nationalism And the State* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982).

⁶⁰ See, Bilenky, Serhiy, *Romantic Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian Political Imaginations* (California: Stanford University Press, 2012).

⁶¹ See, Béland, Daniel, *Nationalism and Social Policy: The Politics of Territorial Solidarity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); White, George W, *Nationalism and territory* (Lanham: MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

⁶² See, Smith, Anthony D, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: M. Robertson, 1979); Hobsbawm, Eric. J, *Nation and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁶³ See, Barbour, Stephen, Carmichael, Cathie, *Language and Nationalism in Europe* by Stephen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Devotta, Neil, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

⁶⁴ Kedourie, Elie, *Nationalism* (London, 1994), p.56.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.58.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.62.

⁶⁷ Eppel, Michael, *The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the Growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958*, International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 30, No. 2 (May, 1998), pp. 227- 250, p.235.

similarities.⁶⁸ According to the modern doctrine of nationalism, an ethnic group has the right to self-determination and the establishment of a sovereign state.⁶⁹ Therefore, ethnicity contributed to identity formation and nation-building in the Iraqi society because the majority of the population in Iraq is Arabs.⁷⁰

Religion was also crucial to Iraqi nationalism. The historiography shows that, over the course of centuries, religion has been incorporated into Iraqi nationalist ideology, which stresses common faiths and loyalty.⁷¹ For example, Muḥammad is considered not just the Seal of the Prophets, but also the founder of the Arab nation.⁷² In Iraq, where the majority of the population is Muslim, Islam has been incorporated into both nationalist ideology and Iraqi identity.⁷³

Related to these factors is the common traits shared among Iraqi tribes: Iraq is a tribal society, which has more rural residents than urban residents.⁷⁴ Commonalities between tribes such as brotherhood, unity, defense of the oppressed and others have played a role in supporting the emergence of the Iraqi identity.

Finally, anti-colonialism has been crucial for the formation of Iraqi identity and the nation's formation: when British forces occupied Iraq in 1914, anti-colonialist sentiment emerged among Iraqi people as a response. This sentiment increased when the British authorities refused to implement the demands of the Iraqi people for full independence of Iraq in 1918. So, Iraqi people from different sects and parties decided to revolt against the British authorities in a struggle for independence. Thus, anti-colonialism was central to the formation of modern Iraq.

These factors all contributed to the emergence of nationalism in Iraq at the beginning of the twentieth century, which was crucial to the subsequent formation of a national identity and nation-state.

⁶⁸ Muller, Jerry Z, *Us and Them: The Enduring Power of Ethnic Nationalism* (Foreign Affairs, Vol. 87, No. 2 (Mar. - Apr., 2008), pp.18-35, p.20.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.34.

⁷⁰ Wamīd, Nazmī, p.35.

⁷¹ Kedourie, Elie, *Nationalism* (London, 1994), p.71.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.70.

⁷³ Parfit, Joseph Thomas, p.15.

⁷⁴ Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Dirāsa Fī Ṭabī'at al-Mujtam' al-Irāqī* (*Study in the Nature of Iraqi Society*), (Baghdad, 1965), pp.118-119.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This thesis is limited to studying the role of Shiites in the resistance of the British occupation of Iraq, and in the formation of modern Iraq in the period between 1914 and 1921. Limiting the exploration to this period and to the role of Shiites, which constituted about fifty-two percent of the Iraqi population in the period of the study, afford the research a degree of specificity that allowed an in-depth exploration of a topic that has previously received little academic attention. Despite a fairly extensive and diverse literature which the study depended on, most of these sources lacked analytical depth about the institutional and intellectual construction of *al-Marja'iyya* (the Shiite religious authority), especially since the latter is known to be limited to the religious and social aspects in the life of the followers, while it issued a *fatwa* on jihad addressed Muslims in general and non-Muslims living within the borders of the three *vilayets* to defend the land. Indeed, no single study exists which adequately addresses the institutional role of *al-Marja'iyya*, and its intellectual construction.

Although the period which this study addresses may seem very short, it witnessed many changes that affected Iraq and major countries. The First World War prompted the formation of international alliances, such as those between Germany and the Ottoman Empire and between France and Britain, and the withdrawal of Russia from the First World War, which influenced Iraq and international relations. In addition, Iraq became an arena for warring forces and was involved in the war. The arrival of British troops in the Faw region on 6 November 1914 and their occupation of Basra in November 1914 began a causal chain of events and change which affected the Iraqi society in general and the holy cities (Najaf, Karbala, Samarra, Kadhimain) in particular.⁷⁵ These events also led to the penetration of religious thought in Iraqi society through *fatwas* issued by Shiite clerics in various parts of the country. Consequently, the first stages of the Shiite resistance in Iraq emerged, including the first and second jihad movements against the British forces under the leadership of Shiite religious authorities from 1914 to 1917.

After the success of the British forces in occupying Baghdad and the withdrawal of Ottoman forces, the British initiated several political and military reforms in the Middle Euphrates region, especially in the cities of Karbala and Najaf.

⁷⁵ Gerschenkron, Alexander, p.205.

Ultimately, news began to leak to the Iraqis about the intention of the British to rule and administer Iraq. In addition, the rise of the Bolsheviks to power in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the leaking of secret treaties among allies – including the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which was signed between Britain and France to divide the Arab countries, had a significant impact on Iraqis and Arabs. Therefore, change had come, and these changes affected the population of the Middle Euphrates region and led to the emergence of the second stage of Shiite resistance by the League of the Islamic Awakening, which led to the Najaf revolution in 1918 against the British.

After British authorities refused to implement the demands of the nationalists in Iraq in 1918, the members of *al-‘Ahd* party (Covenant party) decided to participate in the resistance against Britain and demanded the appointment of one of the sons of Sharīf Ḥussein as the ruler of Iraq. In response, the British authorities arrested a number of *al-‘Ahd* party members.⁷⁶ As a result, a group of intellectuals in Baghdad decided to secede from the *al-‘Ahd* Party and founded the *Jam‘iyat Ḥaras Al-‘Istiqlāl* (the Iraq Guards of Independence Association) in 1919. Building on earlier anti-colonial demands, the Iraq Guards of Independence Association called for the independence of Iraq and the appointment of one of the sons of Sharīf Ḥussein as a ruler of Iraq.⁷⁷

Clerics and tribal leaders also joined this demand; they demanded a Muslim ruler for Iraq and they chose a son of al-Sharīf Ḥussein as the ruler of Iraq. This fostered consensual religious thought for the first time. The most important characteristic of this thought was that the ruler should be a Muslim. This consensual religious thought differed from theocratic religious thought, which adopted the concepts of a Caliphate and an Imamate in power. Those concepts represented the cause of the upper class in the state, which had been adopted by Shiites in the past. After the demand for a Muslim ruler, the religious authority of the Shiite implemented a system with the outlines of Islamic law (*Sharia*). The system was not literally as stated in Islamic law.

However, they chose one of the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein for many reasons. First, the family had a lineage, which went back to the Prophet Muḥammad, and this

⁷⁶ Alawī, Hādī, *Al-‘Aḥzāb Al-Siyāsiya Fī Al-Iraq Al-Siriya Wa Al-‘Alaniya (Iraq's Political Parties A Secret And Overt)*, (Beirut, 2001), pp.41-44.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.47- 49.

was consistent with the inclinations of the Shiite sect. Secondly, the family of Sharīf Hussein had played a significant role in supporting Arab issues. Thirdly, this appointment would implement the Islamic principle of warding off evil and bringing benefits to society. Finally, there were few other qualified options for who would take power in Iraq.

This matter led to the uniting of the Shiites in the holy cities, the tribes in the Middle Euphrates and nationalists in Baghdad in a common essence and general interest: the independence of Iraq and a determination to resist Western colonial invasion. Thus, they established a coalition and this coalition led the passive resistance between 1918-1920, and the revolution that began on June 30, 1920 in al-Rumaiṭha area against the British.

1.6. Thesis Outline

This thesis comprises of seven chapters. This first chapter is an introductory chapter, which identifies the research problem, the aims of the research, and considers the background information of the subject researched. It also provides the thesis statement and methodology adopted.

The second chapter addresses Iraq before the British occupation, focusing on the making of the Iraqi Shiite society in the early twentieth century. Section two explores the reformist movements, which emerged in Iraq at the end of the nineteenth century and were characterised by Arabian nationalism character. It also addresses the rapprochement between the reformist movements and some intellectuals and clerics of the Shiite community in Iraq. In this context, it is important to shed light on the external factors that contributed to the composition of the thoughts and objectives of the reformist movement in Iraq such as the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911, the Ottoman coup of 1908–1909 and the Russian aggression against Iran in 1911.

The third chapter presents an extensive discussion of the first and second jihad movements against the British between 1914-1917. The chapter elaborates on the role of Shiite clerics in the declaration of jihad against the British forces in the cities of Najaf, Karbala, Kadhimain, Samarra and Baghdad in 1914, and the role of Shiite clerics in the induction of tribes in various regions of Iraq. It also describes the rulers of the neighbouring countries that participated in the jihad movements against the

British forces. It concludes by assessing the results of the first and second jihad movements, and the impact of the withdrawal of the mujahedeen from the jihad movement, while looking at its success and failure in achieving its objectives.

Chapter Four looks at the revolution of the holy city of Najaf against the British in 1918. It starts with providing a historical background of Najaf, noting the importance of Najaf in political and religious terms. Thereafter it illustrates the impact of British policy in the Middle Euphrates region, especially in Najaf and Karbala and neighbouring villages after the fall of Baghdad and the effect on Iraq's people. Having discussed such issues, it looks at the establishment of the *Jam'iyat al-Nahḍa al-'Islāmiya* (League of the Islamic Awakening) by a group of clerics in Najaf to resist the British. In doing so, it draws attention towards how this group started to plan a revolution against the British. Lastly, it examines the assassination of Captain Marshall by the League of the Islamic Awakening and the events of the Najaf revolution.

Chapter Five sheds light on the change in approach of the resistance and the use of passive resistance against the British between 1918 and 1920. While it considers the referendum, which was held by the British to seek the Iraqi people's opinion on the continuation of the British administration in Iraq, it illustrates the beginning of the first stage of resistance. Having done so, it looks at the second stage of passive resistance, in which the issue of independence was raised at the regional and international levels. The chapter also deals with the third stage of passive resistance, which included holding meetings, distributing pamphlets, giving fiery speeches and conducting peaceful demonstrations. Chapter Five concludes by discussing the creation of a coalition-that included nationalists in Baghdad, Shiite clerics and the leaders of clans of Middle Euphrates region in order to confront the British authorities through armed revolution.

Chapter Six traces the various events that led to the Iraqi Revolution and appointment of Faisal b. al-Sharīf Ḥussein as the ruler of Iraq between 1920 and 1921. It discusses the causes of the Iraqi Revolution and investigates the propaganda used by the Syrians, Turks and Bolsheviks against the British and its impact on Iraq. Focusing on the Iraqi Revolution, it explores the role of the nationalist, religious and tribal coalition under the leadership of the highest religious Shiite authority in Iraq. This includes elements of the media, clan representatives and leaders, and financial measures taken to support the revolution. The chapter also analyses the negotiations

between the coalition and the British, and how these affected the course of the revolution. Finally, it reveals the appointment of Faisal b. al-Ḥussein as the ruler of Iraq and his quest to get the support of the Shiite clerics in particular, and the Shiites of Iraq in general.

Chapter Seven is the conclusions of the study. It answers the research question and provides a summary of the findings of the study.

Chapter Two

The Shiites of Iraq before the British Occupation

Although this work has selected a limited time frame for the analysis of the role of Shiite in the resistance against the British occupation and remains focused on the period from 1914 to 1921, the historical developments associated with the formation of modern Iraq, including political and social need to be examined. As such, Chapter Two is dedicated to the study of Iraq before the British occupation, focusing on the making of Iraqi Shiite society. It provides a general background to historical developments, covering the social and political aspects of Iraq when the three *vilayets*- Mosul, Baghdad and Basra- were governed by the Ottoman Empire until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section One illustrates the nature of Iraqi society before the British occupation focusing on the making of Iraqi Shiite society (tribes, sects and ethnic groups). Section Two provides a brief description of Shiite holy cities in Iraq in this period. This is important not only because these cities, especially Najafi, played a leading role in the resistance against the British occupation, but also to understand the social and political life in this period. Section Three looks at the reasons for the appearance of the reformist and nationalist movements in Iraq including the external factors that contributed to the appearance of these movements.

2.1. Iraqi Society Before the First World War

Iraq is composed of relatively discrete areas of ethnic and religious diversification. Various sects, ethnic groups, and tribes have settled in different parts of the country from Duhok in the north, to Basra in the south. It is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country with Islam, Christianity, Yazdanism, Judaism, Baha'i, and

other religions being found within its borders.⁷⁸ Iraqi Muslims follow two distinct traditions: Shi‘ism and Sunnism.

There are no accurate statistics showing figures for Iraq's population, the percentage of sects, or their places of settlement before the statistic conducted by the British authorities in 1920.⁷⁹ This census showed that the percentage of Sunni Muslims in Iraq was 41%, and that most of this sect settled in the provinces of Dulaim, Mosul, Sulaymaniyah, Baghdad, Anbar, Kirkuk and Erbil.⁸⁰ Some of the Arab Sunnis had been educated in Ottoman schools and worked in the Ottoman army or government. On the other hand, the 1920 census showed that two percent of the population of Iraq was Christians, mainly living in Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra.⁸¹ Christians of Mosul lived in rural communities, and they had their own schools and received an advanced education compared to that offered to their peers within the Ottoman schools. Finally, three per cent of Iraqis were Jews, according to the 1920 census. They tended to settle in Baghdad and Mosul. The Jews had influence and power because of their financial situation and education, which they obtained in their own schools or from Europe. In contrast, the percentage of followers of all other religions such as the Sabians, Mandaeans, Yazidis and Shabak was one-and-a-half percent, and most of these sects settled in Mosul and Baghdad.

However, it is important to mention that Iraq, like other Middle Eastern countries today, could not be found on a map before World War 1. Of course, the land and the people were there, but the name ‘Iraq’ was not used a hundred years ago.⁸² The region we now know as Iraq was part of the Ottoman Empire, which took the territory of Iraq in about A.D. 1500. While the Ottoman forces occupied Baghdad in 1534 during the rule of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent,⁸³ but during the years 1749–1831, Iraq was ruled by the Mamluk dynasty.⁸⁴ The latter succeeded in

⁷⁸ See, Cecil J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs: Political, Travel and Research in North Eastern Iraq 1919-1925* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957).

⁷⁹ Parfit, Joseph Thomas, p.15.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Heather, Lehr Wagner, *Creation of the Middle East, Iraq* (Second Edition, Infobase Publishing, 2009), p.1.26.

⁸³ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Qum, 1992), Vol. 1, p.53.

⁸⁴ The rule of Mamluk in Iraq began in 1749 under Suleiman Basha, and the final ruler of Mamluk in Iraq was Dawūd Bāshā, who had been isolated by the Ottomans. See, Longrigg, Stephen, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), chapter Vii; Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social from the Modern History of Iraq* (Qum, 1992), Vol. 1, p.149.

obtaining autonomy from the Ottoman Porte.⁸⁵ The Ottomans managed to overthrow the Mamluk regime and impose direct control over Iraq,⁸⁶ until the British troops occupied Baghdad in 1917.⁸⁷ The three provinces sketched from the former Ottoman Empire (Baghdad, Basra and Mosul) became the Kingdom of Iraq in 1921.

Since the subject of this thesis is Shiite resistance against the British occupation between 1914-1921, this section focuses on the Iraqi Shiite's society in the 20th century, specifically the period before the British occupation of the country.

2.2. The Tribes and Beginnings of the Modern State in Iraq

Al-Naqīb argues that the process of creating a collective identity in Arab history falls under four categories: tribal and ethnic origin, religion and sect, profession, and finally locality (region, neighbourhood).⁸⁸ Throughout Arabian history, the tribe has constituted an essential unit of society. Indeed, the existence and strong presence of tribes mandated their participation in the political life of modern Iraq. It has been argued that the ruling Sherifian elite and tribal sheiks were the major forces that influenced royalist Iraq.⁸⁹ This section will focus on Shiite tribes in the making of modern Iraq.

According to the 1867 census, Iraq's population had reached 1,200,000,⁹⁰ and nomadic and rural tribes constituted 76% of the country's population. The population of Iraq was divided into three social categories: the nomadic tribes, the rural tribes, and the urban population the latter only accounted for 24% of the population.⁹¹ It can be said that most Iraqis identified strongly with a tribe. Below the tribe, there was the clan. Each clan was headed by a prominent member of the clan and assisted by a clan council to resolve any problems encountered by the clan. There was also a judicial

⁸⁵ Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al- 'Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Qum, 1992), Vol. 1, p.149.

⁸⁶ Al-Bazzāz, 'Abdu al-Raḥmān, *Al- 'Iraq Min 'Iḥtilāl Ilā al- 'Istiqlāl 1917-1932 (Iraq from Occupation to Independence)*, (Baghdad, 1967), p.26.

⁸⁷ IOR/L/PS/18/B273 "Middle East Committee. Mesopotamia: British Engagements as to Future Status", p.131.

⁸⁸ Khaldūn Al-Naqīb, *Fī Al-Bad' Kān Al-Sirā': Jadal Al-Dīn, Al- 'Ithniya, Al- 'Uma Wa Al-Ṭabaqa 'Ind Al- 'Arab (In the Beginning was the Conflict; The Dialectic of Religion, Ethnicity, Nation and Class Among Arabs)*, (London, Dar al-Saqi, 1997), p.415.

⁸⁹ Alheis, Abdulaziz, *The Tribe and Democracy: The Case of Monarchist Iraq 1921-1958* (Arab Centre for Research and policy Studies, Doha, 2011), p.5.

⁹⁰ Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Dirāsa Fī Ṭabī'at al-Mujtam' al-Iraqī (Study in the Nature of Iraqi Society)*, (Baghdad, 1965), p.118.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.118-119.

council to resolve disputes that occurred between individual members of the clan.⁹² Tribes were grouped into federations (*Qabīla*).

Nomadic tribes made up thirty-five percent of Iraq's population. Al-Wardī, in explaining the increasing number and influence of Bedouin tribes, describes Iraq as a "Mecca" for those tribes that migrated from the Arabian Peninsula.⁹³ Bedouins inhabited the desert in the western and south-western part of Iraq. The largest Bedouin tribes were Shammer and 'Aniza.⁹⁴ Indeed, Shammer was mentioned in pre-Islamic Arabia. Some of the 'Aniza clans were semi-nomadic. In economic terms, the Bedouin tribes were dependent on livestock breeding and the invasion of other tribes.⁹⁵

Rural tribes accounted for forty-one percent of Iraq's population. Numerous villages are scattered on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris, and these villages contain a large agricultural population. These tribes were dependent on agriculture and their alliances with the Ottoman authorities. These alliances led to the establishment of tribal unions.⁹⁶ The Muntafiq was one of the most powerful tribal unions composing of three tribal divisions: Banī Mālik, Ajwad and Banī Said, which settled in the southern part of Iraq from Kufa to Samawa.⁹⁷ Al-Khazā'il occupied the Middle Euphrates from Samawa to Msayab. Āl-Fatla had its tents around the Al-Mishkhab and Al-Shamiyah Rivers, and the region around Al-Hindiya.⁹⁸ Banī Ḥakīm lived mainly in Rumaitha and Samawa.⁹⁹ In addition, the Banī Ḥasan clans were in the area between Karbala and Kufa. The union of Al-Zubayid, which included the clans of Bū Sultān, Al-Ma'amrah, and Al-Jūhiya, ranged on both sides of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The ruling sections of Al-Zubaid had lordship over shepherd and peasant-tribesman.¹⁰⁰

⁹² Nazmī, Wamīd, p.38.

⁹³ Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Dirāsa Fī Ṭabī'at al-Mujtam' al-Irāqī (Study in the Nature of Iraqi Society)*, (Dar Al-Warq, London, 1998), p.117.

⁹⁴ Nazmī, Wamīd, p.36.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.37.

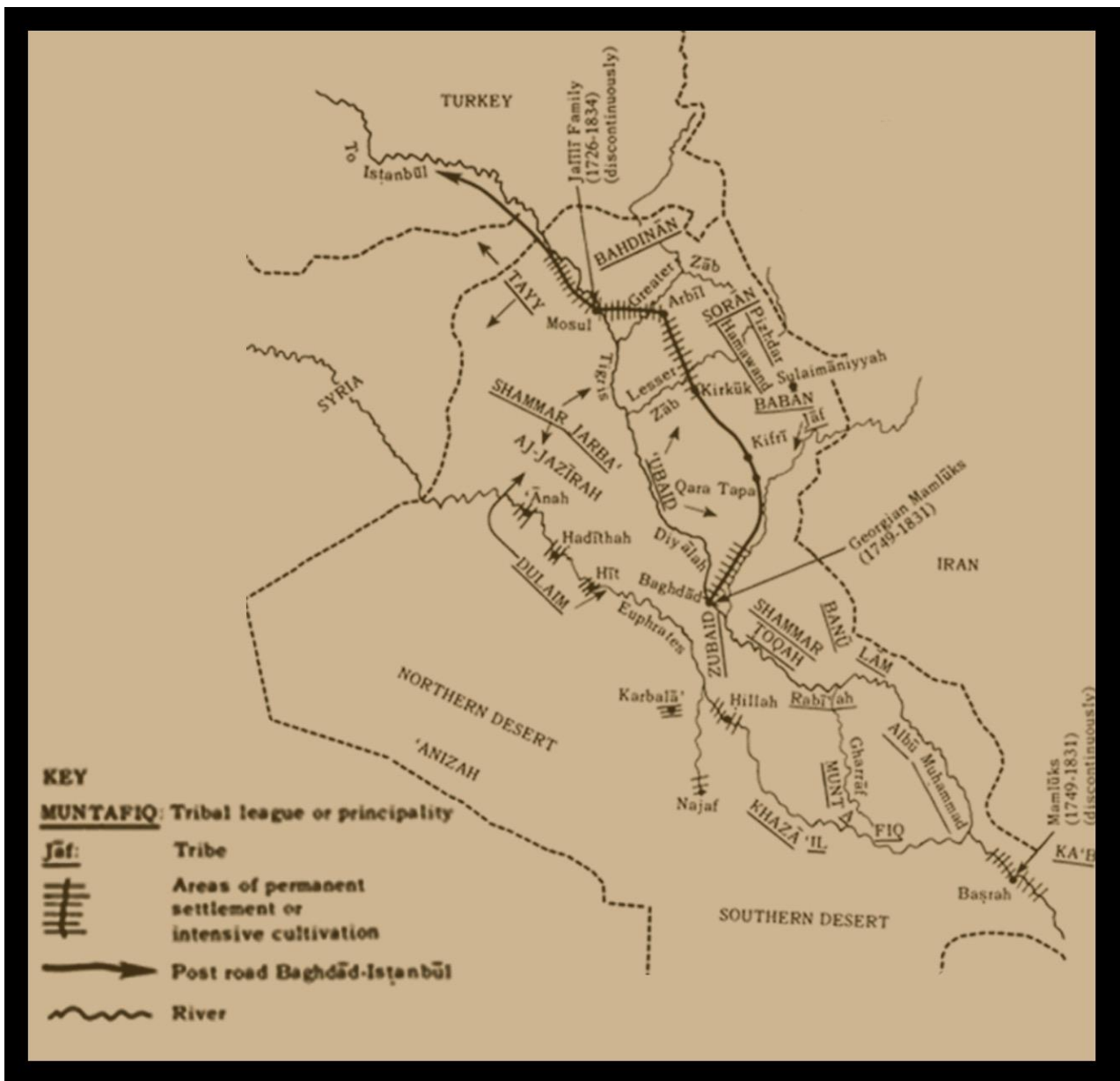
⁹⁷ Batatu, Hanna, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's old Landed and Commercial Classes and its Communities, Ba'athists and Free Officers* (London: Saqi Books, 2012) p.92.

⁹⁸ Nazmī, Wamīd, p.37.

⁹⁹ *Taqrīr Sirī Li Dā'irat Al-'Istikhbārāt Al-Birīṭāniya 'An Al-'Ashāir Al-'Irāqiya (A Confidential Report of the British Intelligence about Iraqi Clans)*, Translated by Al-Ṭāhir, 'Abd Al-Jalīl (Beirut, 1958), p.85.

¹⁰⁰ Batatu, Hanna, p.92.

Figure 1. Sketch of tribes in southern part of Iraq in late 18th and early 19th century (Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*)



It is noteworthy that the Shiite community in Iraq was mainly concentrated in urban centres, in the southern parts of the country, in places like Hillah, Kut,

Diwaniyah, Basra, Amara, and Dhi Qar.¹⁰¹ However, a specific set of factors played a crucial role in the conversion of Arab tribes, in southern Iraq, to Shi‘ism. References to the expansion of Shi‘ism were a frequent feature in Ottoman documents in the late 19th century.¹⁰² Gertrude Bell wrote:

“ It would be a curious historical study, if the materials for it existed, to trace the diffusion of Shi‘a doctrines in Mesopotamia. They have certainly spread, owing to the missionary zeal of Shi‘a divines, during the last hundred years. For instance, a large tribal group of the Zubaid...was turned to Shi‘aism about 1830 by famous mujtahid whose descendants still dominate the politics of Hillah. It is significant that the kindred tribes to the north, the Duliam and Ubaid, a little further removed from the persuasive influence of the holy places, have remained Sunni”.¹⁰³

One of the factors in the conversion of tribes to Shi‘ism was the rise of the holy cities, Karbala and Najaf, as centres of Shiite learning after the fall of the Safavid state, as this drove considerable numbers of prominent Shiite ‘*Ulama*’ to relocate to these cities.¹⁰⁴ There was also an environmental factor, as the changes in the water flow of the Euphrates River provided an impetus for the migration of many tribes to the holy cities and surrounding areas. The construction of a canal, which came to be known as Al-Hindiyyah hydro project, brought water to the perpetually parched residents of Najaf. Most of these tribes were prompted to move and settle along the new canal. In particular, the construction of the canal, completed in 1793, led to a major environmental change in the neighbouring area: the level of water in the Shat Al-Hillah River dwindled. This was the original course of the Euphrates in the 19th century.¹⁰⁵

Another factor that increased interactions between the nomadic tribes was the rise of Wahhabi Salafism, which is considered as an existential threat to Shi‘ism. In the late eighteenth century, the Wahhabis launched several incursions into southern Iraq. During the 1802 offensive, the Wahhabis sacked Karbala, but they failed to lay siege to Najaf. These attacks evoked a sense of vulnerability and led to intense

¹⁰¹ Parfit, Joseph Thomas, p.15.

¹⁰² Gokhan, Cetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (London, Routledge, 2006), p.107.

¹⁰³ Gertrude Bell, *Review of the Civil Administration of Iraq 1920* (Scholar’s choice, 2015) cited Khalil, Osman, *The Hissing Sectarian Snake: Sectarianism and the Making of State and Nation in Modern Iraq* (PhD Thesis, Exeter University, 2012), p.113.

¹⁰⁴ Yitzhak, Nakash, pp.14 -15.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.29-32.

activity by Shiite preachers and emissaries to convert the tribes who, among others, aimed to have a standing tribal force to secure the holy cities.¹⁰⁶ Nakash argues that the emergence of a unified religious denomination and webs of alliances between the Shiite clergy and tribal chiefs represented the formation of a Shiite polity prior to British occupation, and the subsequent establishment of modern Iraq.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the following section looks at the demographic features of Iraq, specifically the religious affiliations of its population, focusing on Shi‘a Islam.

2.3. Shi‘ism and Sects

Iraq was a predominantly Muslim society, yet even within that simple framework, differences emerged. Within this society, two groups (or sects) of Muslims existed: Sunnis and Shiites. According to a census conducted by the British in 1920, however, Iraq’s population reached 2.894.282.¹⁰⁸ This census showed that the largest community, at 52%, was the Shiite Muslims.¹⁰⁹ The Shiites of Iraq were, by and large, Arab. However, in a country that was religiously, ethnically, and politically diverse,¹¹⁰ Iraq’s Shiites also had Persian, Indian and Afghani ancestry, and the reason for the Persian presence in Iraq is the Safavid occupation of Iraq in 1507, and they were mainly living in the shrine cities and in Basra.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Ḥumūd, Al-Sā‘idī, *Dirāsāt ‘An ‘Ashā’ir Al-Iraq; Al-Khazā ‘il (Studies on the Clans of Iraq; Al-Khazā ‘il)*, (Najaf, 1974), p.68.

¹⁰⁷ Yitzhak Nakash, p.4.

¹⁰⁸ Parfit, Joseph Thomas, p.15.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ The ethnic groups of Iraq are divided into Arabs, Kurdish, Turkmen, Christians (Chaldo-Assyrian and Armenians), Yazidis, Mandaens, and a small number of Jews. The Arab ethnicity represents about 70% of the population. Kurdish ethnicity comprises about 15% of the population, and most of the Kurds are settled in the northern provinces. Turkmen are making up the third largest ethnic group in Iraq. Other ethnic groups living in Iraq include Syrians, Circassians, and Persians. See, Wamīd, Naẓmī, p.35; Jawād Mālik, Muḥammad, p.46.

¹¹¹ Yitzhak, Nakash, pp.16-18.

Figure 1.2. Iraq's major ethno-religious Groups (Kirmanj, Identity and Nation in Iraq)



Shi'ism is one of the main sects of Islam, which emerged in the religion's early days after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad in AD. 632. Its followers believe that the Prophet Muhammad designated 'Ali Ibn 'Abī Ṭālib as his successor (or Imam).¹¹² Adherents of Shi'ism are called Shi'a 'Ali, Shiite as a collective, or Shi'i individually, since the word Shiite (شيعة) in Arabic means followers, or "party of".

The concept of Shi'ism has been the subject of various opinions and ideas. While some researchers think that the term 'Shi'ism' emerged from the ideas of 'Abdullah b. Saba', who was a Jew, others believe that the term appeared during the Caliphate of 'Ali Ibn 'Abī Ṭālib (35–40 AH; 656–661 AD). Another group of researchers believe that the concept of Shi'ism appeared after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad (11 AH-632 AD).¹¹³ However, it has a completely different meaning from the perspective of Shiites, who believe that Shi'ism is related to divine orientation and prophetic implementation, and that it was originally connected to the concept of the imamate. They claim that the concept of Shi'ism grew around 'Ali Ibn 'Abī Ṭālib in the era of the Prophet Muḥammad, and that the Prophet used the word 'Shiites' to refer to 'Ali Ibn 'Abī Ṭālib and his supporters and followers. Shiites believe that Shi'ism was a religious necessity and an important consequence to the formation of Islam.

The Shiite creed depends on five pillars: monotheism (*Tawhid*),¹¹⁴ divine justice,¹¹⁵ the Day of Judgment,¹¹⁶ prophethood,¹¹⁷ and Imamah.¹¹⁸ In their exposition of the creed, Shiite scholars place Imamah at the centre, which in Shi'a theology means leadership.¹¹⁹ It refers to the legitimate successor in the Islamic community, and holds that this person should be a member of Muhammad's family (*Ahl Al-Bayt*). This is not only because *Ahl Al-Bayt* are the Prophet's family, but also

¹¹² Kramer, Martin, *Shi'ism Resistance and Revolution* (London: Westview Press Mansell Publishing Limited, 1987), p.21; A.S., Tritton, *Islam: Belief and Practices* (London: Hutchinson University, 1968), p.72.

¹¹³ See, Al-Musāwī, Hāshim, *Al-Tashayū' Nash'atuh Wa Ma'ālimuh (Shiism, Its Inception and Its Features)*, (Beirut, 1414 AH), p.26; Kāshif Al-Ghiṭā', Muḥammad Ḥussīn, *'Asl Al-Shi'a Wa 'Uṣūlihā (The Origin of Shi'a)*, (Beirut, 2008), p.44; Alayān, 'Adnān, *Juthūr Al-Tashayū' Fī Al-Khalīj Wa Al-Jazīra Al-'Arabiya (The Roots of Shi'a in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.34.

¹¹⁴ Al-Muzafīr, Muḥammad Ridā, *'Aqā'id Al-'Māmiya (Beliefs of Shi'a)*, (Qum, 1999), p.17.

¹¹⁵ Alayān, 'Adnān, p.41.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.42.

¹¹⁷ Kāshif Al-Ghiṭā', Muḥammad Ḥussīn, p.157.

¹¹⁸ Al-Musāwī, Hāshim, pp.157-158.

¹¹⁹ Al-Ahwani, Ahmed Fou'ad, *What is Said About Islam: Caliphate and Imamate 1387* (Azhar Magazine, 9th year, 9), p.789.

because they have the prerequisites of religious and political leadership.¹²⁰ As such, an imam must have certain attributes that enable him to fulfill the tasks of the leadership position, including infallibility,¹²¹ the appointment of Imams by God,¹²² and finally the distinction of the Imam,¹²³ and knowledge.¹²⁴

Imamah, according to the Shiite Twelver doctrine,¹²⁵ is the highest level of responsibility given by God to man. Twelvers believe that the Shiite has had twelve Imams,¹²⁶ and that the twelfth and final imam is the absent Imam of the Shiite who will appear near the end of time to spread justice after the planet has been corrupted by injustice and oppression.¹²⁷ During the absence of the imam, the Shiites believe that the Mujtahid¹²⁸ is the deputy of the absent imam who replaces him and works as a connection between the imam and the people.¹²⁹ The imitation of jurists is considered an obligation for all Shiites,¹³⁰ therefore, every adult person who has not

¹²⁰ Shiite Islam primarily differs from Sunni Islam regarding the successor to Muhammad as Caliph of the Muslim community. Adherents to Sunni Islam believe that Muhammad did not appoint a successor, and that his successor can be elected member. As such, they argue that the Prophet intentionally refrained from appointing a successor and left this matter to the leaders of the community to decide according to the principle of *shura* (community consensus and election by 'ijmaa'). This divide between Muslims resulted, and continues to result, in great disunity within the Muslim *Ummah*.

¹²¹ Al-Muzafir, Muḥammad Ridā, p.50.

¹²² Ibid., p.58.

¹²³ Al-Nifsi, 'Abuallah, p.20.

¹²⁴ Al-Muzafir, Muḥammad Ridā, p.50.

¹²⁵ Shiite Islam has been divided into three main groups: Twelvers, Ismailies and Zaidis. The Twelver doctrine believes that the twelve imams are the spiritual and political successors to Muhammad. According to this doctrine, an Imam is the divinely appointed authority on all matters of faith and law, and 'Ali Ibn 'Abī Ṭālib was the first Imam in this line. In their view, he was the rightful successor to Muhammad. After 'Ali Ibn 'Abī Ṭālib, they believe that the next rightful successors are his male descendants from his wife and daughter of Muhammad, Fatimah. The twelfth and final Imam is Muḥammad Al-Mahdī, who is, in Twelver doctrine, believed to be alive and in hiding. See, Sachedina, Abdulaziz Abdulhussein, *The Just Ruler (Al-Sultān Al-'ādil) in Shi'ite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹²⁶ Al-Ḥusaynī, Muḥammad 'Ali, *Ta'arfū 'alā Al-Shi'a (Knowledge About Shiites)*, (Beirut, 2007), pp.32-38.

¹²⁷ Al-Muzafir, Muḥammad Ridā, p.61.

¹²⁸ *Ijtihād* (juristic reasoning) is the ability of a person to handle new religious matters that were not discussed or mentioned before in any texts. This person is called a jurist (*Mujtahid*). *Ijtihād* (juristic reasoning) can be divided into two types: (1) complete juristic reasoning (*Ijtihād*) - the person here can use the evidence of lawfulness to reach subsidiary rulings in all disciplines; and (2) partial juristic reasoning (*Ijtihād*): a person can study religious evidence to reach knowledge of some fields, but not all of them. See, 'Ali Ḥīdr, Khalīl, *Al-'Imāmah Wa Sūlajān: Al-Marji'iyā Fī Iran Wa Al-Iraq (Turban and Mace: Religious Leaders in Iran and Iraq)*, (Kuwait, 1997), pp.73-74; Al-Ḥusaynī, Muḥammad 'Ali, p.141; Al-Qazwīnī, 'Amīr Muḥammad, *Al-Sh'ia Fī-'Aqā'idihim Wa 'Aḥkāmihim (Shiites in Their Beliefs and Rulings)*, (Beirut, 1977), p.96; Karīm, 'Alā', *Mawqif Al-Ḥawza Al-'Almiya Fī Al-Najaf Min Al-Tatawurāt Al-Siyāsiya Fī Al-'Iraq (The Position Of The Ḥawza in Najaf From The Political Developments In Iraq)*, (Babel University, 2007), p.30.

¹²⁹ Ali Ḥīdr, Khalīl, p.50.

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp.70-75.

reached the position of a jurist is obliged to follow and imitate the jurist in his worship, transactions, and all actions, even politically.¹³¹ As such, when the Mujtahid announces a *fatwa*,¹³² which may relate to a religious, political or economic issue, all followers of the Mujtahid must follow the given *fatwa*.¹³³

2.4. The Shi'a Holy Cities of Iraq

The adherents of Shiite Islam, like other Muslims, attach religious importance to Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, they are also spiritually, emotionally, and physically attached to the shrine cities of Najaf, Karbala, Khadimain, and Samarra. The development of these cities in the 16th and 20th centuries by the Ottoman and Iranian states, in the view of Nakash, “was shaped by their desire” to control Shiite affairs in Iraq.¹³⁴

Najaf historically derives its holiness from being the site of the tomb of ‘Ali b. ‘Abī Tālib, the first Imam of the Shiites and his capital city when he became the Caliph.¹³⁵ Therefore, it has become an important place of pilgrimage. The city has been the site for one of the largest and holiest cemeteries in the world “*Wādī Al-Salām*” cemetery between Shiite Muslim.¹³⁶ Najaf has been a centre of Shiite scholarship and the seat of the leading Mujtahid of the day.¹³⁷ Enjoying a semi-autonomous position during the Ottoman occupation, this enabled the city, according to Nakash, to have “an enormous religious and political influence far beyond the limits of Iraq”.¹³⁸ This is attributed, among other things, to its location, which is about 100 miles South of Baghdad. In addition, in the 19th century, Najaf emerged as the most important learning centre for Shiite Islam, with more than nineteen functioning schools. In particular, most students left the city for Najaf after the Ottoman occupation of Karbala in 1843.¹³⁹

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² *Fatwa* is the answer of jurists (*Mujtahid*) in religious issues, so it is said a *fatwa* is a complete religious rule. See, Surūr, ‘Ibrāhīm Ḥassan, *Al-Mu‘jam Al-Shāmil llmṣtalahāt Al-‘Ilmiya Wa Al-Dīniya (The Comprehensive Dictionary of Religious and Scientific Terms)*, (Beirut, 2008), Vol. 1, pp. 202-203.

¹³³ ‘Ali Ḥidr, Khalīl, pp.80-81.

¹³⁴ Yitzhak, Nakash, p.18.

¹³⁵ Al-Janābī, ‘Abdu Al-Satār, *Tārīkh Al-Najaf Al-Siyāsī 1921-1941(The Political History of Najaf 1921-1941)*, (Mektabat Al-Thākira, Baghdad, 2010), p.17.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Hala Fatah, Frank Caso, *A Brief History of Iraq* (New York; Infobase Publishing, 2009), p.140.

¹³⁸ Yitzhak, Nakash, p.18.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

In the early 1900s, the population of Najaf was estimated to be about thirty thousand, and the population was almost entirely Shiite.¹⁴⁰ At that time, the number of pilgrims exceeded the number of city residents two-fold. While Arabs mainly populated the city, Persians were estimated to form one third of the population. The strong influence of the Arab tribes on Najaf can be considered because of the city's position on the edge of the desert.¹⁴¹

Situated fifty miles northeast of Najaf and sixty miles southwest of Baghdad, Karbala's population was estimated to be approximately fifty thousand in the early 19th century.¹⁴² The population of the city was entirely Shiite. The city contains the shrine of the Imam Ḥussein and his half-brother Al-‘Abbās, it was in fact the site where Ḥussein, the son of ‘Ali and the third Shiite Imam, and his companions were killed in a battle against the accession of Mu‘āwiya's son Yazīd to the Caliphate in 680 AD.¹⁴³ Traditionally, believers make twice-yearly pilgrimages to Karbala.

In contrast to Najafī and Karbala, Khadimain and Samarra are situated in Sunni neighbourhoods to the north of Baghdad. Khadimain, now a Baghdad suburb, was an early important Shiite city.¹⁴⁴ It is the burial site of Mūsā Al-Kāzīm and Muḥammad Al-Jwād (the seventh and ninth Imams of the Shiite). Khadimain Mosque, which was rebuilt by the Safavid and Ottoman states in 1515, and has been the centre of Shiite activities.¹⁴⁵ The population of the city was estimated to be eight thousand in the beginning of 20th century, and the majority of its Muslim population was Arab.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, Samarra is considered as one of the Shiite's holiest sites.¹⁴⁷ It is the site of the shrines of ‘Ali Al-Hādī and Ḥassan Al-‘Askarī, the tenth and eleventh Imams of Shiite, though more interestingly, it is the city from which the twelfth or the hidden Imam Muḥammad Al-Mahdī disappeared and entered his period of occultation. The

¹⁴⁰ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Al-Najaf Fī Rubī ‘ Qarn Munthu 1908 (Najaf, In The Quarter Century Since 1908)*, (Beirut, 2005), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.61.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.61-65.

¹⁴² Yitzhak, Nakash, p.21.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Muḥammad, Al-‘Asadī, *Tārīkh al-Kadimain (The History of Khadimain)*, (Amman: Dār Al-Warāq, 2013), Vol. 1, p.23. See Radī, Al-Yāsīn, *Tārīkh al-Kadimain (The History of Khadimain)*, (Dār Al-Kafīl: Kadhiman, 2016).

¹⁴⁵ Cultural property training resource, Iraq, Baghdad-Kadhiman Mosque and Shrine, available online at www.cemml.colostate.edu/cultural/09476/iraq05-011.html> accessed 27.07.2017.

¹⁴⁶ Yitzhak, Nakash, p.23.

¹⁴⁷ Holiest Sites in Islam (Encyclopedia) available on www.statemaster.com/encyclopedia/Holiest-sites-in-Islam#Al_Askari_Mosque.2C_Samarra.2C_Iraq>, accessed on 27.07.2016.

population of Samarra was almost entirely Sunni.¹⁴⁸ Although these Shiite holy cities never lost their spiritual significance, Najaf played a major role in the resistance against the British occupation as will be shown in Chapter Three.

2.5. The Reformist and Nationalist Movement in Iraq

At the end of 19th century, a reformist movement emerged in Iraq following the decay of the Ottoman Empire and increased Western influence in the Middle Eastern region.¹⁴⁹ The reformist movement was represented by the *Al-‘Ahd* Party (Covenant Party). It was founded by a group of Iraqi officers in the Ottoman army and included people like ‘Azīz Al-Masrī, Nūrī Al-Sa‘īd, Tāha Al-Hāshmī, Taḥsīn Al-‘Askarī, and Sa‘ad Al-Takrītī.¹⁵⁰ This movement sought to change political thought and awareness in Iraq and the Arab world, and was characterised by Arab nationalism. Some authors and historians denied the existence of Arab nationalism at the time, including David Lloyd George,¹⁵¹ Gertrude Bell,¹⁵² and Uriel Dann, who maintained that the state of Iraq was an artificial creature at the end of the Ottoman era. They also argued that there was no such thing as Iraqi nationalism.¹⁵³ In fact, Beerī holds that there was no Iraqi nation, and no traditions to unify the different sects.¹⁵⁴ Kedourie states that it was the insistence and determination of young officers that contributed to the establishment of an Iraqi nation, and that ethnography, geography and history played no role.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. Holiest Sites in Islam (Encyclopedia) available on <
www.statemaster.com/encyclopedia/Holiest-sites-in-Islam#Al_Askari_Mosque.2C_Samarra.2C_Iraq>, accessed on 27.07.2016.

¹⁴⁹ Turkification is a policy whereby the Ottoman Empire attempted to compel the nationals of the Ottoman Empire, who did not adhere to Turkish nationalism, to abandon their nationalism and subscribe to Turkish nationalism.

¹⁵⁰ ‘Alawī, Hādī, *Al-‘Aḥzāb Al-Siyāsiya Fī Al-Iraq Al-Siriya Wa Al-Alaniya (Iraq's Political Parties A Secret And Overt)*, (Beirut, 2001), pp.28-29.

¹⁵¹ Lloyd George, David, *Memories of the Peace Conference* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), Vol. 2, pp.659-666, pp.669-670.

¹⁵² Bell, Gertrude, *From Amura to Amurath* (London: William Heinemann, 1911), p.161.

¹⁵³ Dani, Uriel, *Iraq Under Qassem: A Political History 1958-1963* (Jerusalem: Israel University Press 1969), p.1.

¹⁵⁴ Beerī, Eliezer, *Army Officer in Arab Political and Society* (London: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p.326.

¹⁵⁵ Kedourie, Elie, *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle East Studies* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1970), p.214.

In contrast, some authors have tried to link the nationalist movement to the religion of Islam. They claim that Islam is a religion of Arabic nationalism,¹⁵⁶ and they support their view by citing some Quranic verses, which include phrases such as ‘folk’, ‘nation’ and ‘Arab’. However, the advocates of this view do not distinguish between political Islam and Arab nationalism.¹⁵⁷ Hourani argues that Arab nationalism, as a political movement, did not crystallise except during the 20th century.¹⁵⁸ This is also applicable to the nationalist movement in Iraq, which appeared at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

It is important to note that the nationalists and intellectuals of Iraq were affected by a number of Islamic reformers and thinkers, including Jamāl Al-Dīn Afghānī (d. 1897), Muḥammad ‘Abduh (d. 1905), Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935), and ‘Abdu Al-Raḥmān Al-Kawākibī (d. 1902).¹⁵⁹ The essence of their ideas can be divided into two sections: political and philosophical. Politically, the reformers aimed to stir up religious feelings as a means of fighting colonialism.¹⁶⁰ The success of this approach can be seen in the way that the Russian colonisation of Iran (1911) and Italian colonialism in Libya (1911) were repelled. These thinkers called for the condemnation of sectarianism, as well as for the rejection of differences between Shiites and Sunnis, and for the union of Christians, Muslims, and Jews.¹⁶¹ Those who support the philosophical approach argue that the reformers aimed to create an intellectual revolution through Western philosophy and adherence to Islamic thought.¹⁶²

Some Shiite scholars were affected by the thoughts of Islamic reformers such as Al-Kālīsī, Al-Ṣadīr,¹⁶³ Muḥammad Sa‘īd Al-Ḥabūbī,¹⁶⁴ and Muḥammad Riḍā Al-Shibībī.¹⁶⁵ They accepted the call for modernization and Arab nationalism. For this

¹⁵⁶ Al-Bazzāz, ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān, *Al-Islam Wa al-Qawmiya al-‘Arabiya (Islam and Arab Nationalism)*, (Baghdad, 1952).

¹⁵⁷ Al-Dūrī, ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz, *Al-Juthūr al-Tārīkhīya Li Al-Qawmiya Al-‘Arabiya (The Historical Roots of Arab Nationalism)*, (Beirut, 1960), pp.12-14.

¹⁵⁸ Hourani, Albert, p.26.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Ismā‘īl, Muḥyī al-Dīn, *Min Malāmḥ al-‘Asir (Of the Features of Era)*, (Sidon, 1967), pp.13-14.

¹⁶⁰ Keddie, Nikki, Algar, Hamid, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani* (Oakland: University of California, 1968), p.96.

¹⁶¹ Al-Makhzūmī, Muḥammad, *Khātīrāt Jamal al-Dīn al-Afghānī al-Ḥusaynī (Thoughts of Jamal al-Dīn al-Afghānī al-Ḥusaynī)*, (Beirut, 1962), p.82.

¹⁶² Watt, Montgomery, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of al-Ghazali* (Edinburg: University Press, cop, 1963), p. vii.

¹⁶³ ‘Alī, ‘Abbās, *Za‘īm al-Thawra Al-‘Irāqīya; Saḥāḥ Wa Hayāt al-Sayid al-Ṣadīr (Iraqi Leader of the Revolution: Pages and Life of the Leader al-Sayid al-Ṣadīr)*, (Baghdad, 1950), pp.19-26.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Ṣaghīr, Muḥammad, *Qādat al-Fikīr al-Shī‘ī Wa Al-Siyāsī Fī Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf (Leaders of Religious and Political Thought in Najaf)*, (Beirut, 2008), p.31.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.261-262.

reason, they refused to merge with the Persians. While Shiite scholars were suffering persecution under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, they could not abandon Islam or accept Western ideas completely. In fact, they aspired to constitutional rule and the creation of a national Arab entity. Ireland stated that for the Shiite scholars, nationalism meant the erection of an Islamic State once again, with the priesthood in their rightful dominant position. He also states that it meant a state freed from the contaminating influences of the West, purified from tendencies to exalt secularism, and one that was able to stamp out opposing sects and millets.¹⁶⁶ Keddie has pointed to a rapprochement between the thoughts of reformers and intellectual traditions of the Shiite.¹⁶⁷

For Iraq, its social diversity and the ideas of Islamic reformers played an important role in the emergence of a reformist movement at the beginning of the 20th century. This movement succeeded in changing the existent political thoughts and awareness of the Iraqi people. However, it has been argued that, when studying nationalism in Iraq, it is important to consider all sources of influence that may have contributed to the composition and development of the thoughts and objectives of the reformist movement. This section, therefore, also looks at external factors, including the political struggles in Iran and Turkey, the centre of the Ottoman Empire, since the original causes of the 1920 revolt are the focus of this thesis.

One of the important factors in the 20th century was the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911. Although the Iranian revolution belongs to the political affairs of Iran, the Shiite clerics in Iraq played a prominent role in this revolution. In 1906, letters arrived from Iran to Shiite clerics asking for their advice on the establishment of a constitutional council. Sayid Muḥammad Al-Yazdī was one of those who rejected the constitutional movement in Iran and saw that the interest of states must not be shared but should instead be based on just one person being responsible.¹⁶⁸ In contrast, Al-Ākhūnd Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Khurāsānī supported the establishment of a constitutional system and he issued a *fatwa*, which stated that every Muslim must accept and implement these constitutional laws, and that resistance to these laws was resistance to the provisions of the religion. As a result,

¹⁶⁶ Ireland, Philip, p.246.

¹⁶⁷ Keddie, Nikki, Algar, Hamid, pp.46-47 and pp.50-51.

¹⁶⁸ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Sayid Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī Sīratuh Wa 'Adwā' 'Alā Hayātih Wa Marjī 'iyatahu (Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī His Biography And Highlights On His Life His Clerical Organization And His Positions)*, p.167.

the residents of Najaf were divided into two groups: the first group supported the conditional constitutional movement, headed by Al-Ākhūnd Muḥammad Kāẓim Al-Khurāsānī, while the other group rejected the constitutional movement and were headed by Sayid Muḥammad Al-Yazdī.¹⁶⁹ Finally, the Iranian constitution was created in 1906.¹⁷⁰ These events in Iran greatly influenced the growth of thought and consciousness in Iraǧi cities.¹⁷¹

After the ratification of the constitution, Muẓaffar Al-Dīn Shāh died, and his son Muḥammad ‘Ali Shāh - took power on 9th December 1907.¹⁷² Al-Ākhūnd Muḥammad Kāẓim Al-Khurāsānī sent for the Ten Commandments which would, in turn, become the basis of a constitutional system.¹⁷³ However, Muḥammad ‘Ali Shāh adhered neither to the Ten Commandments, nor to the concepts of the Constitutional Revolution. Thus, Al-Khurāsānī issued a *fatwa* which stated that the abandonment of the constitution was tantamount to the abandonment of the provisions of Islam. This *fatwa* was supported by several Shiite clerics, such as Al-Shīrāzīand, Faṭḥallah, and Al-’Aṣfahānī.¹⁷⁴ In July 1909, Muḥammad ‘Ali Shāh was isolated and Aḥmed Mīrza took power. The latter was sympathetic to the constitutional movement, and his position was endorsed by the Shiite clerics in Najaf, and this led to huge parties and celebrations.¹⁷⁵

Most importantly, the Ottoman coup (1908-1909)¹⁷⁶ played a prominent role in the evolution of a consciousness amongst the divergent groups of Iraq. The evolution of a consciousness amongst the divergent groups of Iraǧi people was due to slogans, which were advocated during the coup (freedom, equality, fraternity).¹⁷⁷ It also contributed, to some extent, to the freedom of press, thought, expression and political organizations in Iraq. Hitherto 1908 there had only been three newspapers

¹⁶⁹ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad ‘Ali, *Al-Taṭawur al-Fikrī Fī al-Iraq (Intellectual Development In Iraq)*, (Baghdad, 1959), p.23.

¹⁷⁰ Al-Khāqānī, ‘Ali, *Shu‘arā’ al-Gharī Wa al-Najafiyāt (The Poets Ahlgre Or al-Najafiat)*, (Najaf, 1956), Vol. 10, p.86, Memories of Muḥammad ‘Ali al-Ḥussaynī.

¹⁷¹ Brown, Edward, *The Persian Revolution 1905-1909* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1910), p.98.

¹⁷² Al-Mafarijī, ‘Uday, p.47.

¹⁷³ Kifā’ī, ‘Abd al-Muḥsin, *Zandqānī al-Ākhūnd al-Khurāsānī (The Life Of Al-Ākhūnd Al-Khurāsānī)*, (Tehran, 1359), p.176.

¹⁷⁴ Naẓmī, Wamīd, pp.119-120.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.120.

¹⁷⁶ The Ottoman Coup was a revolution led by a secret association which Young Turks had formed in Salonica with the objective of overthrowing the Sultan's despotism. See, Antonius, George, *The Arab Awakening; The Story Of The Arab National Movement* (Beirut, 1969), pp.101-125.

¹⁷⁷ Al-Mafarijī, ‘Uday, p.47.

in Iraq. After the announcement of the constitution and during the years between 1908 and 1914, there were approximately seventy Iraqi newspapers.¹⁷⁸ In addition, the Ottoman coup contributed to the revival of Arab heritage, especially the Arabic language and the application of constitutional systems.¹⁷⁹ Most reformers confronted the Committee of Union and Progress, which aimed to disseminate Turanian ideas.¹⁸⁰ Finally, the coup contributed to uniting the efforts made by nationalists and Islamists in Iraq, whereby a group of Shiite clerics under the leadership of Al-Ākhūnd Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Khurāsānī supported the constitution.¹⁸¹

Meanwhile, other factors contributed to the national movement in Iraq, such as the Italian occupation of Libya, and Russian aggression against Iran in 1911. In fact, this contributed to the dissemination of anti-colonial thoughts in Iraq. During the period of Russian aggression against Iran, a group of Shiite scholars issued a *fatwa* for the necessity of jihad against the Russians. Among these scholars was Sayid Muḥammad Al-Yazdī, who issued a *fatwa* for jihad against Russia, Britain, and Italy in November 1911. His *fatwa* stated that “Today, European countries attacked the Islamic kingdoms from all directions. On one hand, Italy attacked Libya from Tripoli on the west side and Russia attacked the north of Iran, Britain attacked the south of Iran, and this threatened Islam”.¹⁸² It was clear that all Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs should prepare themselves to defend the Islamic countries against the infidels. They were instructed to also use their money to get the Italian army out of Tripoli, the Russian army out of northern Iran, and the British army out of southern Iran.¹⁸³

After issuing a *fatwa* declaring a holy war against Russia, the scholars of the holy cities decided that all the Mujahedeen should move to fight the Russians in Iran.¹⁸⁴ The Mujahedeen were scheduled to meet in Al-Sahla Mosque in Kufa on 13

¹⁷⁸ Al-Hasanī, ‘Abd Al-Razāq, *Tārīkh Al-Şahāfa Al-‘Irāqiya (The History Of the Iraqi Press)*, (Baghdad, 1957), pp.1-51.

¹⁷⁹ Khalīl Aḥmad, ‘Ibrāhīm, *Taṭawir al-Ta‘līm Fī al-Basra (Development The Education In Basra)* (Basra, 1983), p.47.

¹⁸⁰ Turanian is a national political movement, which emerged between the Ottoman Turks in the latter quarter of the 19th century. It aimed to unite the Turkish race, and impose the Turkish language and culture on non-Turks in the Ottoman Empire. See, Şālih, Jihād, *Al-Ṭurāniya Bayn Al-Şūliya Wa Al-Fāshiya (Turanian Between Fundamentalism and Fascism)*, (Beirut, 1987).

¹⁸¹ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad ‘Alī, *Al-Taṭawur al-Fikrī Fī al-Iraq (Intellectual Development in Iraq)*, (Baghdad, 1959), p.23.

¹⁸² Shubar, Ḥasan, *Al-Taḥaruk al-Islāmī 1900-1957 (Islamic Movement 1900-1957)* (Qum, 2010), p.136.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp.136-137.

¹⁸⁴ These cities are considered to be holy cities for Shiites both in Iraq and across the world because they contain the tombs of Shiite imams such as ‘Alī b. ‘Abī Ṭālib in Najaf, al-Ḥussein b. ‘Alī and

December 1911.¹⁸⁵ From there, they would head for Karbala and Kadhimain and then to Iran, but Sheikh Kāzīm Al-Khurāsānī, the great jurist and supporter of jihad, died a day before the mission was due to start. At the end of March 1912, however, news arrived in Iraq that Russian troops had attacked the tomb of Imam ‘Ali b. Mūsā b. Ja‘far, the eighth Shiite Imam,¹⁸⁶ and a number of visitors had been killed. Due to the attack, a meeting in Kadhimain was held to discuss the issue of declaring another jihad against the Russians and was attended by a group of scholars and clerics.¹⁸⁷ Anti-colonial thought and jihadist ideology managed to penetrate and seep into the consciousness and unconsciousness of Iraqi society.

2.6. Conclusion

This brief background has provided a picture of the historical legacies of three city-states (Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra), which represented the functional borders of Iraq, as per the Ottoman Empire's planning since their falling under its control in 1534. Subsequently, each state manifested a unique identity to which its people felt affinity. This identity was further instilled in each state's inhabitants, due to a policy of enforced Turkification by the Ottomans, causing a reactionary tribal Arabism. This is especially apparent in the latter stages of the Ottoman Empire's reign. Since the conditions of an independent nation-state were not there, tribalism was able to take a stronghold due to what it was able to provide in terms of perks and guarantees, allowing it to play the role of the absent nation. The blood link which connects all the different members of a tribe, their traditions and practices, as well the chain of command leading ultimately to the tribe's Sheikh - with whom rests absolute command - became a source of pride and honour for its members; such that their tribal identity represented a guarantee for their life, property, and land.

The other predominant identity which competed with the first arrived in the form of religious identity. It was incredibly prevalent, especially on religious

al-‘Abbas b. ‘Ali in Karbala, ‘Ali b. Muḥammad and al-Ḥassan b. ‘Ali in Sammara and Mūsā b. Ja‘far and Muḥammad b. ‘Ali. They also contain the religious schools of Shiite (*Ḥawzas*).

¹⁸⁵ The Sahla Mosque is located in the northwestern side of the Kufa Mosque and is considered to be one of the most important mosques for Shiites in Iraq.

¹⁸⁶ ‘Ali b. Mūsā b. Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. ‘Ali b. Ḥussein ‘Ali b. ‘Abī Ṭālib. He was born Medina in (148–203 AH) and died in (765-818 AD). He was the eighth Shiite Imam after his father Mūsā Al-Kāzīm, and before his son Muhammad Al-Jawad.

¹⁸⁷ Shubar, Ḥasan, *Al-Taḥaruk al-Islāmī 1900 -1957 (Islamic Movement 1900-1957)*, (Qum, 2010), p.140.

occasions. Shiite ideology further entrenched religious thought as a form of identity, making its *Marja'* (religious authority, essentially Mujtahid, chiefly Shiite ideology) the ultimate authority in Shi'a society. It was therefore obligatory upon them to follow the commands and teachings - normally in the form of a *fatwa* (religious verdict) - that the *Marja'* authority in Najaf or its representatives imposed elsewhere. The religious identity is unique as it is not mutually exclusive with the tribal one, such that one or many tribes may adhere to the Shiite sect. Sometimes, all Muslims are addressed by its authority. Shrines also aided significantly in the spread of this identity, as they helped create a connection and an order among the Shiite community. Examples of these are the shrines in Karbala, Najaf, Kadhimain, and Samarra.

It was within this historical context that reform movements and societies, such as the Covenant Party, as well as political events, like the Ottoman coup in 1908, played an important role in raising awareness among Iraqi communities, especially in urban areas. These changes and events had their effects most manifested in the three main city-states.

Chapter Three

Britain and the First and Second Jihad Movements (1914–1917)

After the British occupation of Basra on 22 November 1914, the Ottoman Empire sought to involve the Shiites in their fight against the British. To do so, the Ottoman Empire sent representatives to the Shiite clerics in Najaf to persuade them to give their support. The Ottoman Empire succeeded in engaging the Shiites through convincing them that the British occupation of Iraq was an attack on Islam. Thus, the Shiite clerics issued *fatwas* for jihad and incited the people in different areas of Iraq. They delivered religious speeches to persuade them to participate in the jihad movement against the British forces. They also organised resistance.

This chapter analyses the British occupation of Iraq between 1914 and 1917. Thus, it focuses on the declaration of jihad against the British forces in 1914 by a chief of Shiite religious authority in the city of Najaf and the Shiite clerics in the holy cities. Specifically, it looks at the role of Shiite clerics during the first and second jihad movements in forming a common linkage amongst various sects, races and social groups; this played a crucial role in creating an alliance, one built on the broad idea of Islam on a very complex and quite divided region. This alliance, however, contributed to the emergence of the signs of nation building.

3.1. The British occupation of Iraq in 1914

After the Ottoman Empire's participation in the First World War, the British decided to occupy Basra, as it was the only port in Iraq. Thereafter the British occupied all the other regions of the country. The British forces, under the command of General W. S. Delamain, left Bombay for the Persian Gulf on 16 October 1914.¹⁸⁸ The British Government of India succeeded in achieving its goal of entering the war

¹⁸⁸ W.O. 106/895 "Operations of IEF "D": Report by Brig General W.S. Delamain, 1915 Oct. - Nov", p.2.

through the appointment of General W.S. Delamain as the leader of the British convoy. The convoy had the goal of protecting the oil refineries and pipelines in Abadan; when the war began between the British and the Ottoman Empire, military supplies would be provided to the British convoy from India and Britain.¹⁸⁹ The British arrived at Bahrain on 23 October 1914.¹⁹⁰ In Bahrain General W.S. Delamain met Sir Percy Cox,¹⁹¹ and waited for orders from India to occupy Basra.¹⁹² From previous events, it can be concluded that the British Government of India was the decision maker in the occupation of Iraq, because it had gained experience and knowledge of the Persian Gulf over a long period of time.¹⁹³

However, Britain was familiar with the region. Therefore, the British government sought to obtain information and logistical support from its allies including Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir, the ruler of Al-Muhammarah region, and Sheikh Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ, the ruler of Kuwait to achieve its objectives. They were associated with Britain by treaties of protection,¹⁹⁴ or through economic and political relations.¹⁹⁵ Before the British occupation of Iraq, there had, therefore, been a number of visits and exchanges of letters between British officers and Britain’s allies - especially from Kuwait's ruler. The ruler of Kuwait promised to send boats to assist the British troops in Basra.¹⁹⁶ In addition, he gave information to the British

¹⁸⁹ W.O. 106/880 “Copy Letter From CIGS to Colonel Delamain with Three Enclosures, 1914 Oct”, p.5.

¹⁹⁰ W.O. 106/881 “Instruction For and Correspondence to Colonel W.S. Delamain, 1914 Oct.-Nov”, p.2.

¹⁹¹ Rogan, Eugene, *The Fall of the Ottomans; The Great War in the Middle East 1914-1920* (London: Penguin: 2016), p.80.

¹⁹² Barker, A.J, *The Bastard War The Mesopotamia Campaign of 1914-1918* (New York: Dial Press, 1967), p.25.

¹⁹³ See, M. C. C. Seton, *The India Office* (London: Putnam, 1926); Robb, Peter, *A History of India* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002).

¹⁹⁴ Sheikh Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ signed a secret agreement with Major M.J. Meade the British political resident in Bushier, on 18 January 1899. See, Slot, B.J, *Mubarak al-Sabah: Founder Of Modern Kuwait 1896-1915* (London: Arabian, 2005).

¹⁹⁵ Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir signed a treaty with the British in 1909. See, Al-Najār, Mustafā, ‘*Arab-Stān Khilāl Hukum Sheikh Kha‘zal 1827-1925 (Arab Stan During the Role of Sheikh Kha‘zal 1827-1925)*, (Beirut, 2009). In addition, the British Government signed a treaty of protection with Bahrain in 1861. As a consequence, on 28 October 1914, General W.S Delamain demanded Bahrain arrest Robert Wonckhaus a Bahrain agent and a German called Harling, who had written a report on the strength and composition of Force (D) and wanted to send it to the German Consul, which was located at Bushier. See, IOR/L/PS/11/86 “Bahrain: Arrival of Expeditionary Force “D” Letter from Captain T.H Keyes, I.A Political Agent Bahrain to Lieutenant- Colonel S.G Knox, C.I.E Political Resident in the Persian Gulf Bushier, November, 1914, p.5.

¹⁹⁶ IOR/ R/15/1/712/1 “Administration Report for the Kuwait Political Agency for the Year 1915”, p.52.

officers,¹⁹⁷ but General Delamain did not take Sheikh Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ's opinion into consideration when it came to his own military planning.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, the Consul General in the Persian Gulf requested that Sheikh Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ attack Umm-Qasr, Safwan and Bubiyan and occupy them, before doing the same to Basra. The idea was that Sheikh Kha'zal b. Jābir, 'Abdu Al-'Azīz Ibn Su'ūd and other reliable sheikhs, would liberate Basra from the Turks and prevent the arrival of Turkish supplies to Basra and al-Qurna until after the arrival of the British forces.¹⁹⁹ Britain considered Kuwait a potential aid by way of the military bases of the latter. Such bases could be used to protect the British soldiers from the back line, as well as prevent the arrival of aid from Kuwait to the Ottoman forces.²⁰⁰ It was obvious that the war would lead to the establishment of a relationship between the British and 'Abdu Al-'Azīz Ibn Su'ūd, which would enable the British to obtain support to aid the achievement of their goals. In spite of this, 'Abdu Al-'Azīz Ibn Su'ūd was unsuccessful.

The British attacked the Faw area on 6 November 1914 due to its strategic location. Its capture would facilitate the British occupation of the rest of the areas that they desired. As a result of this attack, the Turkish Commander Burhānu al-Dīn in the Faw area was killed, the Turkish soldiers withdrew from the battle, and the British won.²⁰¹ The next day, General Delamain moved his troops and arrived in Sanniya, where he landed his forces.²⁰² The news of the occupation of the Faw area by the British reached Basra through fleeing government officials. When the news arrived in Basra, the Turkish Commander Subhī Bey sent 400 troops led by Sāmī Bey to confront the British troops in Sanniya.²⁰³

¹⁹⁷ IOR/L/MIL/17/15/88 "Report by Brigadier W. S. Delamain, C.B., D.S.O., on the Operations of the Indian Expeditionary Force "D" up to 14th November 1914' [r], p.32. (Major Radcliffe arrived back from Kuwait in 5 November 1914 with the information that Faw fort was in ruins, that Turkish forces therein numbered about 400 strong with seven or eight old guns).

¹⁹⁸ Moberly, F.J, *The Campaign In Mesopotamia 1914-1918* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1997), (First published 1923), Vol. 1, p.106.

¹⁹⁹ IOR /R/15/1/510 "Sheikh Mubarak's Faw and Faddaghiya Properties, 15 Jan. 1913 - 30 Nov. 1914".

²⁰⁰ IOR/L/MIL/17/15/86, "Plan for operations in Turkish Mesopotamia", p.5.

²⁰¹ The British occupied Faw area without obstacles as a result of the information and logistical support, which obtained from its allies. See, Longrigg, Stephen, *Iraq 1900 To 1950; A Political And Economic History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p.78.

²⁰² IOR/L/MIL/17/15/88 "Report by Brigadier W. S. Delamain, C.B., D.S.O., on the Operations of the Indian Expeditionary Force "D" up to 14th November 1914' [2], p.2.

²⁰³ Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu al-Razāq, *Al-Iraq Fī Dawray Al-'Ithilāl Wa al-'Intidāb (Iraq Between the Mandate and Occupation)*, (Baghdad, 1935), p.11.

Britain's allies continued to provide information to the British forces to facilitate their mission. Sheikh Kha'zal b. Jābir sent reliable news to the British that Sāmī Bey had arrived from Basra with a strong force comprised of Turks who wanted to attack the British forces.²⁰⁴ He reported that Sāmī Bey had started to attack.²⁰⁵ When Sāmī Bey and the Turkish forces attacked the British forces, General Delamain knew about it in advance. As a result, the Turkish forces suffered a defeat, and approximately 80 soldiers were killed, so they withdrew to Saihān, four miles from the Sanniya area.²⁰⁶ Through such military victories, the British forces succeeded in occupying strategic areas, a necessary precursor to their successfully occupying Basra. The British commander General Barrett arrived in Sanniya in November 1914,²⁰⁷ after having received orders from India to occupy Basra.²⁰⁸ On 17 November 1914, there was a battle between the Turkish and the British to the south of the village of Kut al-Zin;²⁰⁹ the Turks were defeated and the British took control of the area. It was then that the British decided to occupy Basra.²¹⁰ The British had initially occupied the Faw area, which is near the Abadan area in Iran. The goal at that point was to secure the Abadan area, where there was a large amount of oil that had been excavated by the British Persian Oil Company.²¹¹ Britain was concerned that Turkish forces would return and take control of the Faw region and the oil fields. As a result, after British troops occupied the Faw area, they kept the warship, *Spiegel*, on the Caron River to protect British interests in the area.²¹² The British Navy reached Basra on 22 November 1914; the Turks had already withdrawn.²¹³ Britain established

²⁰⁴ W.O. 106/895 "Operations of IEF "D": Report by Brig General W.S. Delamain, 1915 Oct. - Nov", p.3.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Al-Mūṣilī, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh Muqadarāt al-Iraq al-Siyāsiya (The History Fortunes of Iraq's Political)*, (Beirut, 1925), Vol. 1, p.90.

²⁰⁷ Townshend, Charles, *Desert Hell; The British Invasion of Mesopotamia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), p.31.

²⁰⁸ Moberly, F.J, Vol. 1, pp.114-115.

²⁰⁹ Barker, A.J, *The First Iraq War 1914-1918; Britain's Mesopotamia Campaign* (New York: Enigma Book, 2009), (First published 1967), p.27.

²¹⁰ W.O. 106/878. "Operations in Mesopotamia: Papers, 1 September 1914 - 31 December 1915", No.51, p.10.

²¹¹ Main, Ernest, pp.14-15.

²¹² Candler, Edmund, *The Long Road TO Baghdad* (London: Cassell, 1919), p.9.

²¹³ The British made ceremonial march through street to the central point where notables were assembled, and proclamation prepared by Sir Percy Cox read in Arabic announcing that British flag had now replaced the Turkish flag. See, W.O. 106/878 "Operations in Mesopotamia: Papers, 01 September 1914 - 31 December 1915", No.54, p.11; IOR/L/PS/11/86 "Occupation of Qurna" "Letter from Sir Percy Cox to London office, 10 December 1914, p.1.

a civil administration at Basra on 27 November 1914 due to the importance of this city from both economic and geographic perspectives.²¹⁴

At this early stage, neither the imperial authorities in London nor India had any clear ideas about the future political status of the territories that had gradually come under British occupation.²¹⁵ That said; there were many goals for the occupation of Basra. First, after taking control of Iraq's only seaport in this region, Britain could ensure that military supplies would arrive easily. Secondly, Basra city became a launching point from which to occupy the other parts of Iraq. Thirdly, it enabled Britain to help to protect its allies, such as the Kha‘zal b. Jābir Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ and ‘Abdu Al-‘Azīz Ibn Su‘ūd from Turkish forces.²¹⁶ Fourthly, the British sought to keep non-British influences (primarily Russian and German) out of the region and to protect Britain's strategic interests in Iran's oil fields, as well as its links to India and the Arabian side of the Gulf.²¹⁷ Finally, it ensured the security of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's installations at Abadan in Persia.²¹⁸

After the occupation of Basra city, General Barrett asked the General Command in India on 29 November 1914 for permission to occupy al-Qurna. This request was made for several reasons. The importance of al-Qurna in military terms, as it lies in the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It also enabled the British to exercise control over the marine route of Shatt al-Arab, which helped the passage of large vessels, which in turn helped to supply the British forces. Furthermore, it enabled the British to benefit from the agricultural nature of the town of al-Qurna, which was one of the richest agricultural towns in Iraq. This again helped to supply British troops. Occupying the Qurna also created a moral influence on the tribes and earned their loyalties; thereby preventing them from providing support for the Ottoman forces. Indeed, it enabled the British to protect the Iranian area of Arab-Stan from the threat of the Ottoman forces.²¹⁹ British troops succeeded

²¹⁴ Sluglett, Peter, *Britain In Iraq 1914–1922* (London: Ithaca Press for the Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford, 1976), p.10.

²¹⁵ Tripp, Charles, *A History of Iraq* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.31.

²¹⁶ W.O. 106/880. "Copy letter from CIGS to Colonel Delamain with three enclosures, 1914 Oct", p.5.

²¹⁷ Judith, Yaphe, "War And Occupation In Iraq: What Went Right? What Could Go Wrong?" *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 57, No.3 (Summer, 2003), pp.381-399, 383.

²¹⁸ Kristian, Urichesn, "*The British Occupation Of Mesopotamia 1914–1922*" *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No.2 (2007), 349-377, p.349.

²¹⁹ Nadīm, Shukrī, *Ḥarb al-‘Iraq 1914-1918 (Iraq War 1914-1918)* (Baghdad, 1963), (First published 1954), p.25.

in occupying the al-Muzira‘a area on 7 December 1914,²²⁰ and the al-Qurna area on 9 December 1914.²²¹ After the fall of the cities of Basra and al-Qurna to the British, orders from Istanbul were issued that removed the military commander Jāwīd Pāshā from his post as commander of the forces of the Ottoman Empire. His removal occurred due to the fact that he was held primarily responsible for the defeats that had befallen the Turkish forces. It was instead decided by the Ottomans that they should appoint the military commander Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey in his place.²²²

Through an analysis of previous events, it can be inferred that the Ottoman forces were lacking experience and military equipment; they were not adequately prepared to fight. The British forces ultimately succeeded in occupying strategic areas and achieved the occupation of Basra and al-Qurna without facing any major difficulties. The British occupation provoked anti-British feelings in the population; that became clear through a telegram from Basra, which was sent to the clerics in the holy cities asking them for help by ordering Iraq’s tribes to defend Iraq and face the British forces.²²³

3.2. Declaration of jihad by Shiite clerics against the British forces in 1914

The Turkish Sultan proclaimed jihad against Britain and its allies on 14 November;²²⁴ he called upon all Muslims in the world, including those who were living in Great Britain, France and Russia, to take up arms.²²⁵ The Ottoman state called upon all Muslims to take up arms because it considered itself the State of the Caliphate, and all Muslims were obliged to come to its defence. At the same time, the Ottoman government was seeking to join the Shiites to jihad against the British as the Ottomans realised that the best way to convince the Shiites was by provoking the religious factors and calling upon them to defend the banner of Islam.²²⁶ It was

²²⁰ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu al-Razāq, *Al-Iraq Fī Dawray Al-’Ithilāl Wa al-’Intidāb (Iraq Between the Mandate and Occupation)*, (Baghdad, 1935), p.15.

²²¹ Al-Rāwī, Ibrāhīm, *Thikrayātī (My Memorandums)*, (Beirut, 1969), p.12.

²²² Al-Mūṣilī, Muḥammad, Vol. 1, p.103.

²²³ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-’Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraqi Revolution Introductions And Results)* “Telegram from the people of Iraq to the clerics in the holy cities”, (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, p.22.

²²⁴ IOR/R/15/1/730 “Historical Summary of Events in Territories of the Ottoman Empire, Persia and Arabia affecting the British Position in the Persian Gulf, 1907-1928”[r] (24/188), p.159.

²²⁵ Antonius, George, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Routledge, 2001), (First published 1939), p.141.

²²⁶ Al-Bāzirkān, ‘Ali, p.55.

known that the Shiites do not announce jihad unless the jihad order or consent has hitherto been given by the infallible Imam, who was Imam Muḥammad b. Al-Ḥasan (Al-Mahdī), for the jihad is only announced in the case of the exposure of Islamic countries to attack by non-Muslims, which they called a defence.²²⁷ Thus, the Ottoman Empire sought to rely on the common elements between the Sunni and Shiite sects, namely using Islam to involve them in the jihad against the British. This warrants some further explanation, however, so as to rescue the concept of jihad itself from contemporary connotations of the issue with arbitrary assumptions on Islamist *jus ad bellum*,²²⁸ viewed from the perspective of Western normativity.

Genealogically, contemporary jihad “is the lineal descendent of classical jihad theory as modified by contemporary radical Islam”.²²⁹ As with religious ideologies in general, the processes of time and history and the various adaptive mechanisms that unfold from generation to generation are responsible for the emergence of a set of ideologies that are quite distinct from their original incarnation. As Cook writes, “classical Muslim jihad theory is based upon a combination of Qur’anic selections, *hadiths*... legal discussions based on the *hadith* literature and formal treatises dealing with jihad”.²³⁰ Real mentions of jihad in the Qur’an are rare, with the label not being explicitly applied to the warfare waged by Muḥammad; rather, it appears in the context of later Muslim conquests following the year 634.²³¹ From that time until 740, the concept of jihad began to appear in (and alongside) the *hadith*, being liberally mingled with arbitrary passages from the Qur’an, and indeed subject to the aforementioned interpretative constraints of the *hadith*. A key text in this regard is the *Kitab al-jihad* of ‘Abduallah b. Al-Mubarāk, it includes the first explicit mention of the concept of jihad, as it is understood in its popular, modern, sense.²³² What is key about this text is that it is populated with battle slogans and description of martyrs’ feats and rewards, where the author describes himself as being a “defender of Islam.”²³³ This utterance is echoed by contemporary radical Islamists. In addition,

²²⁷ Kāshif Al-Ghiṭā’, Muḥammad Ḥussīn, p.94.

²²⁸ Right to war.

²²⁹ Cook, David, “Islamism and Jihadism: The Transformation of Classical Notions of Jihad into an Ideology of Terrorism”. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, (Huston, 2009) Vol. 10, No. 2, 2009, 177-187, p.177.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid., p.178.

as is described by Moghadam, “the word *jihad*...means ‘to strive’ or ‘to exert oneself’”.²³⁴

The further emergence of the concept of jihad came about during the Crusades, with prominent authors including al-Sulāmī and Ibn Al-Nahhās al-Dumyaḥī. Jihad also appears in legal literature, with the Sunni variety being vast, and indeed here it has been adapted in accordance with the geopolitical location and associated evolutionary cultural processes. In order to be legitimate, jihad had to have the endorsement of the Imam. In its classical sense, jihad had three forms; of the hand (or sword); of the tongue; or of the soul. This represents the various forms of the conquest of the deviant other. As Cook writes:

“According to the jurists, jihad is a process that begins with the summoning of the enemy to Islam, and either leads to Muslim victory, in which case the enemy is either killed, enslaved or accepts protection (*dhimmi*) of the Muslims, or to a tactical ceasefire (*hudna*). There is little discussion as to what Muslims should do in case of an outright or catastrophic defeat”.²³⁵

A key problem amidst all of this was the actual establishment of a defined conception of an exact identity of the enemy. However, jihad in its classical sense primarily became a tool of the Sunni Muslims, directed towards minority groups such as Shiites. The definition of such was even expanded over subsequent centuries to situations in which Muslims often sided with non-Muslims in warring against particular Muslim factions. Both factions, however, retained distinctive conceptualisations of jihad nonetheless. As Cook writes:

“While Sunni jihad theory emphasises the triumphal process of conquest from non-Muslims in which martyrs either gain victory or paradise, Shi’ites emphasise the tragic and mournful quality of perpetual (but noble) defeat”.²³⁶

As mentioned earlier, the nineteenth century brought anti-colonial jihads, which more closely resembled “nationalism and socialism”.²³⁷ This preceded a shift to a more contemporary form of jihadism in the twentieth century that became bound up with the concept of *fatwah*—a legal opinion. The proclamation of a *fatwah* is indicative of the legitimising of some particular enemy, henceforth justifying any

²³⁴ Moghadam, A., “*Mayhem, Myths, and Martyrdom: The Shi’a Conception of Jihad*”. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2007, pp.125-143, p.126.

²³⁵ Cook, David, p.178.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.179.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

declared war against the same. This serves the cause of further explaining the common denominator that was being formed against the common enemy: the British.

The Ottoman government sent a delegation to Najaf because it was considered to be the centre of the Shiite religion not only in Iraq but also in the world. It was also the place of residence of the chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq. The delegation consisted of military leaders and Shiites who were representatives of the Ottoman Empire.²³⁸ This was a clear indication that the Ottoman Empire was needed for logistical support to face the British forces.

The exchange of letters between the Ottoman government, the chief of the Shiite religious authority, and the Shiite scholars were unfamiliar during the period of Ottoman Empire rule over Iraq. However, the physical British occupation helped to diminish the differences and disputes between them and enhanced their desire to confront the British occupation. The delegation was received by Shiite clerics in Najaf and then a meeting was held in the Al-Hindi Mosque.²³⁹ The choice of the mosque as a place to hold the meeting between the Ottoman Empire delegation and the Shiite clerics gives an indication that the issue under discussion was of a religious nature, one that belonged to all Muslims. In addition, it was obvious that the Ottoman Empire sought to rely on common elements among Iraqi people, especially in the case of religion (Islam), to involve the Shiites in their fight against the British.

Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī, Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā’rī and Sheikh Jawād al-Jawāhirī agreed to participate alongside the Ottoman government in their fight against non-Muslims.²⁴⁰ In fact, this indicates that the anti-colonial sentiment, which dominated the Shiite clerics, was one of reasons that led them to support the Ottoman Empire against the British.²⁴¹ It is noteworthy that Sayid Muḥammad al-Ḥabūbī was influenced by the ideas of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, who called the people to fight against colonisation,²⁴² and the ideas of the nationalists.²⁴³

²³⁸ The delegation consisted of Muḥammad Fāḍil Pāshā al-Dagistānī, Shawkat Pāshā and Sheikh Ḥamīd al-Kalīdār and other. See, Al-Yāsirī, ‘Abd Al-Shahīd, p.55.

²³⁹ Al-Yāsirī, ‘Abd Al-Shahīd, p.55. (Many clerics and tribal leaders attended the meeting).

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p.55.

²⁴¹ Al-Ṣaghūr, Muḥammad, *Qādat al-Fikr al-Shi‘ī Wa Al-Siyāsī Fī Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf (Leaders of Religious and Political Thought in Najaf)*, (Beirut, 2008); Al-Khalīlī, Ja‘far, *Hākathā ‘Arafiuhum (Thus Knew Them)*, (Baghdad, 1963), Vol. 1, p.369.

²⁴² Ibid., p.31.

²⁴³ Al-Ḥabūbī, ‘Ali, *Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī Wa Dawruh al-Fikrī wa Al-Siyāsī 1849-1915 (Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī And His Intellectual And Political Role 1849-1915)*, (Najaf, 2012), p.99.

There was a convergence between the ideas of the nationalists and a group of Shiite clerics, especially regarding anti-colonial ideas. Thereafter, Sheikh Ḥamīd Kalīdār went to Kufa,²⁴⁴ to meet the chief of the Mujtahids and the Deputy to the hidden Imam,²⁴⁵ Sayid Muḥammad Kāzīm al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Yazdī, to convince him to declare jihad against the British troops. The latter did so.²⁴⁶ Thus, the Ottoman Empire succeeded in engaging the Shiites in fighting against the British troops, and also succeeded in obtaining a *fatwa* by a chief of the Shiite religious authority in Iraq, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī through relying and utilising the common elements amongst them, especially Islam. This in turn enabled everyone to participate in the fight against the British.

After issuing the *fatwa* of jihad by Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, the city of Najaf became more effective in calling for jihad. It also became the main city from which the instructions, orders and tasks were issued.²⁴⁷ Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī sought to involve the people from different areas of Iraq in the jihad movement against Britain through his powers as a chief of the Shiite. He urged the people to defend Islamic countries and obliged rich people who were unable physically to join the jihad to help the poor people who wanted to join the jihad. This speech echoed throughout all parts of Iraq, especially in those areas that were Shiite, because of his religious position as the Deputy to the hidden Imam.²⁴⁸ He tried to exploit the common elements amongst the Iraqi people, especially regarding religion (Islam), to encourage them to become actively involved in the resistance and the fighting against the British.

It was an attempt by Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to unite all sects and ethnic and social groups to participate in the jihad against the British because Iraq was divided into three separate *vilayets* during the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The three *vilayets* were Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, but the inhabitants of these *vilayets* have

²⁴⁴ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Sayid Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī Sīratuh Wa 'Adwā' 'Alā Ḥayātih Wa Marjī 'iyatahu (Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī His Biography And Highlights On His Life His Clerical Organization And His Positions)*, (Qum, 2006), p.222.

²⁴⁵ IOR/L/PS/11/171 "Persian Appointees to Shia Shrines" "Letter from Office of the Civil Commissioner on Baghdad to the Under Secretary of State for India, 5 April 1920", p.2.

²⁴⁶ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Sayid Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī Sīratuh Wa 'Adwā' 'Alā Ḥayātih Wa Marjī 'iyatahu (Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī His Biography And Highlights On His Life His Clerical Organization And His Positions)*, (Qum, 2006), p.222.

²⁴⁷ Because Najaf was considered the centre of the Shiite religion not only in Iraq but also in the world. It was also the place of residence of the chief of the Shiite religious authority in Iraq.

²⁴⁸ *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs' of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.51.

common elements such as language, religion, race and others. Therefore, this also contributed to the aforementioned common denominator in the face of a common enemy. In seeking to do this, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī sent a letter to the Iraqi people within various regions to incite jihad. As well as this, he issued a publication to all Muslims in Iraq asking them to unite and be in harmony, leaving their differences to one side and instead uniting and standing as one against the British troops occupying the territory of Iraq.²⁴⁹ For example, he sent a letter to the tribes in the area of al-Shatra, confirming the duty of jihad and expressing his sadness over the lack of attention that had been given to this *fatwa*, and warned them of the consequences of ignoring the matter. He also sent a letter to Sheikh Khīyūn al-‘Abīd, the chief of al-‘Abūdh tribes in Nasiriyah, telling him of the jihad against the non-Muslims, and ordered him and his clan to move to Basra to fight the British who were heading for Basra.²⁵⁰ The laying down of internal differences was, therefore, an additional aspect that affected the emergence of a common denominator. Thus, the signs of alliance to confront the British appeared at the beginning of the war through the *fatwa* of a chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq; Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī. His speeches and *fatwas* were not confined to a specific sect or race in the Iraqi society such as the Shiites. Rather, his speeches and *fatwas* were addressed to all social groups of Iraq society in order to unite them and urge them to work together collectively to face the British forces that threatened Islam, which was, as has been noted, represented by the Ottoman state.

As a result of the issuance of the *fatwa* for jihad against the British by Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, many of the tribal leaders sent letters to him inquiring about the validity of this *fatwa* and what things they should take into consideration. They did not necessarily believe that the Shiite religious authority was supporting the

²⁴⁹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraqi Revolution Introductions And Results)* “A Publication from form Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to all Muslims in Iraq” (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, p.82. Furthermore, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī sent a letter to his representative Sayid ‘Ali al-Qazwīnī in Kufa to tell him about his *fatwa* to fight against the non-Muslims and ordered him to compel the tribes living in Kufa to participate in jihad. Moreover, he sent his son Sayid Muḥammad to incite the tribes to jihad and head to Baghdad to join the mujahedeen who wanted to fight the British forces. See, Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraqi Revolution Introductions And Results)* “Letter from Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to Sayid ‘Ali al-Qazwīnī” “Letter from Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to all Muslims in Iraq” (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, p.80 and p.53.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., “Letter form Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to the clans and tribes of al-Shatra region and to Sheikh Khīyūn al-‘Abīd, the chief of al-‘Abūdh tribes” (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, pp.84-86.

Ottoman Empire on account of a strained relationship that had existed between them for a long period of time.²⁵¹ In addition, many of the tribes in the south of Iraq were at odds with the Ottoman Empire and they did not want to support the Ottoman Empire against the British,²⁵² but after the *fatwa* of Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, they were obligated to provide their support. Thus, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī succeeded through the *fatwa* to eliminate the differences and disputes between the Ottoman Empire and several tribes in Middle Euphrates region in order to create the common denominator required to confront a common enemy.

Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī also sought to involve neighbouring countries in the jihad against the British and for supporting the Ottoman Empire. In order to facilitate this, he sent a letter to Kha‘zal b. Jābir, the ruler of al-Muhammarah region, asking him to defend the Muslim lands that were occupied by British forces. He also asked him to invest his money to support the jihad and incite the tribes living in the al-Muhammarah area to face the attack of British forces.²⁵³ It can be concluded that Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī sent the letter to Kha‘zal for three reasons. First, Sheikh Kha‘zal was from the Shiite sect, so he had no option but to obey the *fatwa*. Secondly, Sheikh Kha‘zal had a strong relationship with many Shiite clerics in Najaf and Karbala. Thirdly, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī sought to create a common purpose, which encompassed all Muslims especially in neighboring countries, to confront the British because he believed that the British were the common enemy of all Muslims.

Furthermore, a considerable body of Shiite clerics in Najaf played an important role in supporting the declaration of jihad through the incitement of tribes to participate in the jihad. For example, Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-‘Aṣfahānī, along with a group of Shiite clerics, had issued a *fatwa* that all people must defend the homeland and fight the British.²⁵⁴ In addition, Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī invited the Iraqi tribes in different regions to join the jihad against the British forces.

²⁵¹ Ibid., “Letter from Sayid Nūr Sayid ‘Azīz al-Yāsiri to Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, Dated 18-November 1914”, (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, p.61.

²⁵² Ibid., “Letter from ‘Atīya Abū al-Qallal to Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī”, (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, p.63.

²⁵³ Ibid., “Letter from Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to Kha‘zal b. Jābir, the ruler of al-Muhammarah region”(Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, p.37.

²⁵⁴ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Sheikh al-Sharī‘a Qiyādatuh Fī Al-Thawra Al-‘Irāqīya Al-Kubrā Wa Wathā‘iquh al-Siyāsiya (Sheikh al-Sharī‘a His Leadership In The Great Iraqi Revolution In 1920 And His Political Documents)* “Letter from Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-‘Aṣfahānī with a group of clerics to all Muslim in Iraq”, (Beirut 2005), pp.129-130. (Such as Muḥammad Ḥusseīn al-Ḥā’irī, Sayid Mustafā al-Kāshānī, Jawād Sāḥib al-Jawāhir, Sayid ‘Ali al-Tabrīzī, Baḥr al-‘Ulūm Zādah and al-Rājī Ṣadir al-Dīn).

For example, Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī came out from Najaf with a group of his followers for al-jihad on 15 November 1914, and while they were sojourning towards the jihad, they passed by a goodly number of cities, such as al-Mushkhab, al-’Abyaḍ, Simmawa and Nasiriyah and they incited the people of these cities to get involved in the jihad against the British. Moreover, he sent some of his aides, including Sheīkh Bāqir al-Shibībī and ‘Ali al-Sharqī, to the tribes that were situated furthest away from the Nasiriyah area, urging them to jihad.²⁵⁵ This was especially significant because many of the tribes did not want to fight with the Turks because of the persecution that had previously suffered at the hands of the Ottoman authorities.²⁵⁶ At the same time, another group of mujahedeen from Najaf, who were headed by Sayid ‘Abdu al-Razāq al-Hiluw, came out for jihad in November 1914.²⁵⁷ Afterwards, a lot of the mujahedeen, including clerics and students of religion, left Najaf and went to Baghdad before going to the front line of the war through the Tigris River.²⁵⁸ Although the call for jihad was random and unorganized, many clan members responded to it due to the *fatwa* of jihad, the influence of clerics and the common denominator that was created because of the rapprochement between the men of the Shiites and the Ottoman Empire to confront a common enemy.

²⁵⁵ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Wa Ḥarakat al-Jihād (Najaf and Jihad Movement)*, (*Muthakarāt Shiekh Hādi Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’*), (Memoranda of Shiekh Hādi Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’), (Beirut, 2002), p.401. On February 19, 1915, Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī left the Sūq al-Shiyūkh area heading towards al-Shi‘ba by using ships that sailed through Lake al-Ḥammār. See, *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, pp.45-47; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Kufa Fī Thawrat Al-’Ishrīn (Al-Kufa in 1920 Revolution)* “Memorandum of Sheīkh Kātib al-Ṭurjī” (Najaf, 1972), p.229; Al-Ḥabūbī, Fārūq, *Muhammad Sa‘īd Al-Ḥabūbī Wa Dawruh al-Fikrī Wa al-Siyāsī 1849-1915 (Muhammad Sa‘īd Al-Ḥabūbī And His Role Of Intellectual And Political 1849-1915)*, (Najaf, 2012), p.116; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Wa Ḥarakat al-Jihād (Najaf and Jihad Movement)*, (Beirut, 2002), p.14; Al-Qasāb, ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz, *Min Thikrayātī (From My Memories)*, (Baghdad, 1962), p.108.

²⁵⁶ Fir‘ūn, Mizhir, p.37.

²⁵⁷ Al-Qasāb, ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz, p.108.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. On November 26, 1914, two delegations came out of Najaf; the first delegation was represented by Sheikh Faṭḥallah al-’Aṣfahānī, Sayid ‘Ali al-Dāmād al-Ṭabrīzī and Sayid Muṣṭafā al-Kāshānī. The second delegation was sent by Sayid al-Yazdī, and represented by his son Sayid Muḥammad, Sheikh Muḥammad Ḥusseīn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’, Sayid Ismā‘īl al-Yazdī along with some Arab and Iranian students. This delegation reached Baghdad on November 29, 1914 and was hosted by Dāwūd Abū al-Timan. On 9 December 1914, a group of mujahedeen boarded the Turkish steamer (al-Mosul) and headed towards Qurna. Also, On 22 November 1914, a group of Shiite clerics came out from Najaf with students of religious sciences. They reached Baghdad on November 29, 1914, then they headed towards the area of al-Amara aboard a Turkish ship and from there they headed towards the area of Arab-Stan accompanied by Tawfiq Bey, the envoy of Baghdad. See, Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Wa Ḥarakat al-Jihād (Najaf and Jihad Movement)* “*Muthakarāt Muḥammad Ḥusseīn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’*” “*Memoranda of Muḥammad Ḥusseīn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’*” (Beirut, 2002), p.363. *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, pp.46-52.

After the clerics and the students of religion left Najaf and its surrounding hinterland for jihad, the tribal leaders and influential personalities in the community also came out for jihad.²⁵⁹ For example, on November 24, 1914, they came out to jihad, each of Sayid Nūr Sayid ‘Azīz al-Yāsīrī and his followers, Mibdir al-Fir‘ūn, Mizhir Fir‘ūn and his followers from the tribe of al-Fatlah, Sayid ‘Alwān al-Yāsīrī and with him a group of tribe al-’Ibrāhīm, Sayid Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh and with a group of tribe al-Zayād and Shiite clerics each of Sayid Muḥammad ‘Ali Hibat al-Dīn al-Shihristānī, Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Riḍā al-Sheikh Mahdī and al-Sheikh Rāḍī.²⁶⁰ Thus, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī and other Shiite clerics in Najaf, through the *fatwa* of jihad, incitement, and his delivery of religious speeches in Najaf, succeeded in uniting the various tribes, sects, races and social groups in Iraq to participate with the Ottoman troops against the British. This played a key role in forming a common denominator that led to the creation of an alliance to confront the British. This alliance contributed to the appearance of the signs of nation building.

In parallel, the religious cities in Iraq played crucial roles in supporting the *fatwa* of jihad through the power of the Shiite clerics, where they sought to unite and encourage all the people to participate in the jihad movement to confront the British. For instance, the city of Karbala was the first of these cities because Karbala was considered to be the second city in importance for Shiites as it contains the tomb of al-Ḥussein b. ‘Ali.²⁶¹ It also contains a lot of religious schools (*Hawza*).²⁶² In addition, many Shiite clerics lived there.²⁶³ These factors meant that the *fatwa* of jihad, which was issued by Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, received approval from the masses without any hesitation. In addition, Sayid ‘Ismā‘īl al-Ṣadir issued a *fatwa* of jihad against the British. The mujahedeen then went to Najaf.²⁶⁴ The geographical location of Karbala was remarkable for its proximity to the most important clans of the south; it was also a connecting link to the most important cities in Iraq. Once many of the tribes near Karbala knew about the *fatwa* of jihad, they purposefully set

²⁵⁹ Al-Fatlāwī, ‘Abdu al-Zahra, p.31.

²⁶⁰ *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.53.

²⁶¹ He was the grandson of Prophet Muhammad and son of ‘Ali b. ‘Abī Tālib, as well, being the third Imam of the Shiite. See, Ṭu‘ma, Salmān, *Turāth Karabla (Heritage of Karbala)*, (Beirut, 1984), pp.58-59.

²⁶² See, Ṭu‘ma, Salmān, pp.109-110.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Al-‘Ābdī, Razāq, *Karbala Fī Sanawāt al-’Iḥtilāl al-Birīṭānī 1914-1921 (Karbala In Years Of British Occupation 1914-1921)*, (Baghdad, 2003), pp.32-33.

out from Karbala to Najaf to participate in jihad. For example, the chief of the clan al-Mas‘ūd al-Ḥāj S‘ūd al-Ḥitīmī and one hundred of his kinsmen took this option.²⁶⁵

The second city was Kadhimain, which is considered the third city in importance for Shiites because it contains the tombs of two Imams of the Shiite religion.²⁶⁶ Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī and Sayid Maḥdī al-Ḥaydarī played a key role in the declaration of jihad.²⁶⁷ Al-Ḥaydarī issued a *fatwa* that the people should invest their money in jihad against the non-Muslims; if anyone declined to pay, he instructed that the money should be taken forcibly.²⁶⁸ Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī called the scholars of Kadhimain to a meeting to discuss the issue of jihad and the issuance of the *fatwa*.²⁶⁹ During the meeting, there was disagreement as both Sayid Ḥassan al-Ṣadir and Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Ḥussein al-‘Asadī foresaw that the fight against the British was doomed,²⁷⁰ based on the strength of Britain's military. In contrast, the majority of clerics insisted on declaring jihad against the British; one of those who supported this view was Sayid Maḥdī al-Ḥaydarī,²⁷¹ who sent a letter to the scholars of the cities of Najaf, Karbala and Samarra, telling them that he intended to fight the non-Muslims. He then requested a meeting in Kadhimain and incited the people to start their jihad against the enemies.²⁷² It is obvious from these events that both Ḥaydarī and al-Khālīsī were determined to fight the British forces in spite of the military differences between the two sides. Furthermore, it can be argued that there existed some set of reasons and ideological convictions that cemented their desire to do this. It is also apparent that they wanted to unify the opinion of Shiite scholars in Kadhimain over the issue of jihad in order to ensure the participation of the majority of the population in the jihad.

²⁶⁵ Al-Ḥabūbī, ‘Ali, *Muhammad Sa‘ūd Al-Ḥabūbī Wa Dawruh al-Fikrī Wa al-Siyāsī 1849-1915 (Muhammad Sa‘ūd Al-Ḥabūbī And His Role Of Intellectual And Political 1849-1915)*, (Najaf, 2012), p.120.

²⁶⁶ The two Imams of the Shiite in Khadimain are Mūsā Al-Khāzīm and Muḥammad Al-Jwād.

²⁶⁷ Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī issued a message entitled “al-Ḥussām al-Battār in Jihād al-Kuffār” (The Sharp Sword in the Face of the Infidels). See, Al-Dabāgh, Hāshim, *Al-‘Imām al-Mujāhid al-Shiekh Muḥammad al-Khālīsī (Al-‘Imām al-Mujāhid al-Shiekh Muḥammad al-Khālīsī)*, (Tahran, 1998), p.126.

²⁶⁸ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 4, pp.154-155.

²⁶⁹ Al-Dabāgh, Hāshim, p.127.

²⁷⁰ Shubar, Ḥasan, *Al-Taḥaruk al-Islāmī 1900-1957 (Islamic Movement 1900-1957)*(Qum, 2010), pp.169-170.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.170.

²⁷² Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), Vol. 4, p.155.

Due to the location of Kadhimain, which is close to Baghdad, and the common elements between them such as religion, language, ethnic, race and other elements, some residents of Baghdad responded to the *fatwa* of jihad.²⁷³ For example, three hundred people in Baghdad went to Kerkh when they knew about the *fatwa* of jihad, where they were awaited by the Turkish steamer (Al-Ḥamidiya) that carried them to al-Qurna.²⁷⁴ Whenever the steamer arrived at a city or was sailing where tribes gathered on the river banks, Sayid Mahdī al-Ḥaydarī ordered the ship's captain to stop, and then Sayid Mahdī al-Ḥaydarī and his companions would disembark to speak to the people and urge them to participate in jihad and fight the British.²⁷⁵ When the procession arrived at al-Amara, Sayid Mahdī al-Ḥaydarī held a meeting in the city's mosque; he urged the people to jihad.²⁷⁶ It can be said that the Shiite clerics relied on stirring the feelings of the people and the common elements amongst the people of Iraq in forming the common denominator to face a common enemy.

In Samarra, Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī played a major role in the declaration of jihad. He issued a *fatwa* to fight against the British and sent his son Muḥammad Riḍā to join Sayid Mahdī al-Ḥaydarī who was heading for the jihad in the city of Kadhimain.²⁷⁷ He also sought to involve people in neighbouring countries such as Sheikh Kha'zal b. Jābir,²⁷⁸ and Sheikh Mubārak Al- Ṣabāh in the jihad.²⁷⁹

²⁷³ The declaration of jihad by scholars in Kadhimain had an effect on Baghdad. For example, a famous person in Baghdad, Dawūd Abū al-Timan, spent a lot of money on the mujahedeen. See, Al-Timīmī, Khālīd, *Muḥammad Ja'far Abū al-Timan: Dirāsa Fī al-Za'āma al-Siyāsiya al-'Irāqiya (Study in the Iraqi Political Leadership)*, (Damascus, 1996), p.83.

²⁷⁴ Al-Ḥussaynī, Ahmed, *Al-'Imam al-Tha'ir Al-Sayid Mahdī Al-Ḥaydarī (The Rebel al-'Imam al-Sayid Mahdī Al-Ḥaydarī)*, (Najaf, 1966), pp.33-34.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Al-Wardī, 'Alī, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al-'Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), Vol. 4, p.155.

²⁷⁷ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī Al-Qā'id al-'Alā lil al-Thawra al-'Irāqiya al-Kubrā 1920 Sīratuh Wa Mwāqifuh Wa Wathā'iq al-Siyāsiya (Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī Supreme Commander of Iraq's Great Revolution in 1920 and His Political Positions and Documentations)*, "Letter from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī to tribal leaders in all parts of Iraq, calling for jihad and resistance to occupiers", (Qum, 2006), p.164.

²⁷⁸ He told Sheikh Kha'zal b. Jābir to leave the area and join the jihad and fight the British. He also asked him to pay money to help the mujahedeen. See, Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraq Revolution Introductions And Results)* "Letter from Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī to Sheikh Kha'zal b. Jābir" (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, p.40.

²⁷⁹ He sent a letter to Sheikh Mubārak Al-Ṣabāh to tell him the news of the occupation of the British forces and asked him to respond to the call of Islam and declare a holy war against the British. See, Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraq Revolution Introductions And Results)* "Letter from Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī to Mubārak al-Ṣabāh" (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, p.41.

To conclude, Shiite scholars in the holy cities succeeded in encouraging people to join the jihad through the issuance of *fatwas*, by delivering speeches, and by sending delegates with messages to tribes to incite and urge them to jihad.

3.3. The First Jihad Movement

The first jihad movement was a response to the *fatwa* of jihad, which was issued by Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī in Najaf and other Shiite clerics in the holy cities. The first jihad movement can be described as spontaneous and emotional; it was not formally organised. Rather, the mujahedeen emerged from their areas randomly to participate in the jihad movement as a result of inducement to do so by the Shiite clerics. It is also interesting to note that the mujahedeen used traditional weapons to face the British forces. There was a lack of military coordination between the mujahedeen and the Ottoman Empire. During the first jihad movement, an alliance was formed through the participation of different sects (Sunni and Shiite), races (Arab and Kurds), classes (clerics, leader of tribes, students, peasants) and the residents of neighbouring countries, such as Kuwait and Muḥammarah. These people, despite their differences, fought beside each other in order to face a common enemy: the British. This alliance contributed to the emergence of signs of nation building.

The first jihad movement was comprised of three battles: al-Qurna, al-Shi‘iba and al-Huwiza (Arab-Stan). The first battle was led by Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey,²⁸⁰ along with a group of clerics,²⁸¹ clansmen, and the people of the cities of Karbala and Najaf.²⁸² These forces took positions around the al-Rūṭa channel.²⁸³ Whilst the military commander, Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey, was equipping his forces for an attack on the British, the British commander, Barrett, came out from his base in Basra to survey the situation. He noticed that the Turks were ready for something and he

²⁸⁰ Buchanan, George, *The Tragedy of Mesopotamia* (London: William Blackwood & Sons Limited, 1938), p.11.

²⁸¹ The group of clerics were by Sayid Mahdī al-Ḥaydarī, Sheikh Faṭḥallah al-‘Aṣfahānī, Sayid Muṣṭafā al-Kāshānī, Sayid ‘Ali al-Dāmād al-Ṭabrīzī and Sayid ‘Abdu al-Razāq al-Hiluw. See, Al-Ḥusaynī, Ahmed, p.37.

²⁸² The clans including al-Fatlah, al-‘Ibrāhīm, al-Shibil, al-Khazā‘il, the tribes of al-Simmawa, Nasiriya. See, Al-Najār, Jamīl, *Al-Sayid Kāṭi ‘al-‘Awādī Wa Dawruh Fī al-Ḥayāt al-Siyāsiya al-‘Irāqiya (Al-Sayid Kati Al-Awadi And His Role In Iraqi Political Life)*, (Baghdad, 2005), p.74.

²⁸³ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu al-Razāq, *Al-Iraq Fī Dawray Al-‘Ithilāl Wa al-‘Intidāb (Iraq Between the Mandate and Occupation)*, (Baghdad, 1935), p.16.

presumed, correctly, that the something was ‘to fight’. As a result, he hurried to prepare a military force to attack the al-Rūṭa site.²⁸⁴

As a direct result, the British moved into the area of al-Muzira‘a towards al-Rūṭa and bombed the Turkish forces. The British commander, Barrett, realised that it was not easy to occupy al-Rūṭa with such a force, so he issued orders to withdraw and return to the area of al-Muzira‘a.²⁸⁵ During this battle, the Turkish military commander, Sulaymān al-‘Askarī Bey, was wounded and was taken to a Baghdad hospital for treatment.²⁸⁶

The main reason for the victory was the *fatwa* of jihad, which obliged the mujahedeen to fight along with the Ottoman troops in the face of the British forces, in order to defend the common element, which is Islam, despite the strained relationship between the mujahedeen and the Ottoman authorities. There were also notable differences from the military side between the mujahedeen and the British forces. Most of the mujahedeen were from the clans of the Middle Euphrates, and they worked in agriculture, fishing, and livestock breeding, and as such they lacked military experience. This was evident through the tools that they used in battles such as those of *Fālḥ and Miqwār*.²⁸⁷

Similarly, the Shiite clerics played a major role in this battle, especially Sayid Maḥdī al-Ḥaydarī. He was considered one of the senior Shiite scholars and had a distinctive stature amongst the mujahedeen. He took over the reins of leadership and issued military instructions to the mujahedeen.²⁸⁸ He also incited the mujahedeen to withstand and defeat the British troops.²⁸⁹ As well as this, he encouraged them through religious speeches to achieve victory.²⁹⁰ Thus, the *fatwa* of jihad and the

²⁸⁴ Moberly, F.J, Vol. 1, pp.162-163.

²⁸⁵ Barker, A.J, *The Neglected War* (London: Faber, 1967), P.65. After this battle General Barrett had resigned from his office because of ill health. See, John S. Galbraith, “No Man’s Child: The Campaign In Mesopotamia 1914-1921”, *The International History Review*, Vol. 6, No.3 (Aug. 1984), pp.358-385, p.366.

²⁸⁶ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu al-Razāq, *Al-Iraq Fī Dawray Al-’Ithilāl Wa al-’Intidāb (Iraq Between the Mandate and Occupation)*, (Baghdad, 1935), p.17.

²⁸⁷ *Fālḥ and Miqwār* are the tools that used in agriculture, fishing and livestock.

²⁸⁸ Al- Ḥussaynī, Ahmad, pp.39-42.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ The mujahedeen asked Sayid Maḥdī al-Ḥaydarī to stay at home to oversee the organization of the mujahedeen, particularly since Sayid Maḥdī al-Ḥaydarī was about 80 years old. However, Sayid Maḥdī al-Ḥaydarī rejected this idea and decided to fight with the mujahedeen. The next morning, Sayid Maḥdī al-Ḥaydarī along with the mujahedeen went set sail on a ship assigned to them and Sayid Maḥdī al-Ḥaydarī ordered the captain to anchor the ship and asked the militants to disembark near the Ḥurayba site, where they put up their tents and spent the night without knowing how far they were from the Turkish army. In the morning, his sons Sayid Maḥdī al-Ḥaydarī, ‘Asadullah and Aḥmad, went out to explore the region, and while carrying out exploration, they noted that they were

Shiite clerics succeeded in creating an alliance, which included the mujahedeen who had come out from various sects and races beside the Ottoman troops to face the British

3.3.1. Al-Shi‘iba Battle

The second battle of the first jihad movement was al-Shi‘iba. The area of al-Shi‘iba is located four kilometers from the south-east part of Basra and contained a castle of antiquity. General Barrett realised the importance of this site, as holding the ancient castle would enable the occupier to protect Basra from the attacks of the Turkish forces. Consequently, General Barrett protected the castle by using trenches, barbed wire, and sandbags.²⁹¹

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the British, the Turkish authorities had made a decision to attack the British forces stationed in Basra. In order to do this, and to take the British by surprise, the troops and the mujahedeen were massed in the area of al-Barjissiya.²⁹² The mujahedeen comprised a group of tribes,²⁹³ people from Baghdad, and Kurds.²⁹⁴ They had all responded positively to the *fatwa* of jihad under the leadership of a group of Shiite clerics.²⁹⁵ Thus, the *fatwa* succeeded in uniting the sects, such as Sunni and Shiite, as well the races, such as Arab and Kurd through creating a common denominator amongst them to face the British forces.

The Turkish forces and the mujahedeen stayed for a period of three months,²⁹⁶ until the arrival of the military commander, Sulaymān al-‘Askarī Bey, who was there

in the middle between the British forces and the Turkish forces. The sons of Sayid Mahdī al-Haydarī returned to their father and told him about this matter. Though the mujahedeen asked Sayid Mahdī al-Haydarī to withdraw, he rejected this idea and decided to fight with the Turkish forces. The mujahedeen fought side by side with the Turkish. The fighting only lasted for a few hours as the British were defeated and withdrew from the battle. See, Al-Hussaynī, Ahmad, pp.39-42.

²⁹¹ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), Vol. 4, pp.171-172.

²⁹² IOR/L/MIL/17/15/95 “Report on the Operations in the Vicinity of Shaiba” 12-14 April 1915, p.2. Al-Barjissiya is located six miles from the south-east part of Basra. See, Nadīm, Shukrī, p.25.

²⁹³ *Muthakarāt al-Ḥāj al-Fāḍil al-Mūh (Memoranda of al-Ḥāj al-Fāḍil al-Mūh)*, (Baghdad, 1986), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.52. (The clans of al-Zubayd, including Āl-Jahash, Āl-Bū Sultān, al-Sa‘īd, al-Mas‘ūd, Āl-Fatla of the west, the clan of Banī Ḥassan, the clan of al-Jubūr, the people of al-Hillah, the people of Baghdad, clans of Baghdad, Diyālī and Dilīm along with clans of Banī Ḥakīm).

²⁹⁴ IOR/L/MIL/17/15/95 “Report on the Operations in the Vicinity of Shaiba” 12-14 April 1915, p.2.

²⁹⁵ *Muthakarāt al-Ḥāj al-Fāḍil al-Mūh (Memoranda of al-Ḥāj al-Fāḍil al-Mūh)*, (Baghdad, 1986), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.52. (The Shiite clerics are Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī, Sheikh Bāqir Ḥaydar, Sayid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm).

²⁹⁶ Al-Qasāb, ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz, p.117.

to lead them into battle.²⁹⁷ He arrived on 9 March 1915, and developed a plan for an attack on the British,²⁹⁸ but the German Officer Sholes,²⁹⁹ and ‘Ajamī al-Sa‘dūn, one of the leaders of the mujahedeen, did not agree with commander Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey.³⁰⁰ Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey, however, insisted on the implementation of a plan and assigned the mission of attacking the British forces to the mujahedeen working beside the Ottoman forces.³⁰¹ Thus, the mujahedeen fought beside the Turkish forces against a common enemy according to the *fatwa* of jihad despite waiting for three months, a non-implementation in their view, and the demands placed upon them by the Ottoman military commander.

The Turkish forces and the mujahedeen began to attack the site of the British troops on 22 April 1915 and the fight continued for two days without any results.³⁰² On the third day of fighting, General Melliss arrived in the al-Shi‘iba area having travelled all the way from Egypt.³⁰³ He took over the leadership of the British forces, and as soon as he had taken command, he ordered the soldiers to go out of the trenches and attack the Turkish forces. As a result, a fierce fight broke out between the two sides,³⁰⁴ and the Turkish forces withdrew. They were defeated; only a small number of guerrillas in the Turkish army stayed and fought.³⁰⁵ The first signs of the

²⁹⁷ Al-Hasanī, ‘Abdu al-Razāq, *Al-Iraq Fī Dawray Al-‘Itihāl Wa al-‘Intidāb (Iraq Between the Mandate and Occupation)*, (Baghdad, 1935), p.17.

²⁹⁸ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), Vol. 4, p.172. (The Turkish would attack from the middle, and the mujahedeen would attack from the right and left sides).

²⁹⁹ Ḥusseīn, Al-Sha‘arbāf, “The leader Mujahid Sayid Muhammad Sa‘īd Al-Habūbī” *Āfāq Al-Najafiya*, Vol. 16 (2009), pp.374-390, p.379.

³⁰⁰ Nadīm, Shukrī, p.31. (They believed that planning a direct attack on the British whilst the latter were located in the fortified site of al-Shi‘iba area was useless and that it was enough to besiege the British, launch strikes against them, whilst also simultaneously cutting off their lines of communication).

³⁰¹ IOR/L/MIL/17/15/95 “Report on the Operations in the Vicinity of Shaiba” 12-14 April 1915, p.7. (From the point the south of Shi‘iba from al-Zubayr to ‘Ajamī al-Sa‘dūn and the ‘Ajami’s tribes with the mujahedeen of the clans of al-Mintifiq and clans of Banī Ḥakīm. On the west, he assigned ‘Abdu al-Fālih al-Sa‘dūn and Khyūn al-‘Ubīd with the militants of the Middle Euphrates and the Kurds. He also assigned the task of the southern attack to the Turkish forces). See, Al-Qasāb, ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz, p.117.

³⁰² IOR/L/MIL/17/15/95 “Report on the Operations in the Vicinity of Shaiba” 12-14 April 1915, p.2.

³⁰³ W.O. 106/886 “Operations at Shaiba: Report by Maj. General C.I. Fry, 1915 Apr. 11-Apr. 12”, p.2.

³⁰⁴ During the heavy fighting between the two sides, General Melliss sent an order to the transport brigade asking them to come quickly and remove the wounded and the injured from the scene of the battle. When the wagons and mules came they raised thick dust. The Turkish thought that this thick dust was because of the arrival of great assistance for the British from Basra. See, IOR/L/MIL/17/15/95 “Report on the Operations in the Vicinity of Shaiba” 12-14 April 1915, p.2.

³⁰⁵ Braddon, Russell, *The Siege* (London: Cape, 1969), pp.25-26.

withdrawal of the Turkish appeared in the ranks of the Mujahedeen of the Iraqi tribes, followed by the Turkish.³⁰⁶

Sayid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, a senior Shi‘a scholar in the 20th century and the secretary of Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī, stated that, on the day of the battle, the main reason for the defeat was rumour. During the battle, the mujahedeen heard rumours as to the death of the Turkish military commander, Sulaymān al-‘Askarī Bey, and all his officers. As a result of these whispers, the mujahedeen fled, but Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī and a group of mujahedeen did not flee. They settled on sending Sayid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm to the tent of the military commander Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey to clarify whether or not he was dead. When he went there, he found that Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey was alive and well; busy reading his paper. The rumour was a deception that led to defeat.³⁰⁷

One of the most important reasons for the defeat of the Ottomans and associated allies in the battle of al-Shi‘iba was that the Turkish military commander, Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey, remained in Baghdad for more than two months to receive medical treatment for the injury caused to his leg during the battle of al-Qurna. The Turkish leadership had sent another leader to replace him in the battle of al-Shi‘iba. However, Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey insisted on leading the forces personally in the battle of al-Shi‘iba, and he was transferred there on a medical stretcher. The two-month delay gave the British troops a chance to increase their fortifications at the sites they occupied; they were also able to provide their soldiers with enough gear and supplies. Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey also did not lead the battle himself because he was on a stretcher; this led to an imbalance in the defences of the Turks and the mujahedeen. Eventually, it led to their withdrawal from the battle, thinking that their military commander, Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey, had been killed. This rumour persisted even though it had been discovered, as noted, that he was alive.

³⁰⁶ They were about 47 men who bent their knees with ropes and decided to either win or die on the battlefield. They were all slaughtered. After the defeat of the Turkish in this battle, Sulaymān ‘Askarī collected his officers around him and announced that the reason for the defeat was the betrayal of the Iraqi tribes. Then he committed suicide by firing his pistol at himself. This defeat did not only affect the military commander Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey terminally, it also influenced a lot of the mujahedeen including Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥabūbī, who died due to his psychological state of mind. See, Al-Qasāb, ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz, p.118; Barker, A.J, *The Neglected War* (London, 1967), p.65; IOR/L/MIL/17/15/95 “Report on the Operations in the Vicinity of Shaiba” 12-14 April 1915, p.3; *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.77.

³⁰⁷ Al-Ḥusaynī, Ahmed, pp.76-77.

In fact, the Iraqi tribes who participated in the jihad became bored because of the three long months that they had spent waiting for the battle. The tribal leaders started to threaten to withdraw and return to their towns, claiming that the hay was running out and that this would make it difficult for them to feed their horses and other animals. They relied heavily on the rainy season to use the grass to feed their animals as well as to grow grain, rice, and other agricultural crops for their livelihood.

Moreover, the Turkish leaders badly mistreated the Iraqi tribes on many occasions; the Turkish commanders directed insults to the leaders and members of the clans. This caused a state of discontent and agitation to arise. Nevertheless, they continued to fight with great gusto for the victory of Islam. An example of these insults can be seen in what was said by Aḥmad Bey 'Awrāq, one of the leaders of the Turkish army, to the mujahedeen. He said: "if we have restored the regions of al-Shi'iba and Basra from the British forces, we have a second target, which is regaining Iraq, especially the area of Middle Euphrates at first and then the clans at the centre of the Tigris because they are traitors".³⁰⁸ Sheikh Badir al-Rumīd, the chief of the Banī Mālik clan, replied by saying, "You are the traitors of Islam and your discrimination against the Arabs is crystal clear, and the Turkish forces which should fight the British not the clans and tribes of Iraq, but the *fatwas* of our scholars oblige the tribes and clans of Iraq to fight the British in these battlefields".³⁰⁹ Another reason for the loss of the Battle of al-Shi'iba was that the Turkish forces and the mujahedeen used very old weapons that lacked basic capabilities. There was, therefore, a vast difference between the British and Turkish forces on the battlefield.

The presence of spies who reported what was going on behind the scenes to the British was another reason for the defeat of the Turkish at the Battle of al-Shi'iba. The British were able to utilise this underhanded and cunning plan because the town of al-Zubayr was a semi-autonomous place; Sheikh 'Ibrāhīm was his own ruler. The British used this city as the centre of their intelligence gathering network; they were assisted in this by Sheikh 'Ibrāhīm.³¹⁰ In addition to the role that Sheikh 'Ibrāhīm played, the British officer Captain G.E. Leachman played an important role, as he spoke the Bedouin dialect very eloquently. Once disguised through adopting Muslim

³⁰⁸ Al-Ḥusaynī, Salīm, p.101.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Bell, Gertrude, *Review Of The Civil Administration Of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner* (London: H.M.S, O., 1920), p.4.

dress, he could also freely mingle with the Bedouins and go to their cafes and meeting places.³¹¹ Through such undercover work, he was able to submit accurate reports on the conditions and equipment of the Turkish forces and the mujahedeen.

Sayid Hibat al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Shahristānī, one of the participants in the Battle of al-Shi‘iba, mentioned the causes for the defeat in his memoirs and these may be seen as some of the most important reasons cited. First, the Turkish forces did not use either telegraphs or telephone lines for organisation and coordination between themselves and the mujahedeen during their battles with British. This caused an imbalance in the communication processes used by the two sides. By contrast, the British were very good at using modern technologies. Secondly, the Turkish leadership neglected the societal needs to present thanks and appreciation to all classes of the mujahedeen for participating in battles. Thirdly, a lot of Iraqi tribal leaders did not correctly count the number of their followers in the battle. This was because they could gain more money if they claimed to have brought more people with them. This caused great disorder in the battle as the military commander designed his plans based on incorrect figures. Fourthly, a lot of the leaders of the Turkish army were very parsimonious in distributing rice and barley, ghee and other food items to their troops. This resulted in many of the mujahedeen leaving. Finally, the failure of Sulaymān ‘Askarī Bey, the military commander of the Turkish forces, to know what preparations the British had made meant that he could not plan a strong attack.³¹²

3.3.2. Arab-Stan Battle

The third battle in the first jihad movement was Arab-Stan. Arab-Stan was an area of great significance for the British because it contained wells and oil refineries. Due to this, the British government had sought to protect this area since the beginning of the war.³¹³ The area, which was under the rule of Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir, belonged to the State of Iran. When the British threatened the city of Basra, a group of scholars

³¹¹ Wilson, Arnold, *Loyalties Mesopotamia 1914 – 1917* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931). Vol. 1, p.35.

³¹² Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Wa Ḥarakat al-Jihād (Najaf and Jihad Movement)(Muthakrāt Sayid Hibat al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Shahristānī)*, (*Memorandum of Sayid Hibat al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Shahristānī*), (Beirut, 2002), pp.425-438.

³¹³ W.O. 106/881 “Instruction For and Correspondence to Colonel W.S. Delamain, 1914 Oct.-Nov”, p.2.

from the holy cities in Iraq sent letters to Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir, and demanded that he support the jihad against the British with money and anything else that he could spare.³¹⁴ Unfortunately, Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir did not care for the letters and thought that the Shiite clerics who sent them might only have done so because they were under pressure from the Turkish government. He was also conscious of the need for the nation of Iran to take a neutral position.³¹⁵ It was obvious that Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir refused to participate in the jihad movement against Britain because he was associated with Britain through a series of longstanding engagements, agreements, and common interests. Indeed, he was considered to be one of Britain’s strategic allies in the region.

Despite the refusal of Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir to participate in the jihad against the British, the tribes living in Arab-Stan, which was subject to the rule of Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir, decided to participate in the process of jihad and to reject the opinion of Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir.³¹⁶ There are three reasons for the participation of Arab-Stan tribes in the movement of jihad against the British. First, the tribes hated Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir for his intensity in the collection of taxes. The Islamic jihad in the eyes of that tribe was a revolution against him.³¹⁷ Secondly, Sayid ‘Issā Kamāl al-Dīn, the chief of the jurists of Arab-Stan at that time, had responded enthusiastically to the call for jihad and had toured the cities of Arab-Stan between the clans to exhort them to join the movement of jihad. He had had a great impact on them.³¹⁸ Thirdly, the common elements between the Iraqi people and the residents of Muhammarah, such as religion (Islam), language (Arabic) and ethnicity (Arab), led the residents of Muhammarah to participate in the jihad movement against the British.

The Turkish reached the area of al-Amara under the leadership of Tawfīq Bey al-Khāldī at the end of January 1915 and camped on the banks of the Karkheh River,

³¹⁴ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā‘iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā‘ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraq Revolution Introductions And Results)*, (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 1, pp.169-170. (The Shiite clerics were Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā’irī who had close relationships with Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir and others).

³¹⁵ Ibid., Vol. 1, p.169.

³¹⁶ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Sayid Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī Sīratuh Wa ‘Adwā’ ‘Alā Ḥayātih Wa Marjī‘iyatahu (Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī His Biography And Highlights On His Life His Clerical Organization And His Positions)*, (Qum, 2006), p.253.

³¹⁷ Al-Wardī, ‘Alī, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraḳ al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), Vol. 4, p.167.

³¹⁸ IOR/ R/15/1/712 “Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for years 1915-1919 [r] (52,39623), p.35.

20 miles west of Ahwaz; then came the mujahedeen, including scholars,³¹⁹ and the Iraqi tribes.³²⁰ As a result of the cooperation between the Turks with the mujahedeen, the tribes of Arab-Stan were encouraged to support for the jihad. On 4 February 1915, the al-Bāwiya tribes that inhabited the eastern part of al-Ahwaz announced that they too would join in with the jihad movement. They cut off the oil pipelines and set them on fire.³²¹ Thus, the alliance came to include some residents of neighbouring countries and mujahedeen from various sects and races and the Ottoman troops in order to confront the British.

On 25 February 1915, the clan of Banī Ka‘ab revolted against Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir and accused him of being an ally of Britain against the Ottoman Islamic State.³²² This clan had taken control of the town of al-Falahiya, where they had appointed Jābir al-Sayid Mish‘al as governor.³²³ This matter drove Sheikh Kha‘zal b. Jābir to collect his troops and divide them into two. The first was led by his nephew Ḥanzala and ordered to attack the clan of al-Bāwiya and control them.³²⁴ The second section was led by his son, a Jāsib, who gave the order to go to the clan of Banī Ka‘ab, and attack the clan.³²⁵ Both the nephew and the son succeeded in subjecting the two tribes; they were brought back under the control of, respectively, their uncle and father.³²⁶

The events described so far illustrate the fact that the *fatwa* influenced the residents of neighbouring countries like Muhammarah despite the fact that the *fatwa* had been refused by the ruler of Muhammarah, Shiekh Kha‘zal b. Jābir. This was

³¹⁹ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), Vol. 4, p.168. (Such as Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khalisī and his son Sheikh Muḥammad, Sayid Muḥammad, the son of Sayid Muḥammad Kāzim al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī al-Yazdī, Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā‘irī and Sayid ‘Issā Kamāl al-Dīn).

³²⁰ Al-Najār, Jamīl, p.72. (Included Āl-Fatla, known as Āl-Bū Hadla, al-Bdīr, Jilīḥa and al-Brājiand with them were the Banī Lām clans headed by Ghaḍbān al-Bnayah, and the Banī Ṭarf clans headed by ‘Awad b. Mahāwi and ‘Āsī b. Sharhān, Rabībī‘a tribes were headed by ‘Ināya b. Mājīd and the al-Razqān clans were headed by Qāsim b. ‘Ali) See, Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Wa Ḥarakat al-Jihād (Najaf and Jihad Movement)*, (Beirut, 2002), p.44.

³²¹ IOR/R/15/1/712 “Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency For Years 1915-1919 [21V] (49/396), p.32.

³²² Kha‘zal, Ḥusseīn, *Tārīkh Al-Kuwait Al-Siyāsī (Political Kuwait History)*, (Beirut, 1962), Vol. 4, p.257.

³²³ Ibid., Vol. 4, p.258.

³²⁴ IOR/R/15/1/712 “Administration Report of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for years 1915-1919 [r] (52,39623), p.35.

³²⁵ Ibid., p.21.

³²⁶ IOR/L/PS/18/B364 “Letter from Lt-Col Sir A.T. Wilson, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.M.G., D.S.O., Officiating Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department, Simla”.

because the majority of Muḥammarah's population was from the Shiite sect. Therefore, the majority of the residents of Muḥammarah responded to the *fatwa* and went out to participate in the jihad movement.

In addition, the *fatwa* of jihad influenced the population of Kuwait despite the fact that Kuwait's ruler, Sheikh Mubārak, refused the request of the Shiite scholars to participate in jihad. We may also recall that the majority of Kuwait's populations are from the Sunni sect. This was illustrated when Sheikh Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ sent support to Sheikh Kha'zal b. Jābir to suppress the revolution of the tribes.³²⁷ The Kuwaitis declined to obey the orders of Sheikh Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ as a result of the impact of the call of jihad and the calls of Sheikh Ḥāfiẓ Wahba and Sheikh Muḥammad Shanqīṭī.³²⁸ However, both Sheikhs, Sheikh Ḥāfiẓ Wahba and Muḥammad Shanqīṭī considered that the obedience of Sheikh Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ was against Islam because he was supporting the ruler of the al-Muḥmmarah area, Sheikh Kha'zal b. Jābir, against Muslim tribes in the area. These tribes were intending to fight the British, who were occupying the lands of Islam.³²⁹ As a result, a group of Kuwaitis (including Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shanqīṭī) left Kuwait and joined the mujahedeen in the al-Shi'iba area, joining with them in fighting the British.³³⁰ Thus, the *fatwa* of jihad succeeded in penetrating the border and influenced the inhabitants of neighbouring countries and succeeded in creating the common denominator needed to fight against a common enemy.

General Barrett sent a force under the leadership of General Robinson to Ahwaz to attack the Turkish forces and the mujahedeen who were in the campsite (al-Ghadīr). The latter were under the leadership of Tawfīq Bey al-Khāldī.³³¹ The

³²⁷ Kha'zal, Ḥussein, Vol. 4, p.258.

³²⁸ Ibid., pp.258-260.

³²⁹ When Jābir insisted on executing the orders of his father, Sheikh Mubārak. A group of Kuwaitis came to him hiding their weapons under their clothes and they refused the orders of Sheikh Mubārak. Jābir informed his father about this event. Sheikh Mubārak sent a message to his son Jābir threatening those who refused to carry out his orders. When the people of Kuwait heard about the threats of Sheikh Mubārak, they kept on urging Kuwaitis who refused the orders of Sheikh Mubārak to obey them, but they failed in their attempt. Consequently, the notables of Kuwait were forced to send a delegation to Sheikh Mubārak in the al-Mahmmarah area to apologize to him. Sheikh Mubārak returned to Kuwait and summoned each of the two Sheikhs, Ḥāfiẓ Wahba and Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shanqīṭī, and he said to them, I am an Ottoman Muslim who gets jealous for my religion and for my own country and I do not want it to be stricken by any harmful thing. I agreed with the British on something that benefits to my country and me. Then, Sheikh Mubārak decided to prosecute all the personalities who had urged Kuwaitis to refuse his orders. Ibid., pp.258-260.

³³⁰ Albātenī, Khāled, *The Arabian Mission's Effect On Kuwaiti Society, 1910–1967*, Ph.D. thesis (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2014), p.105.

³³¹ Al-Hāshmī, Ṭāha, *Ḥarb al-Irāq (Iraq War)*, (Baghdad, 1936), Vol. 1, p.118.

British reached a site four miles from the campsite, where they fired their guns on the Turkish forces and the mujahedeen. General Robinson was surprised by the crowds of clans who assaulted him; fierce fighting resulted in heavy losses on both sides.³³² As a result, the British withdrew from the battle but the Turks committed a grave mistake that helped the British troops to withdraw from the battle with minimal losses. Unfortunately, the Turks accidentally threw bombs at the tribes who were fighting with them; this is an early example of friendly fire in a combat zone.³³³

The leader Muḥammad Fāḍil Pāshā al-Dāghistānī arrived at the campsite in late March 1915 and assumed command of the Turkish forces in place of the military commander Tawfīq Bey al-Khāldī; Muḥammad Fāḍil Pāshā al-Dāghistānī's mission was to attack the al-Ahwaz area and the oil pipelines.³³⁴ He attacked the al-Ahwaz area twice, on 11 April 1915 and 12 April 1915, but his attempts failed because of widespread chaos amongst the Iraqi tribes who were with him.³³⁵ Some people attribute that chaos and discontent to mismanagement by the former commander, Tawfīq Bey al-Khāldī. He had received large sums of money from the supreme command, which was supposed to be distributed amongst the tribes. Despite the fact that Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī had warned against distributing the money to tribes, Tawfīq Bey al-Khāldī insisted on distributing it in this way and assigned Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to complete the task. When Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī started to distribute the money amongst the tribes, disputes began between the heads of the tribes as they started to calculate their shares and found that they were being short-changed compared to the heads of other clans. The members of the clans also complained and accused their superiors of taking the money for themselves.³³⁶ After the completion of the withdrawal, the mujahedeen returned to their areas due to the lack of a new plan by the Turkish authorities to confront the British forces. Thus, the first phase of the jihad ended.

During their fight against the British, the mujahedeen were accused by the leaders of the Turks and others of having not participated in the process of jihad because of the religious opinions of clerics or the need to fight in the defence of their

³³² Ibid., pp.118-119.

³³³ Moberly, F.J, Vol. 1, p.185.

³³⁴ Al-Hāshimī, Ṭāha, Vol. 1, p.119.

³³⁵ Al-Wardī, 'Alī, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al-'Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), Vol. 4, p.180.

³³⁶ Ibid.

homeland, but rather order to obtain booty gained during their battles against the British. Since most of the mujahedeen come from the Iraqi tribes who were Bedouins who were used to taking such spoils, such behaviour was part of the habits that were inherited from Bedouins generation after generation. It is also linked to courage and is within the culture of the Bedouin community; it is not considered to be a sin. The accusation that the mujahedeen participated in the process of fighting the British only to take the spoils is, however, inaccurate. When the mujahedeen participated in the jihad, they knew the large military differences between themselves and the British forces. In addition, the Ottoman Empire treated a lot of Iraqi tribes with injustice and repression before the British forces occupied Iraq in 1914. The Ottoman Empire had put many Iraqi tribal leaders in prisons for many years because of personal differences in some cases or due to misconduct or accusations of criminal acts without trials. When the clerics issued *fatwas* of jihad, however, we find that the first who answered the call of jihad were Iraqi tribes oppressed by the Ottoman government; this confirms that there was a deep desire within these tribes to resist and expel the coloniser occupying their country. They abandoned their disputes and differences with the Ottoman Empire and went to fight under its leadership.

Some of the mujahedeen and some of those fleeing military service started a disobedience movement against the Ottoman government after they returned to their towns. They hoped that their actions would bring autonomy to their cities. There are many factors that contributed to the emergence of the disobedience movement. First, the Ottoman forces suffered many defeats by the British forces, and these defeats gave an impression to the mujahedeen that the Ottoman forces were powerless and would not be able to suppress any revolt. Secondly, it was a result of the emergence of signs of nation building, where the people sought self-government for their cities; a desire that was in keeping with the aforementioned Fourteen Points of President Wilson. Then, because the Ottomans were busy fighting the British, it followed that they would not be able to divert troops to deal with an internal disobedience movement. The first signs of the disobedience movement emerged in Najaf,³³⁷

³³⁷ The disobedience movement in Najaf began on 22 May 1915 when a group of residents of the city and some who had fled military service attacked government centres, leading to a battle between the two sides. As a result, the Turkish soldiers surrendered. The Ottomans sent a delegation to the holy city of Najaf to negotiate with its people to solve the problem by peaceful means. The delegation held a conference and the members of the delegation spoke about the Ottoman Empire and its role in facing the infidels and that there was a religious duty on all Muslims to cooperate with it. The people of Najaf responded that they did not want to start the

Karbala,³³⁸ Hillah,³³⁹ Simmwa,³⁴⁰ and in other regions of the Middle Euphrates. The disobedience movement had a negative impact on administrative, military and economic aspects of the Ottoman Empire. In terms of the administrative aspect, the Ottoman authorities lost control of these cities. In addition, it was possible that the people who inhabited these cities would collaborate with the British forces, which would have been harmful to the Ottoman Empire. In economic terms, the Middle Euphrates region was one of the richest areas of Iraq regarding agricultural production. The Ottoman authorities used the agricultural products from this area to supply the military forces in various parts of Iraq. Consequently, if the local governments took control of these areas, they would deprive the Ottoman authorities of the products needed for their frontline troops. From a military point of view, the Ottoman Empire was at war with Britain and this was the priority for all of its troops. As a result, it was better to keep all the troops fighting against the British instead of sending them to end the revolt. The Ottoman authorities sent the commander ‘Ākef Bey and a group of soldiers to subdue the rebellion movement in Hillah, but they acted wisely in some cities by using peaceful means to stop the rebellion. They sent delegations to resolve the problem of the revolt in the cities of Najaf and Karbala

disobedience movement, but that the wrong actions of representatives of the Ottoman Empire in Najaf had incited it. See, *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.76.

³³⁸ The disobedience movement in Karbala began on 27 June 1915, and was headed by Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamūna and his younger brother Fakhrī Kamūna. They were accompanied by a group of people who had fled the military and a group of residents of Karbala. They attacked the centre of the Ottoman government in the city, and as a result of this attack, the Ottoman forces that were present there surrendered. Reconciliation was reached between the two parties, and the Ottoman government sent a new Kurd governor named Muḥammad Ḥamaza Bey to Karbala. See, *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, pp.78-79; Robert, Jarman, *Iraq Administration report 1914-1932*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge Archive Editions, 1992), “Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories of Iraq 1914-1918, p.28; Bell, Gertrude, *Review Of The Civil Administration Of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner* (London: H.M.S.O., 1920), p.30.

³³⁹ The disobedience movement in al-Hillah began on 23 August 1915. The main reason behind the disobedience was that one of the members of the Turkish forces stationed in al-Hillah chased those were fleeing from military service and during the chase, he was killed. Then there was an exchange of fire between the people of Hillah and the Turkish soldiers. An agreement was reached between both parties through the mediation of Sayid Muḥammad‘Ali Kamūna al-Qazwīnī. According to that agreement, Hillah was no longer under the authority of the Ottoman Empire. See, *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.86; Robert, Jarman, “Administration Report, Hillah District 1917”, Vol. 1, p.103; Karkūsh, Yūsif, *Tārikh al-Hillah (The History Of The City Of Al-Hillah)*, (Najaf, 1965) Vol. 1, p.165.

³⁴⁰ Al-Qasāb, ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz, pp.122-129.

instead of sending military forces, which succeeded in countering the disobedience movement.

3.4. The Second Jihad Movement (1915–1916)

The Ottoman Empire decided to call for jihad again against the British by provoking religious fervour especially amongst the Shiites in the middle Euphrates region through a call for jihad under the banner of the Ḥaydarī Flag.³⁴¹ They invited the Shiite clerics and clans especially in the Middle Euphrates to become involved in the jihad movement through raising this flag because they knew the status of ‘Ali b. ‘Abī Ṭālib amongst those who belonged to the Shiite sect. To make a reality of this the Ottoman Empire sent a delegation of influential personalities to Najaf to bring the Ḥaydarī flag from the shrine of ‘Ali b. ‘Abī Ṭālib.³⁴² The delegation succeeded in engaging the Shiites in jihad and the Ḥaydarī Flag was taken by the clerics on a guided tour of Najaf to provoke religious fervour amongst the residents of Najaf.³⁴³ Afterwards, they headed to Kufa with a group of Shiite scholars,³⁴⁴ along with a group of Arab and the Iranian students of the religious sciences.³⁴⁵ Whilst in Kufa, Sheikh Nu‘mān al-‘A‘zamī (Sunni) and Sayid Muḥammad Ḥassan al-Kalīdār (Shi‘a) gave a speech to the crowds and incited them to participate in the second jihad movement against the British.³⁴⁶ Thus, the Ottoman authorities succeeded in involving the Shiites in the second jihad movement through provoking religious fervour amongst them.³⁴⁷ During the second jihad movement, the *fatwa* of jihad moved from rural areas to the cities.

³⁴¹ Ḥaydarī Flag: is the flag, which was placed on the tomb of ‘Ali b. ‘Abī Ṭālib in Najaf.

³⁴² *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.124. The delegation consisted of Fu‘ād Bey al-Daftarī, Muzhir Pāshā, Hikmat Bey Sulaymān, ‘Izzat Pāshā, the judge Baghdad, and Shukrī Bey, an influential personality in Hillah and arrived in Najaf on 29 October 1915, and was hosted by Sayid Muḥammad Ḥassan al-Kalīdār. See, Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), Vol. 4, p.273.

³⁴³ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Wa Ḥarakat al-Jihād (Najaf and Jihad Movement)*, (*Memorandum of Sayid Hādī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’*), (*Memorandum of Sayid Hādī Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’*), (Beirut, 2002), pp.425-438.

³⁴⁴ Marzah, Mundhir, *Tārīkh Al-‘Iraq Fī ‘Aqdayan 1900-1920 (The History of Iraq in Two Decades 1900-1920)*, (Najaf, 2009), pp.282-283.

³⁴⁵ *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoranda of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, pp.124-125.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.125.

³⁴⁷ A group of people from Najaf and a group of fellows from the clan of Banī Ḥassan came to Kufa to join the jihad. In addition, Sayid Muḥammad, the son of Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, arrived in Kufa to join the jihad on behalf of his father. Moreover, the mujahedeen left Kufa and

During the second jihad movement, the Shiite and Sunni clerics along with some military leaders of the Ottoman Empire sought to develop an alliance between various sects in Iraq society in order to confront the British force. Sheikh Nu‘mān al-’A‘zamī, a Sunni scholar, gave an enthusiastic speech to the mujahedeen to face the British,³⁴⁸ whilst other Shiite clerics delivered speeches to the mujahedeen to incite them to jihad.³⁴⁹ Furthermore, scholars and fighters from al-Kadhimain were invited by scholars to visit al-’A‘zamiya. They entered the Mosque of Imam Abū Ḥanīfa, and Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jawāhirī recited a prayer. Having done so, Sheikh Nu‘mān al-’A‘zamī gave a speech calling for the union of the world of Islamic sects, namely Sunnis and Shiites, and implored them to stand united against the British.³⁵⁰ This speech came in reaction to the meeting of the notables of Baghdad, where the attendees had agreed to support the British, except for ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī, who refused to discontinue his support for the Turkish.³⁵¹

It can be inferred that the Shiite and Sunni clerics relied on delivering on religious speeches to unify the sects in Iraq in order to form an alliance to confront the British. These actions also showed the first signs of nation building to face challenges and changes.

The Ottoman authorities foiled this matter, however, after they had backed away from furthering the second jihad movement. There was a feeling that there was no need for further fights after the glorious victories that had been achieved by Turkish forces at the Battle of Salmān Pāk and the withdrawal of the British to the area of al-Kut. At that point, it was decided to dispense with the mujahedeen in a diplomatic way after seeing that there was no need for them; it was felt that the Turks

headed towards to Baghdad and on their way there they incited the residents of al-Kafil, al-Ṭuwīrij, Sadat al-Ḥindiya, and Musayab to participate in the Jihad. The mujahedeen arrived in Baghdad on 28 November 1915 and waited in al-Kadhimain for the Ottoman authorities to transfer them to the battlefield. See, *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, pp.125-126; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Wa Ḥarakat al-Jihād (Najaf and Jihad Movement)(Muthākrot of Sayid Muḥammad Ḥussīn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’)*, (Memoirs’ of Sayid Muḥammad Ḥussīn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’), (Beirut, 2002), pp.372-377.

³⁴⁸ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Wa Ḥarakat al-Jihād (Najaf and Jihad Movement)(Muthākrot of Sayid Muḥammad Ḥussīn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’)*, (Memoirs’ of Sayid Muḥammad Ḥussīn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā’), (Beirut, 2002), p.250.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.375-376. (The Shiite clerics included the Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī, Sayid Muḥammad Muḥammad al-Yazdī, and Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jawāhirī).

³⁵⁰ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā’iyā Min Tārīkh al-’Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)*, (Beirut, 2005), Vol. 4, p.280.

³⁵¹ F.O.371/2771 “Turkey (War) Code 44W File 10252-18845”, 1916. (The dignitaries of Baghdad, which included ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Kīlānī, Mūsā al-Bājajī, Jamīl Zādah ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān, Yūsif al-Suwīdī, Yūsif al-Bājajī, ‘Abdu al-Latīf Thunayān and Rāshid al-Hāshimī).

alone were able to defeat the British troops. As a result of this, a lot of mujahedeen withdrew and returned to their cities. Thus, the second jihad movement ended.³⁵²

The withdrawal of the mujahedeen from the fighting did, however, have a negative impact on the Ottomans' military situation. It would have been possible for the Turks to benefit from them in different locations during their confrontations with the British, especially in Baghdad, which was an important and strategic location. The fall of Baghdad would significantly have affected the Turkish forces. The course of events was also not in favour of the Ottoman Empire. The Empire needed to fight back against the British; it needed every fighter to help to slow down the advance of the British who were coming to occupy Baghdad. With hindsight, it can be seen that it would have been better for the Ottoman authorities not to dispense with the mujahedeen despite the huge amount of money that their services cost. As a result of such mistakes, the British occupied Baghdad and other Iraqi cities.

The participation of the Iraqi people in the second jihad movement was not like the first jihad movement for several reasons. First, the Ottoman Empire was weaker and unable to face British troops alone, and this was clear during the first jihad movement. Secondly, the ill treatment by the Ottoman Empire of the leaders and members of clans before the war and during the first jihad movement was reflected negatively during the second jihad. Thirdly, the British forces occupied

³⁵² Al-Najār, Jamīl, pp.86-87. (The news arrived in mid-January 1916 about the incursion of the Russian troops in Iran and their movement towards Iraq's borders. There were telegrams from some Iranians to Najaf scholars asking them to rescue them from the Russians. On January 18, the manager of Karbala city Hamza Bey appeared in al-Kadhimain to meet with clerics and discuss how to incite the people to jihad in Iran. The Turkish government sent troops and ammunition in large quantities to the Iranian border. As a result of these events, a telegram arrived in early February 1916 to the associate of the governor in Baghdad, Khalīl Bey, who replaced Nūr al-Dīn. The telegram requested those scholars and the Mujahedeen to meet him in the area of al-Kut to discuss Iran. The scholars and Mujahedeen were suspicious of the request of Khalīl Bey, as they did not know his objectives and motivations. On February 14, 1916, the mujahedeen, including clerics, leaders and members of the Iraqi tribes, set sail upon the Turkish Ship (Burhāniya) from Baghdad. They arrived at the headquarters of Khalīl Bey in al-Kut on February 1916. The clerics remained in al-Kut for about ten days, and during that time, more disturbing news about Iran reached them; Russian troops had managed to occupy Kermanshah and were approaching Khāniqān. As a result, the clerics and the mujahedeen left al-Kut. Some returned to Kadhimain and thereafter trekked back to their cities, and some went to Shaṭra to assist Sheikh Khiyūn al-'Abūdī the chief of the al-'Abūdī clan who was fighting the British troops with a bunch of mujahedeen consisting of Iraqi tribes but without the participation of the Turkish forces. They managed to defeat the British at the Battle of al-Baṭinja on February 1916). See, *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī* (*Memoirs' of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī*), (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.158 and 167; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Wa Ḥarakat al-Jihād (Najaf and Jihad Movement)* (*Muthākrat of Sayid Muḥammad Ḥussīn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā'*), (*Memoirs' of Sayid Muḥammad Ḥussīn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā'*), (Beirut, 2002), p.377; Thomas, Bertram, *Alarms and Excursions in Arabia* (London. 1931), pp.78-79.

many areas in Iraq. Fourthly, the British forces succeeded in obtaining the support of many tribal leaders by giving them money or positions. Finally, the battles between the British and Ottoman forces affected trade movements inside Iraq, and this had negative consequences for the population.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has provided clear evidence of the role of Shiite clerics in forming a common denominator amongst the sects in Iraq, which led to the emergence of an alliance that confronted the British. Their actions also showed the first signs of nation building to face the challenges and changes.

Since the early days of the British occupation of Iraq, the Ottoman Empire had sought to involve the Shiites in their fight against the British. The Ottoman Empire had realised their inability to involve the Shiites due to their strained relationship over a long period of time. Therefore, the Ottomans adopted a policy of highlighting the existence of common elements between the two parties, especially in terms of religion (Islam), in order to persuade the Shiites to fight the British. The Ottoman Empire sent several delegations to the Shiite clergy in Najaf to persuade them to issue religious *fatwas* to fight the British in order to defend Islam. In this, the Ottoman Empire was successful and a group of Shiite scholars issued *fatwas* of jihad in order to defend Islam. A series of rallying religious speeches was also given and supportive messages were sent to tribal leaders and some of them sent their sons to jihad. Thus, a common denominator was formed between the Ottoman Empire and the Shiite religious institution in the city of Najaf and other holy cities to confront a common enemy.

The Shiite clerics in the holy cities succeeded through *fatwas* and other methods in organizing resistance against the British. In so doing they also involved the tribes of the Middle Euphrates, residents of Baghdad, Kurds, and other ethnic groups, as well uniting the different sects and races in the regions of Iraq to jihad. This led to the creation of an alliance to confront the British and this alliance contributed to the appearance of the signs of nation building.

In this way, the first and second jihad movements began. During these movements, a common denominator was formed, which played a role in creating an alliance through the uniting of the different sects, races and social groups in Iraq, and

in some neighbouring countries such as Kuwait and Muhammarah, in order to confront a common enemy: the British occupation. This alliance contributed to the emergence of signs of nation building. The common denominator was not only formed through shared ideological solidarity, it also involved the delineation of a common enemy

During the first jihad movement (1914–1915), the various sects, races, and social groups in Iraq fought along with Ottoman forces many battles against the British. During these battles, the Ottoman authorities made many mistakes that contributed to the failure of the jihad movement; for instance, the leaders of the Turks accused some of mujahedeen who participated in jihad movement of only doing so in order to obtain booty. Moreover, the Turkish leaders badly mistreated some of the leaders of Iraqi tribes. As a result, many of mujahedeen returned to their towns and the first jihad movement ended.

Later, the second jihad movement was declared (1915–1916). During the second jihad movement, the Ottoman Empire relied on provoking religious fervour amongst the Shiite to involve them in jihad. As a result, many of the scholars, clerics, leaders, and members of the clans in the Middle Euphrates region accepted the call of jihad and decided to confront the British and they came out from their towns to support the Turkish forces. However, the Turks found that they no longer needed them after the victory that they had achieved in the Battle of Salmān Pāk. The government therefore dispensed with the clerics, scholars, leaders, associated clansmen and others, and the mujahedeen returned to their towns. Thus, the Ottoman policy caused the failure of the first and second jihad movement and ended the alliance. It can be concluded that the withdrawal of the mujahedeen had an impact on the Ottoman Empire and contributed to the fall of Baghdad and others cities to the British.

Chapter Four

The Revolution in the Holy City of Najaf in 1918

After the success of the British occupation of Baghdad on 11 March 1917 and the withdrawal of Ottoman forces, the British initiated several political and military measures in the Middle Euphrates region. However, residents of the Middle Euphrates did not accept these measures. At the same time, news reached some of the Shiite clerics and the intellectuals in the holy cities about the intention of the British to rule Iraq after the leaking of secret treaties among allies, including the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This had a significant impact on the Arab world, including the people of Najaf. As a result of these events, a group of Shiite clerics in Najaf decided to establish political parties and associations to lead on political issues in Iraq. They also sought to move away from the established central authority towards decentralized authority. As part of this wider movement, a group of Shiite clerics established a political association in Najaf in late 1917 and early 1918; this was called the League of the Islamic Awakening (*Jim 'yat al-Nahḍa al-'Islamiya*). Its intention was to lead resistance against the British authorities. With the establishment of the League, the second stage of Shiite resistance began against the British. During this period, the association worked on cooperating with the majority of the sects and races in Iraq and sought to attract them to work collectively through relying on the existence of common elements amongst them, such as religion, language, ethnicity, anti-colonisation sentiment and others. This led to the formation of the signs of identity that contributed to nation building in order to resist the British authorities.

This chapter focuses on the second stage of the Shiite resistance against the British, which was the Najaf revolution of 1918. In so doing so, this chapter considers the reasons that led to the change and development of Shiite political ideology. Thereafter, it analyses the role of the League of Islamic Awakening (*Jim 'yat al-Nahḍa al-'Islamiya*) in creating organized resistance and what role this played in forming an identity which contributed to nation building in order to face the British forces.

4.1. Background to Najaf

Najaf is a significant city in Iraq for political and religious reasons. For centuries, the Shiite scholars in Najaf were keen to confirm their political independence and refused to succumb to the central authority in Baghdad.³⁵³ In political terms, Najaf is important because it was the headquarters of a chief of the Shiite religious authority. He exercised his religious and political authority over Shiites not only in Iraq but all over the world. It is noteworthy that all the countries that have been able to seize Iraq throughout history have avoided taking any action that could have negatively affected the status of the scholars in Najaf.³⁵⁴

In addition, the city of Najaf has a religious and sacred status.³⁵⁵ Najaf is compared to al-'Azhar in Cairo and al-Zaytuna in Tunisia, but al-'Azhar and al-Zaytuna are two centres for the study of religious sciences of the Sunni doctrine, whereas Najaf is a religious and educational centre for the Shiite doctrine. Najaf is one of the holy cities of the Islamic world. It therefore ranks alongside Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. If any serious problem originates in the Shiite world, not just in Najaf, everyone looks to the holy city of Najaf and waits for the *fatwa* of the chief of Shiite religious authority, who is the vice Imam of the twelve Imams of the Shiites during the time of absenteeism.³⁵⁶

The population of Najaf was about 35,000 in 1908,³⁵⁷ and was divided into three categories. The first category was the Iraqis, who numbered about 20,000, and included *al-Zuqurt* and *al-Shumurt*, mostly traders and some professionals, and 3,000 clerics. This category had dominance, power and social influence in Najaf.³⁵⁸ *Al-Zuqurt* and *al-Shumurt* were two military militias that emerged in Najaf in 1813 alongside the religious leadership and controlled over the four quarters of Najaf, which are al-Mishraq- al-Buraq- al-Huwish and al-Amara. They were joined by a large number of the people who resided within Najaf city. During the period of this study, 'Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal headed the quarter of al-'Amara, while Sayid Maḥdī al-

³⁵³ Al-Nifisī, 'Abduallah, p.47.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., pp.47-48.

³⁵⁵ Lyell, Thomas, *The Ins And Out Of Mesopotamia* (London; A.M. Philpot L.T.D, 1923), p.17.

³⁵⁶ Al-Nifisī, 'Abduallah, p.50.

³⁵⁷ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Al-Najaf Fī Rubī ' Qarn Munthu 1908 (Najaf, In The Quarter Century Since 1908)*, (Beirut, 2005), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.61.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., pp.61-62.

Sayid Salmān controlled the quarter of al-Huwiesh, Kāzīm Ṣabī headed the quarter of al-Buraq, and al-Ḥāj Sa‘ad al-Ḥāj Rāḍī headed the quarter of al-Mishraq.³⁵⁹

The second category was immigrants from Persia and India and other countries. They were a minority within the Najafi community, and their number in 1908 was about 7,000.³⁶⁰ They had integrated themselves completely within the Najafi community; some even became Iraqi citizens and enjoyed all Iraqi citizen’s rights.³⁶¹ The third and final category in the Najafi community was clerics; they were divided into Iraqi and immigrant clerics. The number of immigrants was estimated to be about 5,000 while the Iraqis numbered nearly 3,000.³⁶² They migrated from various parts of the world and settled in Najaf to seek knowledge.³⁶³ A number of them continued to live in Najaf after the end of their studies, and some played a significant role in the development of the history of Najaf city with regard to its religious, political and social aspects. Thus, in the holy city of Najaf there were two leaderships. The first was the religious leadership, represented by the clerics, which was led by the highest religious authority. The second was the military militias, represented by *al-Zuqurt* and *al-Shumurt*. Both sets of leadership played important roles in the events of the Najaf revolution.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁹ Al-‘Asdī, Ḥasan, *Thawrat Al-Najaf (The Revolution of Najaf)*, (Baghdad, 1975), p.44. In the beginning of nineteenth century, Najaf was attacked several times by Wahhabis. As a result, Sheikh Ja‘far Kāshif al-Gitā’ ordered a group of young men in Najaf, who were called *al-Zuqurt*, to face the attacks of Wahhabis and he had supplied them with weapons and money. The main reason for naming them *al-Zuqurt* was due to the fact that they used to go hunting birds in the desert of Najaf. They succeeded in facing the Wahhabis attack and this provided them with more power in Najaf. *Al-Zuqurt* were accused of the assassination of Mullāh Maḥmūd Ṭāhir. Therefore, the friends of Mullāh Maḥmūd Ṭāhir, who were named *al-Shimrit*, demanded revenge from the assassin’s of Mullāh Maḥmūd Ṭāhir. As a result, conflict between the two sides took place and continued for a long period of time. As a result, *al-Zuqurt* and *al-Shimrit* controlled over the quarters of Najaf. See, Āl-Ḥabūbah, Ja‘far, *Mādī al-Najaf Wa Ḥādīruh (Najaf’s Past and Present)*, (Beirut, 2009), (First published 193) Vol. 3, pp.330-340; C.O. 691/1 “Baghdad Administration Report, 1917”, p.142.

³⁶⁰ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Al-Najaf Fī Rubī‘ Qarn Munthu 1908 (Najaf, In The Quarter Century Since 1908)*, (Beirut, 2005), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.62.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.62.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p.63.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ IOR/L/PS/732/1 “Mesopotamia: fortnightly reports by High Commissioner, Letter of Office Civil Commissioner to India Office London”. 24 January 1918, p.6.

4.2. The impact of British policy in the Middle Euphrates region after the fall of Baghdad

The British gained control over Baghdad on 11 March 1917,³⁶⁵ after the withdrawal of Turkish forces.³⁶⁶ Afterwards, the British initiated a series of political and military measures in the Middle Euphrates region. It is important to mention that the British authorities did not have experience in dealing with the residents of the Middle Euphrates region, and this resulted in the creation of disputes and clashes between the British forces and the mostly native population. Such problems contributed to the creation of resistance against the British in Najaf.

The British authorities distributed a proclamation drafted by Sir Mark Sykes,³⁶⁷ and in the name of General Maude on 19 March 1917 in Iraq.³⁶⁸ General Maude, saw it as unnecessary and held that the policy would create confusion in the minds of the Arabs as to the future intentions of Great Britain. He also felt that it would unduly arouse their hopes and ambitions at a time when the authority of the British army must remain supreme and be unquestioned in the Occupied Territories.³⁶⁹ Despite the concerns of General Maude, Sir Percy Cox stuck to the content of the proclamation. As a result, a dispute emerged between General Maude and Sir Percy Cox. Eventually, the crisis ended with the granting to Sir Percy Cox of the powers that he requested after his disagreement with General Maude.³⁷⁰ As a result of the proclamation of the British policies announced, the Iraqi people were divided into two factions. The first supported the Turks and tried to organize the Iraqis to defend Baghdad. The second faction called for the establishment of an Arab state and sought to unite the Arabs in order to face the British forces that had occupied the territories

¹² IOR/L/PS/18/B273 “Middle East Committee. Mesopotamia: British Engagements as to future Status, [r], 31, p.1.

³⁶⁶ IOR/L/PS/11/21 “Mesopotamia: Fall of Baghdad Intention of Turkish Government”

³⁶⁷ Drafted by Sir Mark Sykes. See, Graves, Philip, *The Life Of Sir Percy Cox* (London; Melbourne: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd, 1941), p.218.

³⁶⁸ IOR/L/PS/18/B273 “Middle East Committee. Mesopotamia: British Engagements as to Future Status, [r], p.1. The proclamation read as follow: “The Arabs were assured that the British Government bore no enmity or ill-will against the populace; that it had no desire to treat them as enemies so long as they themselves remain friendly and neutral and refrain from taking up arms against her British. On the contrary, the British government hoped to prove to be good friends and protectors. The inhabitants were assured that, under the British flag, they would enjoy the benefits of liberty and justice in regard to religious and secular affairs, and that is was the wish of the British government to free the Arabs from the oppression of the Turks and bring about an advancement and increase of prosperity and trade. See, Ireland, Philip, p.71.

³⁶⁹ Ireland, Philip, p.99.

³⁷⁰ Mālik, Muḥammad, p.332.

of Iraq.³⁷¹ Thus, the first signs of organised resistance against the British that emerged in the middle Euphrates region can be evaluated as having been due to the nature of British policies in Iraq.

The British authorities appointed political rulers and conducted several administrative reforms in various areas of Iraq. However, these were rejected by lots of the residents of Iraq and especially those who lived in the Middle Euphrates region. The British authorities appointed Captain Balfour as a political governor for the al-Shamiyah province, which also included the areas of Najaf, Kufa, Shamiyah, Abu Suakhir, Hor-ad-Dukhn, al-Mishkhab and Ghammas.³⁷² In addition, the British appointed Ḥamīd Khān, a political aide to the governor in Najaf. Further, the British appointed Sarkīs, a young Christian, as its representative in Kufa.³⁷³ Maḥmūd al-Ṭabaqgālī was appointed as a representative of Abu Sukhair.³⁷⁴ These political appointments were not acceptable to several residents of these areas because these cities had been self-governing since the Turkish had abandoned them in 1916 – one year earlier.³⁷⁵ In addition, most of the people of Najaf did not feel comfortable with the appointment of Ḥamīd Khān as their governor in spite of their links to his family. This was because they felt he was dominated by the influence of the British.³⁷⁶ Furthermore, the British formed a local police or military force of the Iraqi people, which was called "al-Shubana", but many of the people called that group the

³⁷¹ Al-‘Umar, Fārūq, *Ḥawl Al-Siyāsa Al-Birīṭāniya Fī Al-Irāq 1914-1921 (Around the British Policy in Iraq 1914-1921)*, (Baghdad, 1977), pp.76-77.

³⁷² Al-Shanābī, ‘Abd al-Stār, “*al-Wad’ al-‘Idārī Li Madīnat al-Najaf Wa ‘Atharuh Fī al-Nashāṭ al-Siyāsī Li al-Hawza al-‘Almiya 1917-1924*” “*The Administrative Situation Of The Holy City Of Najaf And its Impact on Political Activity of Hawza*”, *Journal of Afāq al-Njafiya*, Vol. 24, (2011), pp.233-260, at p.238. Ḥamīd Khān came from a Najafi family and was fluent in English because he had been educated in the schools of India. He refused the job at first, but the British sought help from Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to persuade him to accept this position. Eventually, they succeeded and Ḥamīd Khān agreed to take on the position. See, IOR/L/PS/732/1 “Mesopotamia: fortnightly reports by High Commissioner, Letter of Office Civil Commissioner to the Political Secretary India Office London”, 24 January 1918, p.6; Al-Khalīlī, Ja‘far, Vol. 1, p.11.

³⁷³ Robert, Jarman, “Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories of Iraq 1914 - 1918”, Vol. 1, p.31.

³⁷⁴ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba ‘da Maqatal Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf after the Killing of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), p.11.

³⁷⁵ Robert, Jarman, “Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories of Iraq 1914 - 1918”, Vol. 1, p.28.

³⁷⁶ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba ‘da Maqatal Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf after the Killing of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), p.11.

"infidels" because of their cooperation with the British. As a result, the group became social outcasts in several regions of Iraq.³⁷⁷

The British authorities also appointed Captain W.M. Marshall as governor in Najaf to replace Ḥamīd Khān.³⁷⁸ Marshall arrived in Najaf in early February 1918, and took the home of ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal.³⁷⁹ When he first arrived he wanted to restructure the police force because they tended to support the leaders of Najaf. As a consequence, Marshall resorted to using police personnel from the Shiite community who had been with him in the cities of Baghdad and al-Kut. Most of the personnel were Kurds from Kermanshah and he recruited others from outside Najaf.³⁸⁰ As well as this, he cut off the financial allocations that had previously been given to the leaders of Najaf to limit the power and influence of the leaders of Najaf.³⁸¹ These measures led to increased hostility between the leaders of Najaf and the British authorities. Furthermore, the British established a system for the collection of municipal taxes; this replaced the earlier system which had been more erratic in terms of its collection. Through this measure, it can be deduced that the hostility of the people increased against the British because they had not been used to paying taxes during the period of Ottoman rule.

The lack of experience of the British authorities in dealing with the residents was clear in Najaf when the British occupied these areas. The British sought, through their policy, to attract the leaders and elders of these areas by giving them money or by appointing them to positions of leadership. ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal, the head of the quarter of al-‘Amara in Najaf, was the first one to be contacted by the British and he

³⁷⁷ *Taqrīr Sirī Li Dā‘irat Al-‘Istikhbārāt Al-Birīṭāniya ‘An Al-‘Ashāir Al-‘Irāqiya (A Confidential Report of the British Intelligence about Iraqi Clans)*, Translated by Al-Ṭāhir, ‘Abd Al-Jalīl (Beirut, 1958), p.2.

³⁷⁸ Wilson, Arnold, *Loyalties Mesopotamia 1917-1920* (London, 1936), Vol. 2, p.73. Gertrude Bell described Captain Marshall as being unique in his acceptance of the difficult task entrusted to him. He had knowledge of the Persian language and had hoped to return to Britain the next summer for his marriage, but when he was offered this new position, he expressed his satisfaction to accept this great responsibility. See, Bell, Gertrude, *Review Of The Civil Administration Of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner* (London, 1920), p.38.

³⁷⁹ Robert, Jarman “Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories of Iraq 1914 - 1918”, Vol. 1, p.32”. ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal was born in the city of Najaf in 1872. He participated in local fights that took place in Najaf and between the people of Najaf and the clans close to Najaf. He was able to obtain the Presidency of al-‘Amara quarter in Najaf, but his ambition did not stop at this point, as he wanted to be the leader of Najaf, but Sayid Maḥdī al-Sayid Salmān, the head of al-Huwish, rivaled this ambition. See, Al-Mūsawī, Majīd, *al-Hāj ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal al-Ṭā‘ī* (‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal al-Ṭā‘ī), (Baghdad, Unknown).

³⁸⁰ Bell, Gertrude, *Review Of The Civil Administration Of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner* (London, 1920), p.38.

³⁸¹ Al-‘Asdī, Ḥasan, p.226.

was given money and the authority to issue licenses for the transportation of goods and food.³⁸² He also tried to strengthen his relationship with the British. When Sir Ronald Storrs descended with a number of his assistants on the holy city of Najaf on May 19, 1917, great crowds of the people of Najaf came out to greet them on the orders of the ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal.³⁸³ After a period of time, news was delivered to the British that ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal was smuggling prohibited substances such as mercury, tin, and other materials to the Turkish.³⁸⁴ The British realized that ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal was not the man for them, he was not “one of us”, and that he could not be relied upon. As a result, they reduced his influence as soon as possible, and sought to find a more suitable person who could be trusted with the management of their interests in the holy city of Najaf.³⁸⁵

The lack of experience of the British authorities in dealing with the residents became even more obvious in late October 1917, when one of the leaders of the ‘Aniza tribe arrived in Najaf with a caravan and a letter from Colonel Gerard Evelyn Leachman. The latter asked for the governor of Najaf, Ḥamīd Khān, to help him provide the tribe of ‘Aniza with of grain.³⁸⁶ However, Najaf was suffering from a lack of food at that time due to the constraints imposed on trade due to the war between the British and Turkish. Najaf depended on imports of grain and other foodstuffs from its neighbouring areas,³⁸⁷ and the grain and food prices were very high.³⁸⁸ News spread in Najaf that one of the leaders of the ‘Aniza tribe, who was loyal to the British had attempted to buy grain and had found that its price had risen

³⁸² F.O. 882/27/3171 “Mesopotamia, Affairs in Najaf”, p.115.

³⁸³ Storrs, Ronald, *Orientalism* (London; Readers Union Ltd, 1939), p.241.

³⁸⁴ Ḥbīban, Ḥamīd, *Ḥaqā’iq Nāṣi’a (The Spotless Facts)*, (Najaf, 1971), pp.47-48. The British wanted to verify the authenticity of the information so they sent a person named Nāsir to buy the prohibited substances from ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal. Nāsir was able to buy the prohibited substances and transported them to outside Najaf. In order not to lose an important ally such as ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal in Najaf and to ensure that matter, the British sent another man named Muḥammad, who claimed to be a fugitive Turkish officer who had fled the British. He came to ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal, who welcomed him and hosted him. Muḥammad was briefed on the secret deals made by ‘Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal with the Turkish smugglers, as well as the amounts of money that he received as a result of these transactions. Then Muḥammad returned to the British and told them this serious information.

³⁸⁵ Ḥbīban, Ḥamīd, pp.47-48.

³⁸⁶ Rush, Alan, *Record of Iraq 1914-1966 “Affairs in Najaf”*, (Cambridge: Archive Edition, 2001), Vol. 1, p.604.

³⁸⁷ C.O. 691/1 “Administration Reports of Shamiyah and Najaf 1918, p.69”.

³⁸⁸ Iraqī National Library and Archive, 945, No.2 “Najaf - Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī’a al-’Aṣfahānī, 13 February 1918, p.4”.

most dramatically. A demonstration erupted in which even women participated.³⁸⁹ A group of people attacked the caravan and stole some weapons and property.³⁹⁰

As a result, Captain Balfour went to Najaf and held a meeting with the heads of the city, and asked them to return the stolen items and pay compensation for the caravan.³⁹¹ However, the heads of Najaf did not comply.³⁹² Captain Balfour held another meeting in Najaf on 19 October 1917, but only ‘Aṭiya Abū al-Qallal came with a group of his armed men and Kāzīm Ṣabī.³⁹³ An altercation between the two sides occurred during the meeting.³⁹⁴ As a result, Kāzīm Ṣabī and ‘Aṭiya Abū al-Qallal and his armed followers carried out an attack on the centre of the city and stole a few things and set fire to some of the city’s contents.³⁹⁵ Meanwhile, Major H. C. Pulley escaped, dashingly, by driving his car to Hillah.³⁹⁶ Captain Balfour made haste to the house of Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī.³⁹⁷ Then a group of people of Najaf went to Abu Sukhair and carried out attacks on the centre of British government in that city.³⁹⁸ Moreover, whilst the clans of Banī Ḥasan in Kufa attacked the centre of the British government there, the officer in charge of the centre gave the attackers from the Banī Ḥasan clans 1,000 Lira, thereby preventing them from stealing or damaging the building and its contents.³⁹⁹ Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī summoned the four heads of Najaf to settle the dispute between them and Captain Balfour. He succeeded in solving the problem.⁴⁰⁰ From such events it can be noted that the British authorities did not know how to deal with the residents of Najaf and this led the British

³⁸⁹ Rush, Alan, “Affairs in Najaf”, Vol. 1, pp.604-605.

³⁹⁰ Bell, Gertrude, *Review Of The Civil Administration Of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner* (London, 1920), p.37.

³⁹¹ C.O. 691/1 “Administration Reports of Shamiyah and Najaf 1918, p.69”.

³⁹² Bell, Gertrude, *Review Of The Civil Administration Of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner* (London, 1920), p.37.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Al-Mūsawī, Majīd, pp.126-130; Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005), (First publish 1969), Vol. 6, pp.259-260.

³⁹⁵ C.O. 691/1 “Administration Reports of Shamiyah and Najaf 1918”, p.69.

³⁹⁶ Bell, Gertrude, *Review Of The Civil Administration Of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner* (London, 1920), p.37.

³⁹⁷ Robert, Jarman, “Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories of Iraq 1914 - 1918”, Vol. 1, p.31.

³⁹⁸ IOR/L/PS/732/1 “Mesopotamia: Fortnightly Reports by High Commissioner” Letter of Office Civil Commissioner to the Political Secretary India Office London, 22 December 1918, p.9”.

³⁹⁹ Al-Muzafir, Kāzīm, Vol. 1, p.92.

⁴⁰⁰ IOR/L/PS/732/1 “Mesopotamia: Fortnightly Reports by High Commissioner, Letter of Office Civil Commissioner to the Political Secretary India Office London, 22 December 1918, p.9”.

administration to lose the support of many influential personalities in the Middle Euphrates region; this further helped to create opposition to the British policy in Iraq.

In terms of military measures, the British felt it necessary to establish military garrisons in locations in the Middle Euphrates region to secure their political administration.⁴⁰¹ One of the military garrisons stationed in the area of 'Umm al-Tibin came near to the neighborhood of al-Amara in Najaf on 12 December 1917.⁴⁰² When 'Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal learned about this, he thought that the garrison wanted to arrest him, so he asked his friends for help and shots were fired at the garrison. As a result one soldier was killed and another was wounded.⁴⁰³ The garrison came back to its camp in 'Umm al-Tibin without responding to the shooting and, after a few hours, a British aircraft flew over Najaf.⁴⁰⁴ As a result, some folks went up on the high roofs of their houses and opened fire on the British plane.⁴⁰⁵ At the same time, other gunmen attacked the centre of the British government, and Ḥamīd Khān, a political aide to the British governor, fled with his staff to Kufa.⁴⁰⁶

As a result of this incident, Captain Balfour imposed a fine of 50,000 rupees on the people of Najaf,⁴⁰⁷ and ordered the extradition of 'Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal and Karīm, the son of al-Ḥāj Sa'ad al-Ḥāj Rādī, to the British.⁴⁰⁸ However, 'Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal along with a group of his followers escaped from Najaf.⁴⁰⁹ After a period of time the family of 'Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal travelled to 'Aṭīya Abū al-Qallal in the desert because of the British threat.⁴¹⁰ As a result, the hostility of the people in Middle Euphrates region, especially in Najaf, increased against the British because of the exiled 'Aṭīya and his family outside of Najaf, and the fine which the British had imposed on the residents of Najaf.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰¹ Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba'da Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf after the Killing of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), p.15.

⁴⁰² IOR/L/PS/732/1 "Mesopotamia: Fortnightly Reports by High Commissioner, Letter of Office Civil Commissioner to the Political Secretary India Office London, 24 January 1918", p.7.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Rush, Alan, "Affairs in Najaf", Vol. 1, p.608.

⁴⁰⁶ Wilson, Arnold, *Loyalties Mesopotamia 1917-1920* (London, 1936), Vol. 2, p.73.

⁴⁰⁷ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 949, No.2 "Troubles in Najaf", p.12.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., p.35.

⁴⁰⁹ Rush, Alan, "Affairs in Najaf", Vol. 1, p.612.

⁴¹⁰ Al-'Asdī, Ḥasan, p.226.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., pp.240-241.

Concurrently, some news reached the group of Shiite clerics and the intellectuals in the holy cities and in Baghdad about the future intentions of the British government with regards to the rule and administration of Iraq.⁴¹²

At the same time as the telegraph arrived, globally, the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and there some secret treaties were leaked amongst allies. The leaks included the Sykes-Picot agreement, which was a plan between Britain and France to divide the Arab territories. The leaking of this plan had a significant impact on the Iraqis and Arabs.⁴¹³ When the news reached the Iraqis, many meetings were held and Najaf was centre of most of these meetings due to the presence of the supreme religious authority for Shiites in Iraq, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī.⁴¹⁴ Najaf was also not under the authority of the British during the war years as it had been a self-governing city since the rebellion against the Turkish in 1915. As a result of all these events, the League of the Islamic Awakening was formed by a group of Shiite clerics (Second class) in Najaf to resist the British administration. Here, therefore, began the second stage of Shiite resistance against the British.

4.3. The League of the Islamic Awakening and the Assassination of Captain Marshall

As a result of the failure of the first and second jihad movements (1914-1917) to successfully face the British troops,⁴¹⁵ a group of Shiite clerics in Najaf realised that the time to adopt Shiite political ideology had finally come. The process of changing and developing Shiite political ideology happened by creating approaches

⁴¹² Ireland, Philip, pp.96-97. The news, which had been telegraphed to Baghdad on March 29, 1917, included the following information. First, occupied territories were administered by his Majesty's government, not by the government of India. Secondly, Basra, along with Nasiriya, Shatt-el-Hai, Kut, Bedrai were to remain permanently under British administration. Thirdly, Baghdad was to be an Arab state with a local ruler or government which would operate under the auspices of a British protectorate in everything except name. Fourthly, Baghdad was to be administered behind a facade of Arab rule as far as possible, and was to be an Arab province with indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions. Fifthly, Sh'ia Holy Places were to be separate enclaves not under direct British control, and care would be taken not to include any important irrigation or irrigable area in them. Finally, there was to be control of irrigation, navigation and conservancy of rivers in villages under the guidance of a single British administration.

⁴¹³ F.O. 371/3381/107379 "Telegram from R. Wingate No.948, Alexandria, dated June 16,1918".

⁴¹⁴ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqatl Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.27.

⁴¹⁵ See Chapter Three.

and thoughts that were different to those found in previous periods. It also happened through the establishment of political parties and associations which were required to lead on political issues as well as lead the resistance against the British authorities. As well as this, a group of Shiite clerics deduced that Shiite political ideology needed to move away from central authority, which was represented by the chief of a Shiite religious authority, towards decentralised authority. This was because they believed that it would help to create organized resistance. This played a critical role in the formation of identity that contributed to nation building.

The signs of change in Shiite political ideology emerged in late 1917 and early 1918, when a secret society was founded in Najaf. This was called *Jim‘yat al-Nahḍa al-Islamiya* (The League of the Islamic Awakening); its members included Shiite clerics, influential personalities in Najaf, and many young men from Najaf.⁴¹⁶ It was led by Shiite clerics (second class).⁴¹⁷ Anti-colonisation sentiment dominated the thinking of the League founders, especially Muḥammad Baḥar al-‘Ulūm, Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā’irī, al-Mīrzā ‘Abbās ‘Asad al-Khalīlī and Shiekh Muḥammad ‘Ali al-Dimashqī. They sought to fight the British authorities to get them out of Iraq.⁴¹⁸ In addition, they supported the ideas that called the people to participate in the administration of the state because they were supporters of the constitutional movement in Iran in 1908-1909. They also called for decentralization during the rule of the Ottoman Empire over Iraq.⁴¹⁹ Indeed, appointing Muḥammad Baḥar al-‘Ulūm as head of the League due to the status of his family in Najaf and his ideas, contributed significantly towards achieving their goals.⁴²⁰ Thus, it can be deduced that the founders of the League sought to establish a nation.

Further, the founders of the League sought to attract all Muslims in Iraq to work collectively. They sought to do this by relying on common elements, especially Islam

⁴¹⁶ Vinogradov, Amal, “*The 1920 Revolt in Iraq Reconsidered: The Role of Tribes in National Political*”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No.2 (April, 1972), pp.123-139, p.133.

⁴¹⁷ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 936, No.2 “Mājid Muḥammad Baḥar al-‘Ulūm- Najaf” 14-4-1918/2-3-1919, p.5; Āl-Ḥabūbah, Ja‘far, Vol. 3, p.344; Al-‘Alawī, Hādī, *Al-‘Aḥzāb Al-Siyāsiya Fī Al-‘Iraq Al-Siriya Wa Al-‘Alaniya (Iraq’s Political Parties Overt And Covert)*, (Beirut, 2001), p.46. (Muḥammad Baḥar al-‘Ulūm as president Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā’irī as vice president, al-Mīrzā ‘Abbās ‘Asad al-Khalīlī as secretary, Shiekh Muḥammad ‘Ali al-Dimashqī as second secretary, Sayid Ibrāhīm al-Bahbahānī as confidential secretary, ‘Ali ‘Abbās al-Rumāhī, ‘Abdu al-Razāq ‘Udwa, Kāẓim Ṣabī, Sa‘ad Ṣaliḥ, Aḥmad and Karīm and Muḥsin, the sons of al-Ḥāj Sa‘ad al-Ḥāj Rādī, as members).

⁴¹⁸ Al-Khalīlī, Ja‘far, Vol. 4, p.91.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p.371.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p.91.

to achieve common goals, and this matter was obvious through the name of the League.⁴²¹ Moreover, it can be concluded that the founders of the League realised that the restriction of political work to one sect, such as the Shiite sect in previous periods, did not create an identity that would contribute to the building of a nation. Accordingly, they adopted an approach of teamwork between all the sects.

In addition, the establishment of the League in a city such as Najaf contributed to the emergence of the features of identity due to the good levels of educational found there compared to other areas (and especially the Middle Euphrates region). Najaf had lots of religious schools and many students studied there. This allowed these political ideas to be readily accepted by lots of people in Najaf and especially those who belonged to the class of intellectuals.⁴²² Furthermore, the formation of the League in Najaf played a significant role in helping to ensure that the ideas of the association spread to nearby cities, such as Karbala, and Baghdad amongst others. This was achieved due to the geographical location of Najaf, which is close to important cities, as well as through meetings, publications and others methods. The founders of the League also sought to rely on cities instead of the countryside in organizing resistance, unlike in previous periods where a chief of Shiite religious authority relied on the clans as armed forces.⁴²³ The tribal system did not participate in creating an identity because tribal society was a closed society. It was similar to the feudal system, where the head of the tribe had power, and the tribal members followed him.⁴²⁴

The political organisations need proper planning and an intellectual approach which would help the members of any given society to achieve their goals. It also needed to formulate the central tenets of its message that would contribute to attracting people to join the association. The workings of the League were characterised by accuracy and the accommodation of people of all political positions. The central tenets of the League included twenty-one articles.⁴²⁵ The first article confirmed unity among Muslims: Muslims should link with each other under the title of the Islamic League to come together and collaborate in order for Islam to act as a

⁴²¹ Al-‘Alawī, Hādī, pp.45-46.

⁴²² Āl-Ḥabūbah, Ja‘far, Vol. 3, pp.375-380.

⁴²³ See Chapter Three.

⁴²⁴ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, pp.353-358.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.265.

single force in the face of adversity and hardship.⁴²⁶ The second article emphasised the need to work together in order to apply Islamic concepts through the Islamic community and the application of Islamic law.⁴²⁷ The third article advanced absolute support for the independence of Islamic governments in general in the Arab and Islamic world, and in Iraq in particular. The League was so deeply interested in full independence that it expressed its readiness to support organisations in other Arab countries who sought independence with physical and moral support.⁴²⁸ The seventh article in the document stated that the supreme authority headed the association for Muslims.⁴²⁹ The eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth articles were dedicated to the administrative and partisan systems of subsidiary bodies.⁴³⁰

It was clear through the first article that the League sought to create an identity that would participate to building a nation through collective action and exploit common elements such as language, religious, customs and traditions in Iraq in order to secure that goal. In addition, it was obvious that the League was seeking to unify the Sunni and Shiite sects under the banner of Islam in order to achieve independence, which is considered to be the main pillar of nation building in Iraq.⁴³¹ The League also sought to rely on anti-colonial sentiment, which was prevalent amongst the majority of residents of Arab and Muslim countries. This was done in order to create and organize resistance against colonial powers, including Britain.

Although the League was characterised by religious character, it was clear through the third principle of the League that the founders of the League were affected indirectly by the ideas of nationalism, especially the ideas of the Covenant Party (*Al-‘Ahd Party*) due to the geographical location of the city of Najaf.⁴³² The city of Najaf was not far from the headquarters of the Covenant Party in Damascus.

⁴²⁶ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Thawrat al-‘Ishrīn Fī Thikrāhā al-Kamsīn; Mal‘ ūmāt Wa Mushāhdāt Fī Al-Thawra Al-‘Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (Revolted In Its Fiftieth Anniversary; Information and Views in the Great Iraqi Revolution)*, (Baghdad, 1971), p.66.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Shubar, Ḥasan, *Al-‘Amal Al-Ḥzbī Fī Al-‘Iraq 1908-1958 (Partisan Action in Iraq 1908 - 1958)*, (Qum, 2010), p.46.

⁴²⁹ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Thawrat al-‘Ishrīn Fī Thikrāhā al-Kamsīn; Mal‘ ūmāt Wa Mushāhdāt Fī Al-Thawra Al-‘Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (Revolted In Its Fiftieth Anniversary; Information and Views in the Great Iraqi Revolution)*, (Baghdad, 1971), p.68.

⁴³⁰ Shubar, Ḥasan, *Al-‘Amal Al-Ḥzbī Fī Al-‘Iraq 1908-1958 (Partisan Action in Iraq 1908-1958)*, (Qum, 2010), p.48.

⁴³¹ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Thawrat al-‘Ishrīn Fī Thikrāhā al-Kamsīn; Mal‘ ūmāt Wa Mushāhdāt Fī Al-Thawra Al-‘Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (Revolted In Its Fiftieth Anniversary; Information and Views in the Great Iraqi Revolution)*, (Baghdad, 1971), p.66.

⁴³² Al-‘Alawī, Hādī, pp.28-29 (*Al-‘Ahd Party* was established in Damascus in 1913 by a group of Arab officers and Iraqi officers).

It is also very close to the branches of the ditto in Baghdad and Mosul.⁴³³ Therefore, these ideas could spread amongst the cities through publications, newspapers, and other methods. Some of the terminology mentioned in the third article, such as anti-colonisation, territorial and ethnic (Arab), were considered to be nationalistic terminology and theories which were used by nationalists for nation building.⁴³⁴

After the first stage of the Shiite resistance against the British occupation,⁴³⁵ the religious leaders of the League realised that political action would not achieve the desired results because it had relied on passion and spontaneity. What was needed was an ability to convince the people of the principles and ideas of the League and an exploiting of anti-colonial sentiment amongst residents. Therefore, the members of the League worked to spread their ideas in different areas in Iraq. The activity of the League encouraged people to join,⁴³⁶ and the most active member was ‘Abbās al-Khalīlī.⁴³⁷ The news of the activities of ‘Abbās al-Khalīlī reached Ḥamīd Khān, the political aide to the governor of Shamiyah and Najaf. Therefore, Ḥamīd Khān sent a letter to al-Mīrzā Asad's father, ‘Abbās al-Khalīlī. The former asked the latter to prevent his son, al-Mīrzā ‘Abbās, from undertaking his activities because they were not acceptable to the British. However, ‘Abbās al-Khalīlī did not succumb to the words of Ḥamīd Khān, and instead accused him of betrayal and of possessing loyalty to the British.⁴³⁸

As a result of the invitation of ‘Abbās al-Khalīlī and other members, most of the heads of Najaf except Sayid Maḥdī al-Sayid Salmān joined the League.⁴³⁹ The League was also joined by Najim al-Baqāl and some tribal leaders in the Middle Euphrates region,⁴⁴⁰ along with other residents of Najaf and people who resided in

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ See, Smith, Anthony D, *The Ethnic Origin of Nation* (Oxford, 1986); White, George W, *Nationalism and territory* (Lanham, 2000); Humphreys, R.A, Lynch, Johan, *The Origin of the Latin American Revolution 1808-1826* (New York, 1965).

⁴³⁵ See chapter two.

⁴³⁶ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 936, No.2 “Mājid Muḥammad Baḥar al-‘Ulūm- Najaf” 14-4-1918/2-3-1919, p.7.

⁴³⁷ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba ‘da Maqatl Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf After The Killing Of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), p.23.

⁴³⁸ Al-Khalīlī, Ja‘far, Vol. 4, p.92.

⁴³⁹ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba ‘da Maqatl Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf After The Killing Of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), p.24.

⁴⁴⁰ Including Marzūq al-‘Awād, chief the Āl ‘Awād clan, Rābiḥ al-‘Aṭiya, chief of al-Ḥmīdāt clan, Wadāy al-‘Ali chief of Āl ‘Ali clan, Salmān al-Fādil, head of the al-Ḥawātīm clan, and many others. The League in Najaf was also joined by many others, including Āl Ṣabī, Āl Ghnīm, Āl Kirmāsha, Āl al-‘Akāyshī, Āl al-Ḥāj Rādī, Āl Abū al-Qallal, Āl ‘Udwa. See, Al-Mafrajī, ‘Uday, p.195.

different areas of Iraq.⁴⁴¹ The members of the League faced a challenge in persuading some clans to join the League for two reasons. First, some tribes did not discover the intention and the desire of Britain in proceeding to rule Iraq because Britain when it occupied Baghdad in 1917 gave promises to the Iraqi people that it came to liberate them from the Ottoman authorities and not for the occupation of Iraq.⁴⁴² Secondly, the British authorities succeeded in securing the support of some of the leaders and elders of areas by giving them money or by appointing them to positions of leadership.⁴⁴³

The members of the League sought to engage the leaders of Najaf in the League because the leaders had influence and power in Najaf through their control over the four quarters of Najaf. Therefore, they were able to oblige some residents of Najaf to join and support the League. This helped the League to co-ordinate resistance against the British, achieve its goals, and form an identity.

In addition, the founders of the League deduced that political action alone would not result in the formation of an identity and would not achieve the goals of the League. Therefore, the League was divided into two sections: political and military. Both sections were overseen by a member of the League. The military section comprised several branches; in Kufa, Abu Sukhair, al-Hira and al-Shamiyah.⁴⁴⁴ It took part in the dissemination of the ideas of the League amongst Iraqi tribes. It did this through the methods available to them such as holding meetings, delivering speeches and posting advertisements on walls that condemned the policies of the British.⁴⁴⁵ The military section managed to form a broad base of popular support in the Middle Euphrates region within a short period. When the number of recruits in the military section increased, the organisational structure of the League distributed them into three groups.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴¹ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 936, No.2 "Mājid Muḥammad Baḥar al-'Ulūm- Najaf" 14-4-1918/2-3-1919, p.7.

⁴⁴² Al-Ḥusaynī, Salīm, p.146.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., p.147.

⁴⁴⁵ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 936, No.2 "Mājid Muḥammad Baḥar al-'Ulūm- Najaf" 14-4-1918/2-3-1919, p.7.

⁴⁴⁶ Al-'Asdī, Ḥasan, p.169. (The first group was led by Kāzīm Ṣabī and 'Abbās 'Ali al-Rumāḥī, the second group was led by Najim al-Baqāl and the third group was led by Karīm al-Ḥāj Sa'ad Rādī).

The League contacted Turkish forces in the al-Ramadi region in January 1918,⁴⁴⁷ and requested their support.⁴⁴⁸ In addition, ‘Abbās, the son of Najm al-Baqāl informed the Turkish leaderships in Mosul as to the formation of the League and its main objective: to rid Iraq of the British. He also stressed the League’s readiness to cooperate with the Turkish forces in order to help the latter expel the British. After that, ‘Abbās sent a letter through the Bedouins to the leaders of League urging them to speed up their revolution against the British in Najaf. This, he believed, would diminish the pressure on the Turkish on the battlefield.⁴⁴⁹ In addition, secret contact was made between the League and the head of German intelligence, Captain Persil, by ‘Ajamī Sa‘dūn.⁴⁵⁰ When the British occupied the area of ‘Ana, they arrested the retreating German and Turkish officers, and seized all their documents and papers that had not been destroyed.⁴⁵¹ They found a letter that was translated into German.⁴⁵² The documents indicate the role of ‘Ajamī al-Sa‘dūn, who had received one thousand five hundred lira from the German officer, Preussen, as a scheme of the revolution. The documents also indicated the existence of a committee called the Committee of Islamic Revolutionary, its main objective was make Najaf a centre of religious strikes between tribes.⁴⁵³ As a result, the British associated the establishment of the League with the Germans. They believed that German troops stationed in the region founded the League.⁴⁵⁴

It can be inferred that the members of the League contacted the Turks for support because they knew the military capabilities of the British forces and they knew, as a result, that they would not be able to defeat the British without support. Furthermore, Britain was a common enemy for the Turks, Germans, and the League. Therefore, the League contacted the Germans and the Turks to unite their forces to confront a common enemy. During the first stage of the Shiite resistance, the Shiites provided support to the Turkish authorities in order to protect the identity of the

⁴⁴⁷ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 936, No.2 “Mājid Muḥammad Baḥar al-‘Ulūm- Najaf” 14-4-1918/2-3-1919, p.6.

⁴⁴⁸ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba ‘da Maqṭal Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf After The Killing Of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), p.91.

⁴⁴⁹ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā ‘iyā Min Tārīkh al- ‘Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, p.269.

⁴⁵⁰ *Al-Bayan Newspaper*, July 1946, No.2, p.31.

⁴⁵¹ Rush, Alan, “Disturbance in Najaf”, Vol. 1, p.602.

⁴⁵² *Memorandum of Ḥamīd Khān* (Beirut, 2002), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.12.

⁴⁵³ IOR/L/PS/10/470 “Fortnightly Reports by High Commissioner”, no.11, p.49.

⁴⁵⁴ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba ‘da Maqṭal Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf After The Killing Of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), pp.91-92.

Ottoman Empire. When the League was founded, however, the Shiites asked for support from the Turks. This matter can be explained as an attempt by the founders of the League to express their identity.

Revolution against the British in Najaf became the main objective of the League because they believed that through the revolution they would achieve their goals. In practical terms, this would obligate the clans and the residents of the nearby cities to participate in the revolution against the British authorities. However, differences emerged concerning the timing of the revolution.⁴⁵⁵ Some members, such as Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā'irī, believed in the necessity of an urgent revolution, especially when the British began to gain an understanding of the activity of the League in Najaf.⁴⁵⁶ Others believed that there was a need for patience and they should not start the revolution until they had the support of the various cities of Iraq as well as the tribes and clans of the Middle Euphrates. They believed that greater support would help them to achieve their goals.⁴⁵⁷ The members who saw the need for an urgent revolution in Najaf and the expulsion of the British started planning the revolution. This mission was carried out by a secret military section of the League. When information about the organization, its plans, and the existence of a secret military section came to the attention of Captain Balfour, he gave orders to monitor the activities of the League. He gave orders to foil the plans of the members of the League against the British in Najaf and other regions.⁴⁵⁸ We can conclude that a secret military section of the League chose the city of Najaf to start the revolution for two reasons. First, the British authorities knew the sacred status of the Najaf amongst the Shiites inside and outside Iraq. Therefore, the British authorities would not attack the city of Najaf. Secondly, if British forces attacked the Najaf, that action would likely lead to the involvement of the tribes near Najaf in the revolution to defend the holy city. The British authorities would also be exposed to international pressure to stop an attack on Najaf.

⁴⁵⁵ Al-Mafrajī, 'Uday, p.196.

⁴⁵⁶ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 945, No.2 "Najaf - Sheikh Faḥallāh Sheikh al-Sharī'a al-'Aṣfahānī", 13 February 1918, p.5. Indeed, after a letter that had been sent by Ḥamīd Khān to the father of al-Mīrzā 'Abbās al-Khalīlī, it was expected that the British would arrest the members of the League. Keen for this not to happen, the members were determined to speed up the eruption of the revolution in Najaf. See, Al-Khalīlī, Ja'far, Vol. 4, p.92; Al-Mafrajī, 'Uday, p.196.

⁴⁵⁷ Al-Mafrajī, 'Uday, p.197.

⁴⁵⁸ Ḥbīban, Ḥamīd, p.69.

During a meeting held in Najaf on 18 March 1918,⁴⁵⁹ a number of the revolutionaries gathered agreed to attack the centre of the British government in Najaf the following morning.⁴⁶⁰ On the morning of 19 March 1918, 27 people carried out the attack.⁴⁶¹ They killed Captain Marshall and the soldiers who were with him.⁴⁶² The attackers withdrew and returned to their homes.⁴⁶³ Thus, the League assassinated Captain Marshall; this was the first clash between the Shiites and the British in Iraq.

As a result of an event that occurred on the same day as the assassination of Captain Marshall,⁴⁶⁴ the members of the League, some leaders of Najaf (*al-Zuqurt* and *al-Shumurt*),⁴⁶⁵ and some residents of Najaf,⁴⁶⁶ united in order to resist the British. This diverse group of people formed the leadership of the revolution and made plans to confront the British.⁴⁶⁷ They increased the fortifications around the city, dug trenches around it, and collected arms to defend the city.⁴⁶⁸ Thus, the League succeeded in forming the features of identity that contributed to nation building in the city of Najaf through unifying all classes and social groups such as the leaders of Najaf, clerics and residents well as through exploiting common

⁴⁵⁹ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba ‘da Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf after the killing of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), p.26.

⁴⁶⁰ Ṣāliḥ, Karīm, *Najim Al-Baqāl Qā’id Al-Thawra Al-Kubrā did Al-’Ihtilāl Al-Birīyānī (Najim Al-Baqāl The Great Leader of the Revolution Against The British Occupation)*, (Najaf, 1980), p.76.

⁴⁶¹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), pp.56-58; Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Al-Najaf Fī Rubi ‘ Qarn Munthu 1908 (Najaf, in the Quarter Century Since 1908)*, (Beirut, 2005), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, pp.208-210.

⁴⁶² IOR/L/PS/10/470 “Fortnightly Reports by High Commissioner”, no.10, p.41; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.59; Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Al-Najaf Fī Rubi ‘ Qarn Munthu 1908 (Najaf, in the Quarter Century Since 1908)*, (Beirut, 2005), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, pp.210-212; Al-’Asdī, Ḥasan, p.247.

⁴⁶³ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba ‘da Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf after the Killing of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), p.31.

⁴⁶⁴ When the news of the assassination of Marshall reached Captain Balfour, he went to Najaf with a group of British soldiers. They began wandering around Najaf, but did not see anything that raised suspicion; Captain Balfour was almost convinced that the attack was not from Najaf, but this conviction quickly changed when he heard the sound of gunfire. When the news of the killing of the two policemen reached Captain Balfour, he rebuked al-Ḥāj Sa’ad al-Ḥāj Rādī and accusing him of committing these acts. As a result, the sons of al-Ḥāj Sa’ad shot at Captain Balfour but they did not hit him. The British authorities asked al-Ḥāj Sa’ad to deliver his sons, but he refused. See, Al-Sharqī, ‘Ali, *Al-’Ahlām (Dreams)*, (Baghdad, 1963), p.106; Al-’Asdī, Ḥasan, pp.253-256.

⁴⁶⁵ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.70; Al-’Asdī, Ḥasan, p.258 (The leaders of Najaf are Kāzīm Ṣabī, Āl Abū al-Qallal, ‘Abbās ‘Alī al-Rumāḥī and others).

⁴⁶⁶ Al-’Asdī, Ḥasan, p.257.

⁴⁶⁷ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.71.

⁴⁶⁸ Al-’Asdī, Ḥasan, pp.261-262.

elements such as language, religion, ethnicity and others in order to confront the British authorities and achieve common goals.

4.4. The British authorities and the Najaf revolution

The British saw the Najaf revolution from two points of view. The first was that Najaf was sacred to the Shiites in particular and Muslims in general. It followed that if the authorities took any military action, it would give the Turks a chance to broadcast bad publicity against the British in Islamic and Arab countries. It would also contribute to the involvement of the tribes of neighbouring regions in the revolution; that would achieve the goal of the League in forming a resistance which included various sects and races and social groups. This in turn would also contribute to the creation of nation building. Gertrude Bell stated that there was no doubt that the tribes were all watching Najaf with interest and that any action taken against the holy city would raise considerable resistance against the British. This was the hope of the Turks.⁴⁶⁹ The second viewpoint was that if the British took an attitude of tolerance with the people of Najaf, this would encourage the tribes and towns adjacent to the city to follow the example set and conduct military operations against the British. This was the main objective of the League, it sought to achieve this objective through the assassination of Captain Marshall.

British authorities worked to thwart the scheme of the League by taking several measures. First, the British authority sent military supplies from the cities of al-Hillah and Baghdad to Najaf; after a short period of time, a large British military force gathered around Najaf.⁴⁷⁰ The British surrounded Najaf on three sides: the east, north and south. Najaf was isolated. This made it difficult for any assistance to arrive from the cities of Karbala, Kufa and Abu Sakhir. The British also cut off the water supply to Najaf.⁴⁷¹ The siege around Najaf led to a rise in food prices and this affected the daily life of the residents of Najaf, including the rebels.⁴⁷² The siege prevented the

⁴⁶⁹ Bell, Gertrude, *Fusūl Min Tārīkh Al-Iraq Al-Qarīb (Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner)*, translated by Ja‘far al-Khayāt (Beirut, 2010), p.125.

⁴⁷⁰ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqatal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.73. (The headquarters of these forces was near the tomb of Kumīl b. Ziyād, which is about three Kilometres away from Najaf).

⁴⁷¹ Al-‘Asdī, Ḥasan, p.265.

⁴⁷² A secret meeting was held at the house of Kāzīm Ṣabī on April 3, 1918, the rebel heads in Najaf attended it. During the meeting it was decided that they should negotiate with the British,

rebels from escaping Najaf.⁴⁷³ It was obvious that the British authorities sought, through surrounding of the city of Najaf, to prevent the rebels from obtaining support from the cities and clans near to Najaf and from the Turks.

The members of the League sent letters to the elders of neighbouring areas, but the British executed the person who carried these letters. However, the League prepared letters and handed them to a person from the Banī ‘Āmir tribe to deliver to the tribal leaders of the Middle Euphrates, and he successfully delivered the letters to the tribal leaders of the Middle Euphrates.⁴⁷⁴ Sayid Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh mentioned, during the siege of Najaf by the British, that he had received letters from the League, and that the British force that was besieging Najaf could not be confronted by the tribes due to their superior number and weapons.⁴⁷⁵ The person who was sent by the League to the leaders of the clans of the Middle Euphrates arrived in Najaf on 1 April 1918 and told the leaders that the tribes would not be able to support the rebels in Najaf because of the military fortifications constructed by the British,⁴⁷⁶ and because of the withdrawal of Turkish forces from many fronts against the British.⁴⁷⁷ This news had a strong influence on the revolutionaries in Najaf; their morale was weakened significantly due to the non-participation of the tribes or the Turkish forces.⁴⁷⁸

Secondly, the British adopted a strategy of divide and conquer, and worked to draw some of the leaders of Najaf and the clergy to their side in order to disperse the people of Najaf. For example, on 3 April 1918, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī invited

especially since hunger, thirst and rising food prices were increasing every day in Najaf. This reflected poorly on the rebels. See, Al-’Asdī, Ḥasan, p.289.

⁴⁷³ When the British authorities refused clemency to rebels, the rebels decided to escape from Najaf and not surrender themselves to British. However, they failed to escape from Najaf due to the siege, which imposed, by British. See, Al-’Asdī, Ḥasan, p.294.

⁴⁷⁴ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqatl Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.86; Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ’Ijtimā’iyā Min Tārīkh al-’Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, p.282.

⁴⁷⁵ Abū Ṭabīkh, Jamīl, *Muthakarāt Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh 1910-1960 (Memoirs’ of Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh 1910-1960)*, (Amman, 2001), p.63.

⁴⁷⁶ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqatl Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.102.

⁴⁷⁷ On March 26, 1918, the Turkish forces surrendered in the Ramadi area. This eased the pressure on the British armies. As well as this, the British achieved victory over the Turkish in Khan Baghdadi in the Upper Euphrates. In addition, the British were able to occupy the town of ‘Anah without resistance. See, *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, (Friday 29 March 1918), p.2; *Western Times Newspaper* (Tuesday 2 April 1918), p.3.

⁴⁷⁸ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqatl Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.102.

the rebel heads to come to his house to discuss the issue of the blockade, which affected the city's people. During the meeting, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī asked them to negotiate with the British. Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī sent some people close to him to negotiate with the British and asked the latter to put fewer restrictions on the rebels. However, those loyal to the British wanted to expel the leaders of the revolution, because it was otherwise impossible for them to have influence in Najaf. This latter group of people prevented the envoys of Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī from going from Najaf to Kufa for a meeting with the British. Instead, they insisted on going themselves to Captain Balfour to tell him what had happened at the secret meeting. They met Captain Balfour and explained the feeling of the revolutionaries, their fear, and their despair. Captain Balfour insisted on his requests being met.⁴⁷⁹ Through this policy, the British authorities succeeded in knowing the rebel plans and weakened the resolve of the rebels; this contributed to thwarting the revolution.

Thirdly, while the British authorities sought to arrest the rebels without the use of force, they negotiated with a chief of Shiite religious authority, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, to resolve the dispute.⁴⁸⁰ The Governor General in Iraq sent a letter to Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī expressing his disapproval of what had happened in Najaf and ordering the arrest of those who had caused the problem. He also added that he was confident that there would be cooperation from the clergy of Najaf and that he was waiting for them to solve the underlying problem. At the same time, Captain Balfour sent letters to Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, and to clerics and the heads of the city asking them to start negotiations. As a result, the people of Najaf selected a delegation to negotiate with the British. The delegation was composed of clerics and leaders of Najaf. However, Najim al-Baqāl and his aides opposed the selection of Sayid Maḥdī al-Sayid Salmān. This was because they knew of his position against the revolution and his support of the British. They asked him to choose al-Ḥāj Sa‘ad al-Ḥāj Rāḍī instead, but the audience of the meeting did not agree. The delegation

⁴⁷⁹ Al-’Asdī, Ḥasan, p.289; *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍa al-Shabībī Wa Riḥlātah (Memoirs’ of Muḥammad Riḍa al-Shabībī and His Trips)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.275; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.106.

⁴⁸⁰ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-’Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraqi Revolution Introductions And Results)* “Letter From General Governor in Iraq to Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 2, p.48.

met with Captain Balfour and asked him to resolve the issue and overcome the sanctions for the sake of achieving reconciliation between the two parties.⁴⁸¹

The British authorities did not use force against the rebels because they were worried that the use of force would provoke the residents of Iraq and neighbouring countries, to rise up against them.⁴⁸² Thus, they negotiated with a chief of Shiite religious authority in Najaf, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, because they knew his influence and authority over the Shiites inside and outside Iraq. He could force the rebels in Najaf to surrender. Through an analysis of previous events it can be concluded that the British authorities did not negotiate with the founders of the League of the Islamic Awakening during the Najaf revolution in order to avoid giving them political legitimacy.

Fourthly, the Commander General in Iraq imposed decisions on the rebels and residents of Najaf.⁴⁸³ The decisions of the Commander General were as follows; he demanded the unconditional delivery of the murderers and those who had assisted them. He decided that a fine of 1,000 rifles and 50,000 rupees should be collected by the leaders of Najaf from the perpetrators of the murder. He issued an order for the delivery of one hundred people from Najaf to the British government as prisoners of war; otherwise, the city would remain under siege without any food or water.⁴⁸⁴ It can be concluded from these decisions that the British authorities wanted to put pressure on the rebels to surrender.

As a result of the rebels' refusal to implement the decisions, the British authorities decided to attack Najaf. The British occupied the hill near al-Huwish because of its strategic location, on 7 April 1918, under the leadership of General Sanders, and they succeeded in occupying the hill.⁴⁸⁵ Thereafter, three British officers entered Najaf. They went to the house of Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī and asked him to talk with Sir Arnold Wilson in Baghdad. He asked him about his safety

⁴⁸¹ *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍa al-Shabībī Wa Riḥlātah (Memoirs' of Muḥammad Riḍa al-Shabībī and His Trips)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.263; Ḥbīban, Ḥamīd, p. 84.

⁴⁸² Arnold, Wilson, *Loyalties Mesopotamia 1917-1920* (London, 1936), Vol. 2, pp.74-75; Iraqi National Library and Archive, 965, No.2 "Letter From Iranian Counsel to Iranian Ambassador in Baghdad" 26 March 1918, pp.5-6.

⁴⁸³ Wilson, Arnold, *Loyalties Mesopotamia 1917-1920* (London, 1936), Vol. 2, p.74.

⁴⁸⁴ *Al-Arab Newspaper*, No. 84, Second Volume (9 April 1918).

⁴⁸⁵ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraqi Revolution Introductions And Results) "Report of British Authorities"* (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 2, p.116.

and Najaf.⁴⁸⁶ It was obvious that the objective of these actions was to reassure Shiites in different cities of Iraq, and in countries around the world, that the British authorities knew of, and respected, the status of Najaf.

After the occupation of the city of Najaf, the British authorities took strict measures against the members of the League. Captain Balfour asked those who were loyal to British authority in Najaf to arrest the revolutionaries and collect the fines that had been imposed on Najaf.⁴⁸⁷ The British also provided two lists of wanted names.⁴⁸⁸ The first list contained the names of those who would be tried, and the second included the names of prisoners of war who had been requested by India. The British also promised to give a reward of 500 rupees to anyone who guided them to the hideout of the rebels. Based on Captain Balfour's instructions, two committees were formed in each section of Najaf. The first committee was to collect the fines imposed on the people of Najaf, and the second committee was a specialized unit focused on arresting the wanted. The objective of these committees was to prevent the British from colliding with the people in Najaf.⁴⁸⁹

In addition, Captain Balfour visited Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī on 28 April 1918, and gave him a list of the clergy wanted by the British, most notably Sayid Muḥammad 'Alī Baḥar al-'Ulūm and Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā'irī.⁴⁹⁰ Sheikh al-Jazā'irī decided to surrender to the British on 30 April 1918.⁴⁹¹ The British authorities declared that there would be a reward of 5,000 rupees given to those who arrested or provided information as to the whereabouts of al-Mīrzā 'Abbās al-Khalīlī and Shiekh Muḥammad 'Alī al-Dimashqī.⁴⁹² However, al-Mīrzā 'Abbās al-Khalīlī escaped from Najaf on 4 May 1918, and managed to travel covertly across the border

⁴⁸⁶ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Al-Najaf Fī Rubī 'Qarn Munthu 1908 (Najaf, in the Quarter Century Since 1908)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.224.

⁴⁸⁷ *Muthakarāt Muḥammad Riḍa al-Shabībī Wa Riḥlātah (Memoirs' of Muḥammad Riḍa al-Shabībī and His Trips)*, (Beirut, 2011), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, pp.283-284.

⁴⁸⁸ Al-'Asdī, Ḥasan, pp.309-310.

⁴⁸⁹ Longrigg, Stephen, *Iraq 1900 To 1950 A Political And Economic History* (London, 1953), p.96; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqatal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), pp.133-134.

⁴⁹⁰ Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu Al-Razāq, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Ba 'da Maqatal Al-Kābtin Marshall (Revolution of Najaf after the Killing of Captain Marshall)*, (Baghdad, 1972), p.73.

⁴⁹¹ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 950, No2, "News about Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā'irī", 30-4-1918/30-8-1919, p.1, 24 (Afterward, he was deported to Hillah and then to Baghdad)

⁴⁹² Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqatal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), pp.155-156.

into Iran.⁴⁹³ As for Shiekh Muḥammad ‘Ali al-Dimashqī, he was isolated and introverted and was not known by a lot of people in Najaf. Therefore, the British were unable to either find or arrest him.⁴⁹⁴ As a result, al-Mīrzā ‘Abbās al-Khalīlī and Shiekh Muḥammad ‘Ali al-Dimashqī, who were the founders of the League and had played a primary role in the murder of Captain Marshall, were not arrested. From previous events, it can be concluded that the British authorities wanted to eradicate the thoughts and ideas of the League because it threatened their interests.

Nevertheless, the British authorities did succeed in arresting those accused of killing Marshall, as well as those who had revolted them. It was decided on 2 May 1918, to send the first batch of detainees, about 65 people in Kufa, to India.⁴⁹⁵ The rifles and the fines imposed on Najaf, estimated at 50,000 rupees, were also collected.⁴⁹⁶ As a result, the siege around Najaf, which had lasted forty-six days, ended. The trial of those arrested by the British started on 5 May 1918. A court-martial was held at the house of Balfour in the northern city of Kufa.⁴⁹⁷ The court sentenced Sheikh al-Jazā’irī to execution but this was reduced to imprisonment in the camp of al-Shu‘iba. The political bureau in Baghdad ordered the Political Bureau in al-Shamiyah and Najaf to deport Sheikh al-Jazā’irī, as a prisoner of war (Class B) to India with the rest of the prisoners of Najaf. However, Sheikh al-Jazā’irī was deported to the al-Muhmarrah region and continued his imprisonment there due to the efforts of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, Sheikh Khaz‘al b. Jābir and other Shiite clerics.⁴⁹⁸ Similarly, Sayid Muḥammad Baḥar al-‘Ulūm was sentenced to execution by the court, but due to the efforts of Sheikh Khaz‘al b. Jābir and other Shiite clerics

⁴⁹³ Al-Khalīlī, Ja‘far, Vol. 4, p.103. The British found documents in the home of al-Mīrzā ‘Abbās al-Khalīlī, which included an article written by him about the revolution in Najaf and an article written by ‘Ali ‘Abdullah al-Qiṭīfī about jihad and defence as well as other articles about religion and jihad written by Aḥmed al-Jazā’irī and Sayid Muḥammad al-Hindī. See, Iraqi National Library and Archive, 951, No.2 “Documents in the House of al-Mīrzā ‘Abbās al-Khalīlī”, 29 September 1918, pp.6-16.

⁴⁹⁴ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā’iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, p.310.

⁴⁹⁵ ‘Ārif, Muḥammad, “*Aḥīr Muqātilīn Thawrat al- ‘Ishrīn Yarwī Thikrayāta*” “*Last Fighters of Twenty Revolution (1920) Narrates His Memories*”, Magazine ‘Alif Bā’ al-Baghdādiya, First year, No.6 (26 June 1968).

⁴⁹⁶ *Al-Arab* Newspaper, No. 108, Second Volume (7 May 1918).

⁴⁹⁷ IOR/L/PS/732/1 “Mesopotamia: Fortnightly Reports by High Commissioner, Report no.14, p.2. (Colonel Lechmain and a group of British officers headed the military tribunal).

⁴⁹⁸ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 950, No.2, “News about Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā’irī”, 30-4-1918, 30-8-1919, p.2, 3,6,13,15,17,23.

the judgment of execution was replaced by banishment to the al-Muhammrrah region.⁴⁹⁹

On 25 May 1918, the court finished its processes and decided to execute eleven people,⁵⁰⁰ imprison nine persons for periods ranging between six years and life, and exile 16 people to India.⁵⁰¹ At dawn on 30 May 1918, eleven people were hanged.⁵⁰²

4.5. The position of the Chief of Shiite Religious Authority from the time of the formation of League of Islamic Awakening to the Najaf Revolution in 1918

The League raised an important issue for all social groups in Iraq; namely, whether all groups should come together to confront the British authorities and achieve independence for Iraq. At the same time, the League was characterised by religious character; it was led by a group of Shiite clerics in Najaf.

When a group of Shiite clerics in Najaf established the League,⁵⁰³ they based it on several principles.⁵⁰⁴ The seventh article of the principles stated that a chief of Shiite religious authority was to be head of the League.⁵⁰⁵ Through this principle, it was obvious that the founders of the League were seeking the support of a chief of Shiite religious authority; because they knew how powerful his influence could be to the Shiites inside and outside Iraq. His support would help them to achieve their goals, where he has the ability to oblige the Shiites in Iraq to support the League through a *fatwa* or his position as the vice Imam of the twelve Imams of the Shiites during the time of absenteeism.

⁴⁹⁹ Iraqi National Library and Archive, 936, No.2 “Mājid Muḥammad Baḥar al-‘Ulūm- Najaf” 14-4-1918/2-3-1919, pp. 14,25,27,30.

⁵⁰⁰ Āl- Ḥabūbah, Ja‘far, Vol. 3, p.349. (Each of Kāzim Ṣabī, ‘Abbās ‘Ali al-Rumāḥī, ‘Alwān ‘Ali al-Rumāḥī, Karīm al-Ḥāj Sa‘ad al-Ḥāj Rāḍī, Aḥmad al-Ḥāj Sa‘ad al-Ḥāj Rāḍī, Muḥsin al-Ḥāj Sa‘ad al-Ḥāj Rāḍī, Sa‘īd, Muḥsin Abū Ghnīm, Najam al-Baqāl, Majīd b. al-Ḥāj Mahdī Dī‘tibil, and Jūdī Nājī. The people who were sentenced to execution by the British were in Kufa and when they heard this news they decided to escape. However, they failed to do so. See, Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), pp.177-178.

⁵⁰¹ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, pp.316-317.

⁵⁰² Al-‘Asdī, Ḥasan, p.342.

⁵⁰³ Vinogradov, Amal, “*The 1920 Revolt in Iraq Reconsidered; The Role of Tribes in National Political*”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No.2 (April, 1972), pp.123-139, 133.

⁵⁰⁴ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, p.265.

⁵⁰⁵ Kamāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad, *Thawrat al- ‘Ishrīn Fī Thikrāhā al-Kamsīn; Mal‘ ūmāt Wa Mushāhdāt Fī Al-Thawra Al-‘Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (Revolted In Its Fiftieth Anniversary; Information and Views in the Great Iraqi Revolution)*, (Baghdad, 1971), p.68.

It can be observed, however, that there was a difference in the views between the Shiite clerics about the League and its members and activities. For instance, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, the second chief of the Shiites, supported the League and sought to ease the sentences against members of the League. Also, Sheikh Khaz‘al b. Jābir sought to improve his relationship with clerics in Najaf because the relationship became strained after he refused to provide support to the mujahedeen during the first and second Jihad movements. However, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, the chief of the religious Shiite authority, did not support the League from its inception.⁵⁰⁶ It was clear that Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī was not convinced about the ideas and principles of the League and political action in general, as he was opposed to the constitutional movement in Persia.⁵⁰⁷

Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī took a neutral stance through the process of negotiations with the British authorities and sought to remove the siege imposed around Najaf. For example, he and Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-‘Aṣfahānī and other clerics sent a letter to the British commander in Baghdad asking him for mercy and explained the conditions under which the people of Najaf were labouring. Al-Yazdī also sent a letter to the General Commander of the British armies in Baghdad on 30 March 1918 asking him to remove the siege on Najaf because the punishment had impacted upon innocent and vulnerable people. The British Commander General refused.⁵⁰⁸

Al-Yazdī considered himself to be a mediator between the rebels and the British authorities to resolve the conflict between them. For example, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī asked al-Ḥāj Sa‘ad al-Ḥāj Rāḍī to deliver his sons to the British and he promised to spare their lives, but al-Ḥāj Sa‘ad al-Ḥāj Rāḍī rejected the suggestion and decided to resist the British. In a meeting held at his home, al-Yazdī asked the rebel leaders to sign a letter addressed to the British expressing their regret and remorse for what had happened, and their obedience to them. After long

⁵⁰⁶ Al-Ḥusaynī, Salīm, p.145.

⁵⁰⁷ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Sayid Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī Sīratuh Wa ‘Adwā’ ‘Alā Ḥayātih Wa Marjī ‘iyatahu (Muḥammad Kāzīm Al-Yazdī: His Biography and Highlights on His Life, His Clerical Organization and His Positions)*, (Qum, 2006), pp.161-194.

⁵⁰⁸ Muḥammad, Al-Khū‘ī, *Muthakarāt Shāhīd ‘Ayān ‘An Thawrat Al-Najaf (Memoirs’ of Eyewitness about Najaf Revolution)*, (Beirut, 2009), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.92; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā‘iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā‘ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraqi Revolution Introductions And Results)*, (Beirut, 2009) “Letter From Najaf Clerics to British Commander General” 26 March 1918 and “Letter From Captain Balfour to Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī and clerics of Najaf” 2 April 1918, Vol. 2, pp.53-55.

discussions, the rebels declined to sign the proposed letter. As a result, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī decided to form a delegation and asked the delegation to go to Captain Balfour to tell him about the rebels' rejection of the demands of the British, and to ask him for clemency. Captain Balfour refused, insisting on his demands being met.⁵⁰⁹

It was obvious that al-Yazdī agreed with the procedures that were taken by the British authorities against the rebels after they were arrested. For example, he did not object to the execution of the eleven people found guilty by the British authorities of having assassinated Captain Marshall.⁵¹⁰ He also did not object to the honorary ceremony that was held for Captain Balfour on the same day of the execution in the city of Najaf.⁵¹¹

Through analysis of such events it can be concluded that the attitude of Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī about the League and the Najaf revolution is considered to be a negative one. According to his position as a chief of Shiite religious authority, he was expected to have an active role in the political issues that would help contribute to the independence of Iraq. Therefore, the negative attitude of Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī was one of the factors that led to the thwarting of the first clash between the Shiites and the British authorities.

4.6. Conclusion

To sum up, the three main factors that led a group of Shiite clerics to establish a political association to lead the political issues in Iraq were: the political and military measures undertaken by the British authorities in the Middle Euphrates region; the failure of the first and second jihad movements; and the changes in British policy relating to the future governance of Iraq. The political association was

⁵⁰⁹ Al-'Asdī, Ḥasan, p.256; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Thawrat Al-Najaf Wa Maqtal Al-Kābtin Marshal (Najaf Revolution and Killed Captain Marshall)*, (Beirut, 2005), p.102.

⁵¹⁰ A group from Āl-Ḥāj Rāḍī asked Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to issue a publication stating that it was not permissible to execute eleven people for killing one person, but Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī did not agree. Instead he said that Najaf must be purged of criminals. As a result of this answer, they tried to kill him. Perhaps the reason Āl-Ḥāj Rāḍī asked Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī to intervene was because they knew he had asked Captain Balfour to pardon Aḥmed b. Muḥammad Kāzīm al-Khurāsānī, and Captain Balfour had responded positively to this request. See, Al-'Asdī, Ḥasan, p.339; Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', Muḥammad, *'Uqūd Min Ḥyātī (Decades of My life)*, (Najaf, 2012), p.109.

⁵¹¹ Robert, Jarman "Review of the Civil Administration of the Occupied Territories of Iraq 1914-1918", Vol. 1, p.33; IOR/L/PS/732/1 "Mesopotamia: Fortnightly Reports by High Commissioner", Report no.14, p.2.

established by a group of Shiite clerics in the city of Najaf in late 1917 and early 1918; it was called the League of the Islamic Awakening. The goals of the founders of the League were to resist the British authorities and to create an identity that would contribute to nation building.

As this chapter has shown, the founders of the League sought to achieve their goals through several measures. They included establishing the association in Najaf because of the good educational level there, which allowed these political ideas to be accepted. This also allowed the ideas of the association to spread to nearby cities such as Karbala and Baghdad amongst others. The founders also worked collectively with all social groups and exploited common elements, such as language, religion, ethnicity, anti-colonisation sentiment and others in Iraq to further their aims. Then, the founders formulated tenets to encourage the people to join the association. Further they divided the association into two sections: political and military. They contacted the Turkish forces to obtain their support. A revolution against the British authorities in Najaf became the main objective of the League because they believed that through such a revolution they would achieve their goals. In order to start this process, they assassinated Captain Marshall.

British politics played an important role in the ending of the revolution in Najaf. With regard to the Shiites of Iraq, the British wanted to show them that they wanted only to arrest the killers of Captain Marshall; they wanted to avoid harming holy places. To achieve these aims, the British forces surrounded Najaf to prevent the rebels from obtaining support from cities and clans near to Najaf and from the Turks. This also prevented the rebels from escaping Najaf. They also imposed restrictions on the residents of Najaf and the rebels in order to thwart the revolution. The British were in constant contact with Iran, other countries, and a chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq, to show that they were not targeting the holy places. They only wanted to arrest the killers of Captain Marshall. The British authorities managed to overcome the revolution in Najaf. They took strict measures against the members of the League because the ideas of the League threaten their interests and objectives in both Iraq and the wider area more generally.

One of the main reasons behind the failure of the Najaf revolution was that the Shiite clerics in Iraq in general, and Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī in particular, did not issue *fatwas* to fight the British. This contributed significantly to their arising insufficient support for the rebels. However, the issuance of any *fatwa* would have

changed the situation for both the British and the rebels inside Najaf. It should also be considered that the revolution started without cooperation and coordination between those in Najaf and cities and tribes nearby. It was assumed, wrongly, by the members of the League that there would be cooperation and coordination with the tribes and clans in neighbouring areas to Najaf before the assassination of Captain Marshall.

Despite the failure of the League to achieve its goals, it succeeded in changing Shiite political thought through the establishment of political associations in Karbala, Najaf, Samarra, Khadimain and Baghdad. Such organisations would, thereafter, lead political action in Iraq against the British. Therefore, it is concluded that the League led to the first direct clash between the Shiites and the British authorities. Furthermore, the League led the Shiite clerics in the holy cities to work with all social groups, and this contributed to uniting various sects, and races. In turn this played a central role in the convergence of their ideas and the wider dissemination of their aspirations. It also succeeded in forming the features of an identity.

Chapter Five

Passive Resistance to the British Occupation, 1918–1919

After the failure of the Najaf revolution in 1918, many clerics, nationalists and tribal leaders realised that there were many difficulties resisting the British due to disparities in military capabilities. They also believed that working individually without organisation would not be fruitful. Therefore, they decided to confront the British through peaceful means and work cooperatively to achieve their common goal; full independence of Iraq without a mandate.

This chapter discusses the passive resistance in Iraq against the British authorities during 1918 and 1919. It focuses on the coordination and cooperation between the new coalition and their use of a peaceful strategy. In addition, this chapter analyses the role of this coalition in the emergence of signs of nation building during the period passive resistance.

The first stage of passive resistance began in 1918 when the British government decided to hold a referendum to seek the opinion of the Iraqis on the continuation of British administration. Many people in the holy cities and in Baghdad tried to thwart the referendum. In the second phase of resistance, from late 1918 to early 1919, they brought their case for full independence to international and regional attention, and were supported in doing so by Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī and Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī'a al-'Aṣfahānī. The last phase of passive resistance, which lasted from mid-1919 to 1920, consisted of cooperation and coordination between the different sects, races, and political parties. They held meetings and peaceful demonstrations which brought them closer. During this stage, a coalition was formed, comprised of nationalists, Shiite clerics and clans. This coalition played a role in the emergence of signs of nation building.

5.1. The referendum and the establishment of political parties and associations

The first stage of the passive resistance began when the British authorities decided to hold a referendum for the Iraqi people about the future rule of Iraq. However a group of Shiite clerics, tribal leaders and nationalist in the holy cities and Baghdad worked to thwart the referendum. In order to discuss the referendum which led to a passive resistance, it is important to understand the reasons and motives that

led the British administration to hold a referendum. Sir Arnold Wilson, the British civil commissioner in Baghdad wished for a continuation of British rule in Iraq and the establishment of an empire in the Middle East. He faced many challenges inside and outside Iraq and, as a result, he sought to implement his wishes through consensus. Therefore, he held a referendum in Iraq.

The first challenge that faced Wilson was the Turkish authority's refusal to recognise the legitimacy of the British occupation of Mosul.⁵¹² Wilson was worried about the Turks' refusal because he was aware of the existence of pro-Turkish group that was constructed of former officers in city of Mosul. He was also convinced that whatever form of government arose in Iraq, it would need to be strong enough to exercise control over the cities of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul.⁵¹³ It is important to mention that Wilson was aware that his view contradicted the principles of the Sykes-Picot agreement and the initial instructions issued by the British government regarding the future governance of Basra and Baghdad.⁵¹⁴

The second challenge occurred on 8 January 1918, when the President of the United States of America, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, announced his Fourteen Points.⁵¹⁵ Article XII, which promised the right of self-determination to all peoples, was especially important, as it was directly applicable to the former Turkish territories.⁵¹⁶ It also gave legitimacy to the Iraqi people in their demands for independence and the right to self-determination.

The third challenge that materialised was the issuance of an Anglo-French statement on 8 November 1918. This committed both nations to establishing governments and national departments based on the free choice of the population from which the governments would derive their powers. France and Britain agreed

⁵¹² On 30 October 1918, Truce Moudros was held between Turkey and Britain, which formally ended the state of war between the two nations. Afterwards, British officials in Baghdad received orders from the Ministry of War to occupy Mosul. These orders were assigned to Captain Marshall, who was stationed 14 miles south of Mosul. He occupied the city on 2 November 1918. The British authorities occupied Mosul because of its strategic location. See, Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917–1920 A Clash of Loyalties: A Personal and Historical Record* (London, 1930), pp.16–21; Howard, Harry, *The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History, 1913–1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1931), p.298.

⁵¹³ F.O. 371/5127, 'From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to India Office, 18 November 1918'.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ F.O. 371/4150/5394, "Memorandum no.524, 22 February 1919: from Lt-Col. A.T. Wilson to the Under- Secretary of State For India", p.7; Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917–1920 A Clash of Loyalties: A Personal and Historical Record* (London, 1930), p.104; Harry, Philby, *Arabian Days: An Autobiography* (London: R. Hale, 1948), p.173.

⁵¹⁶ Zuhīr, 'Atīya, *Mabda' Taqrīr al-Maṣīr Wa al-Arab (The Principle of Self-Determination and the Arabs)* (Baghdad, 1959), p.33.

to encourage and support the establishment of national governments and administrations in Syria and Iraq.⁵¹⁷ Wilson sent a letter to the ministry of India opposing the Anglo-French statement,⁵¹⁸ because it was inconsistent with his ambition to create an ever-greater British Empire across the Middle Eastern region.⁵¹⁹ It can be inferred that British politicians had separate views on the future of Iraq. However, the British government in India was leading upon the political issue of Iraq as they had a better experience and knowledge in the Persian Gulf region. Edwin Samuel Montagu, the Secretary State of India, sent a letter to Wilson on 18 November 1918. The letter informed him that Colonel T.E. Lawrence had presented a proposition on the Arab issue to the British government recommending that the lower region of Iraq be governed by ‘Abdullah b. Sharīf Ḥusseian, while the upper region should be governed by Zayd b. al-Sharīf Ḥussein, and Syria by Faisal b. al-Sharīf Ḥussein. Colonel T. E. Lawrence specified that the three countries would be under British administration and that the lower region would be effectively under British control,⁵²⁰ Wilson’s view on the proposal was asked for.⁵²¹

These proposals were inconsistent with Wilson’s plan and approach. As a result, he asked the British government to exclude Iraq from the rule of Sharīf Ḥussein’s sons.⁵²² He urged that Baghdad, Basra and Mosul should be considered as a single unit for administrative purposes under the effective control of the British, as had been done by Sir Percy Cox in 1917.⁵²³ He explained his opposition to the establishment of an Arab state in Iraq under the rule of Sharīf Ḥussein’s sons: the Shiites in Iraq violently opposed Arab unity under Sunni rule.⁵²⁴ He also raised the issue of Ibn Su‘ūd’s hostility to Sharīf Ḥussein and his sons. Wilson stated, ‘If we

⁵¹⁷ Rush, Alan, Vol. 2, p.153.

⁵¹⁸ Philby, Harry, p.173.

⁵¹⁹ Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917–1920 A Clash of Loyalties: A Personal and Historical Record* (London, 1930), p.104. (I would be remiss in my duty if I did not score before everything my conviction that the Anglo-French statement as far as it is concerned about Mesopotamia, it would put us in difficulties and it would be like a lethal weapon in the hands of people who do not know how the administration of their affairs, and according to the experiences of my political governors in various parts of Iraq, I can announce with confidence that the people in general does not expect nor want any comprehensive project for independence, as indicated in the Anglo-French statement).

⁵²⁰ F.O. 371/4148/13298. “War Cabinet-Eastern Committee. 39th Meeting, Dated 27 November 1918”.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

⁵²² Ireland, Philip, p.156.

⁵²³ Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917–1920 A Clash of Loyalties: A Personal and Historical Record* (London, 1930), p.104.

⁵²⁴ F.O.882/23/3133, “From Political Baghdad, to Secretary of State for India—no.10973, 10 December 1818”.

encourage the idea of Arab control instead of the European in Arabic-speaking regions, this would raise the potential of religious hatred in Iraq, and so we will be deprived from some advantages offered by our occupation of this vital area'.⁵²⁵ The religious hatred that is referred to by Wilson was incorrect at that time because the Shiite clerics supported the Ottoman Empire during the first and second jihad to confront the British forces,⁵²⁶ as well as the principles of the League of Islamic Awakening, which were formulated by the Shiite clerics and called for unity between all Islamic sects.⁵²⁷ Therefore, it can be deduced that Wilson tried to raise the religious hatred issue to achieve his plans.

To learn about the direction of public opinion in Iraq, Wilson decided to hold a referendum.⁵²⁸ He believed that public opinion in Iraq opposed creating an Arab kingdom without advice, assistance, or control from Britain and, instead, favoured the creation of an Arab state that would include Basra, Baghdad and Mosul under the rule of an Arab prince.⁵²⁹ He stated; 'this feeling according to my personal knowledge is prevalent in all parts of Iraq, especially in both Najaf and Karbala, and rural areas, where Sir Percy Cox enjoys great prestige'.⁵³⁰ Therefore, Sir Arnold Wilson wanted to legitimise his plan and approach through holding a referendum in Iraq in order to obtain the support of the people for his plans for the future rule of Iraq.

Wilson mentioned the advantages of individual candidates with regard to their suitability for governing Iraq, such as Hādī Pāshā al-‘Amrī, a member of the family of the Sultan of Egypt and the son of al-Sharīf Ḥussein, or Naqīb of Baghdad ‘Abdu al-Rahmān al-Qīlānī,⁵³¹ and Sheikh Khaz‘al b. Jābir, the ruler of the al-Muhammarah region.⁵³² Wilson noted that Sheikh Khaz‘al b. Jābir was from the Shiite sect and was loyal to Britain,⁵³³ but also opined that his appointment would be disastrous, as he would increase latent hostility all over Iraq.⁵³⁴ Wilson concluded that none of the

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ See Chapter Three.

⁵²⁷ See Chapter Four.

⁵²⁸ Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917–1920 A Clash of Loyalties: A Personal and Historical Record* (London, 1930), p.108.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Rush, Alan, "From Political Baghdad to Foreign Office, 24 November 1918", Vol. 2, p.155.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² F.O.882/23/3133/MES/19/17, 'Telegram From Political Baghdad, to Secretary of State for India, No. 11454, 22 November 1918.'

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

candidates were suitable to rule Iraq and suggested that, instead, Sir Percy Cox be appointed delegate for five years without an Arab prince or another president of state.⁵³⁵ Sir Arnold Wilson received a telegram from the Secretary of State for India, approving his opinions and instructed him to take the necessary steps to prevent Khaz‘al b. Jābir from becoming ruler of Iraq.⁵³⁶

As a result, the Joint Committee authorised Wilson to hold a referendum in Iraq,⁵³⁷ using the following questions:

1. Do you favour a single Arab state under British tutelage, stretching from the northern border of Mosul to the Gulf?
2. In this case, should an Arab prince be named for this state?
3. If so, who should be chosen as president?⁵³⁸

It was clear that the method of formulating the questions was not commensurate with the ambition of the majority of Iraqis for many reasons. First, the establishment of an Arab state was directly linked to British tutelage. Secondly, in the case of establishing such state, it would be only a formality. Finally, these questions made it clear that the British aimed to achieve certain results. Nevertheless, Wilson was not satisfied even with these restrictions; he wanted to impose more restrictions to ensure that the results of the referendum were compatible with his desires.

Arnold Wilson sent his instructions to all the political rulers of Iraq and asked them to discuss the questions of the referendum with influential personalities and tribal leaders in their regions. He thought that this would allow him to learn their views as to the continuation of British rule in Iraq.⁵³⁹ These instructions clearly demonstrate Wilson’s intention to manipulate the referendum for several reasons. He limited the referendum to influential personalities and tribal leaders; this matter was

⁵³⁵ Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917–1920 A Clash of Loyalties: A Personal and Historical Record* (London, 1930), p.108.

⁵³⁶ F.O.141/444/ 12215, ‘From Secretary of State for India to Civil Commissioner Baghdad, No. 11608, 27 November 1918’.

⁵³⁷ Young, Hubert, *The Independent Arab* (London, 1933), p.280.

⁵³⁸ Rush, Alan, ‘From Secretary of State to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, Repealed to Viceroy, Foreign Office, 28 November 1918’, Vol. 2, p.157.

⁵³⁹ He told them: when it appears to you that public opinion is in favour of the continuation of the British, you are entitled to meet with all the notables and elders and ask them the referendum questions, and tell them that their answers will be sent to me to be presented to the British government. If it appears that public opinion is likely to be divided sharply, or standing on opponent position against continuation of British, you should postpone the meeting with the elders and tribal leaders and inform me about it and wait my instructions. See, F.O.882/13/3640, ‘Memorandum 27190, Civil Commissioner to Political Officers, Baghdad, 30 November 1918’.

not mentioned in the telegram that was sent to him informing him that he should hold a referendum. Secondly, he asked the political rulers to hold a referendum only if public opinion supported the continuation of British rule in Iraq.⁵⁴⁰ Thirdly, he demanded that the political rulers discuss the questions of the referendum individually and secretly with influential personalities in their regions first and only latterly were they to hold a public meeting to discuss the questions of referendum.⁵⁴¹ This procedure was unfair and contrasted with the general conditions of how to hold a referendum. Wilson's plan for the future of Iraq can be summarized as having two main goals: to create Iraq as a unified political entity composed of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, and to ensure the continuation of Iraq under British rule

The political rulers in the various regions of Iraq implemented Wilson's instruction to apply the referendum. This led to a split in opinions. The first view corresponded with Wilson's plan, however the second view opposed his plan and reflected the religious and nationalistic aspirations of the people. This view contributed to the emergence of signs of nation building. It can be said that the passive resistance against the British began in Iraq during the referendum of 1918.

5.2. The Referendum of 1918: Reorganising the Occupied Country

It was the first time that a referendum had been held to decide the future of the three occupied *vilayets* of Mesopotamia. The referendum results corresponded with Wilson's plan in several areas in Iraq.

In Basra merchants felt that the economic situation had improved during the British occupation of Iraq. Accordingly, this category of the native population was less supportive of the idea of independence; they also rejected the presence of an Arab ruler in Iraq. Sir Arnold Wilson visited Basra to consult with local notables during the referendum,⁵⁴² but he had difficulty estimating general opinion on the referendum.⁵⁴³ Therefore, Basra's political ruler, Evelyn N. Howell, took the advice of Aḥmad al-Şāni'a on how to handle the indigenous residents of Basra.⁵⁴⁴ As a

⁵⁴⁰ F.O.882/13/3640, 'Memorandum 27190, Civil Commissioner to Political Officers, Baghdad, 30 November 1918'.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² F.O. 882/23/3133, 'Telegram no.11453, 22 December 1918: From Political Baghdad to Secretary of State for India'.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ F.O. 882/13/5050, 'Self-Determination in Iraq: Secret Compilation of Declaration and Telegram', p.3. 'You must not hold a public meeting with the elders of Basra and ask them the

result, he did not hold a public meeting with Basra notables. Instead he spoke individually with several prominent people and recorded their views.⁵⁴⁵

Howell secretly took opinions from seventeen people: of those thirteen were Muslims, one was a Kurd, there was a single Jew, one Christian and one Armenian. Cumulatively, he considered these people to be representative of all opinions within Basra.⁵⁴⁶ In a telegram to Sir Arnold Wilson, Howell reported that the majority of Muslims in Basra favoured Iraq's independence, but did not favour the selection of a prince from the family of al-Sharīf as ruler of Iraq. They did not see any suitable family or man inside Iraq as ruler of Iraq. They also felt that a ruler from outside Iraq was undesirable.⁵⁴⁷ According to Howell, the Muslims in Basra had different opinions. Some of them favoured full independence for Iraq and viewed the British as infidels who should not govern a Muslim country,⁵⁴⁸ while others wanted the continued civil administration of the British, with some matters modified to suit the desires, aspirations, and needs of the Muslim population.⁵⁴⁹ After reviewing the ideas of various sects and races in Basra, the political ruler concluded that there was a demand for continued British administration of governance in Iraq, including Mosul, under a British commissioner and without a local prince.⁵⁵⁰ During the referendum process in Basra, it was obvious that the merchants and landlords played an essential role in the formation of the political views of the wider populace. In general, the British administration supported the merchant class and landowners, whilst a couple of the intelligentsia favoured the progressive establishment of an Arab government

referendum questions because maybe they vote out of fear, and maybe they gather and say for you, we do not want you and get out of our country'.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., p.2, 6. Based on this work, someone loyal to the British authority told Sir Arnold Wilson, 'You are a very wise in knowing about each man individually about his views on the referendum' See, F.O. 882/23/5050, 'Self-Determination in Iraq: Secret Compilation of Declaration and Telegram' p.3.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., p.6. From among the seventeen persons interviewed by Basra's political ruler, Sulaymān Fayḍī. Sulaymān Fayḍī was a strong supporter of Sayid Ṭālib al-Naqīb during the period of Turkish rule. He called for the independence of Iraq, supported the idea of an Arabian prince as ruler of Iraq and the appointment of a member of al-Sharīf Ḥussein's family to that position. See. F.O. 882/23/MES/19/7, 'Telegram no.1706, 26 January 1919: From Political Baghdad to Secretary of State for India'.

⁵⁴⁷ F.O. 882/23/3505 'Telegram from P.P Basra, to Civil Commissioner, Baghdad—no.536, 21 December 1918'.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid. (Evelyn N. Howell did not give details about their political position and he considered them to be religious fanatics or believed that they feared the establishment of a just government, which would reduce corruption).

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

under an Arab Prince.⁵⁵¹ However, the nationalists in Basra, such as Sulaymān Fayḍī, supported one of the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein to become the ruler of Iraq. Therefore, the opposition against the British authorities was not clear in Basra.

In the region of Qurna, thirty people including tribal leaders, village heads, and notables signed a petition declaring that they wanted to stay under the protection of Britain and accepted Sir Percy Cox as the governor of Iraq.⁵⁵² In addition, the tribal leaders of the Amara region signed a petition requesting that their rulers and politicians be Englishmen who spoke Arabic, and declared their refusal to support an Arab ruler of Iraq. These leaders also demanded the selection of fair judges from the Shiite sect and supported Sir Percy Cox's return to Iraq.⁵⁵³ Opinions in the Kut area were similar to the rest of Iraq, where the people favoured the unity of Iraq, including Mosul, and opposed rule by an Arab prince.⁵⁵⁴ The situation was similar in the region of al-'Aziziyah, where the assistant political ruler reported that the appointment of a son of al-Sharīf Ḥussein would face strong opposition.⁵⁵⁵

In the Nasiriyah region, two hundred and seventy people including tribal elders and notables signed a referendum calling for the appointment of Sir Percy Cox as the governor of Iraq and they opposed the appointment of an Arab prince.⁵⁵⁶ However, the Nasiriyah leaders also demanded that the prince should not be from Iraq as the Iraqis could not agree amongst themselves on a person, and consequently, choosing an Iraqi might cause further internal conflict and dispute.⁵⁵⁷ Furthermore, leaders from this region demanded that Mosul needed to be considered as an integral part of Iraq.⁵⁵⁸ In the Sammawa region, eighty-three people issued four statements, all of which favoured the continuation of British administration of Iraq.⁵⁵⁹ Despite this support, large numbers of tribal and clan leaders in Sammawa and al-Rumitha, headed by Banī Ḥakīm, completely rejected British rule in Iraq.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵¹ F.O. 882/23/MES/19/7, 'Telegram no.1706, 26 January 1919: From Political Baghdad to Secretary of State for India'.

⁵⁵² F.O.882/23/3505 'Self-Determination in Iraq: Secret Compilation of Declarations and Telegram—no.2', p.7.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., Telegram—no.3, p.8.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., Telegram—no.4 (b), p.9.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., Telegram—no.4 (b), p.9.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., Telegram—no.5, p.11.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., Telegram—no.5, p.11.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., Telegram—no.5, p.11.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., Telegram—no.6, p.12.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., Telegram—no.6, pp.12–13.

In the al-Hillah region, the political ruler Major H. C. Pulley consulted Muḥammad ‘Ali Al-Qazwīnī, who was loyal to the British authorities,⁵⁶¹ on the best way to pose the referendum questions. Al-Qazwīnī recommended that the ruler invite seven of the local leaders to a meeting and, during the meeting, question them about the referendum.⁵⁶² The political ruler accepted al-Qazwīnī’s proposition, but then news about the referendum quickly spread throughout the city, leading the public to hold a meeting to discuss how to thwart the referendum.⁵⁶³ Participants agreed to send a letter to Hillah’s political ruler informing him that they knew of his plans to let only seven people participate in the referendum. They also demanded that they should be allowed to take part. The letter was signed by a large number of traders and dignitaries, including the mayor of Hillah who delivered the letter. The political ruler refused to take the letter,⁵⁶⁴ and supported the appointment of Percy Cox as governor of Iraq.⁵⁶⁵

In the al-Hindiya area, referendum statements were signed by twenty people, in the Musayyib area by six people, and in the al-Diwaniyah area by one hundred and fifty-nine people, all of whom supported the continued British administration of Iraq and the return of Percy Cox.⁵⁶⁶ Those in al-Diwaniyah believed that the appointment of an Arab prince in Iraq was consistent with their religion which called for rule by an imam, but they also saw that it might be to do achieve that at the given point in time.⁵⁶⁷

The referendum statement in Khanqin was signed by one hundred and fifty people. It was distinguished from the statements from other regions of Iraq by its long introduction explaining the local disadvantages of Turkish administration and the advantages of British administration.⁵⁶⁸ Beside this, the statement from the Mandali area, signed by twelve people, expressed the desire for Iraq’s unity and the continuation of British rule.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶¹ IOR/L/PS/10/962 ‘Intelligence Report: Summary of Report No.18’, p.59.

⁵⁶² Al-Basīr, Muḥammad, *Tārīkh Al-Qadiya ‘Irāqiya (The History of the Iraqi Issue)* (Baghdad, 1923), p.69.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.69–70.

⁵⁶⁶ F.O.882/23/3505 ‘Self-Determination in Iraq: Secret Compilation of Declarations and Telegram—no.8’, pp.17–18.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., Telegram—no.10, p.20.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

In the Kafra area, all Arab and Kurdish tribal leaders, along with some notables, supported the governance of Iraq by an Arab prince but requested that Britain postpone such an appointment.⁵⁷⁰ In Kirkuk, seventeen people signed a statement demanding the unity of Iraq, under the protection and supervision of the British.⁵⁷¹ In the Mosul area, a group of scholars, dignitaries, and residents met on 10 January 1919,⁵⁷² and signed a letter written by Aḥmad al-Fakhrī seeking the upgrade of their mandate in the fields of trade and agriculture, the deployment of security forces across the country, and the continuation of British rule.⁵⁷³

As shown, the largest support for the British came from merchants, landowners, loyal tribal leaders, and a minority of the clergy. Merchants supported the British for several reasons, most notably the benefits from British trade in Iraq. In 1919, British money trading in Iraq amounted to five million pounds; many traders in Iraq became brokers, dealers, or traders to agents.⁵⁷⁴ Landlords supported British rule in Iraq because the British government was the only unit capable of collecting income from the land on their behalf.⁵⁷⁵ Tribal elders supported the continuation of British authority for several reasons, particularly the British implementation of the laws of the clans,⁵⁷⁶ and laws of land ownership which strengthened their influences.⁵⁷⁷ The British had isolated the tribal elders opposed to British policy and replaced them with clan leaders who were.⁵⁷⁸ The British supported these tribal leaders by giving them money to increase their influence, which made other clan members unable to confront them.⁵⁷⁹ The clan leaders supported the British. It can be said that the signs of nation building did not appear in the areas previously mentioned. This was because Sir Arnold Wilson succeeded in implementing his plan on the rule of Iraq in these areas.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., Telegram—no.11, p.21.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., Telegram—no.12, p.21.

⁵⁷² Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā* (*Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results*), 'A Meeting in the House of Nāmiq 'Afanī Āl Qāsim Āghā on 10 January 1919' (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 2, p.190.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 'A Meeting in the House of Nāmiq 'Afanī Āl Qāsim Āghā on 10 January 1919' (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 2, p.190.

⁵⁷⁴ Cab. 21/204/7212 " Letter from Lt. Col A.T Wilson Acting Civil Commissioner Baghdad to Secretary of State of India, Dated 15 November 1919 ".

⁵⁷⁵ C.O. 696/2 " Administration Reports, Hillah Division, 1919", p.18; C.O 696/2 " Administration Reports, Shamiyah Division, 1919", p.2.

⁵⁷⁶ C.O. 696/1 " Administration Reports, Hillah Division, 1918", p.121.

⁵⁷⁷ C.O. 696/4 "Administration Reports, Muntafiq Division, 1921", p.3.

⁵⁷⁸ C.O. 696/1 " Baghdad Wilayat, Administration Report for the year 1917", pp.43-44.

⁵⁷⁹ C.O. 696/1 "Administration Reports, Nasiriya Division District, 1918", p.351.

5.3. Rejecting Colonial Status: Wanting Statehood

Opposition to the referendum was formed in several areas; most prominently in Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad, and Kadhimain. In these areas, Shiite clerics, nationalists, and tribal leaders played prominent roles in rejecting the referendum and the British presence in Iraq; they demanded an Arab ruler for Iraq. The Shiite clerics in these areas issued a *fatwa* prohibiting the election of a non-Muslim to rule a Muslim dominant country. Tribal leaders also played a key role in opposing the referendum through their influence over clan members. The nationalists raised the Iraqi people's awareness of the issues and unified public opinion against the referendum, whilst publicising these thoughts in different areas of Iraq. These measures all played a role in creating a rapprochement between the various sects and political parties.

5.3.1. Najaf

During the British administration, Iraq was divided into nine provinces. The city of Najaf belonged to the province of al-Shamiyah, and was governed by Major Norbury.⁵⁸⁰ Sir Arnold Wilson selected Najaf as the first region to hold the referendum due to its political, religious, and social importance, and its significance to Shiites in Iraq and throughout the world.⁵⁸¹ It was clear that Wilson wanted the referendum results to be a model for other regions, especially the Shiite areas of Karbala, Samarra, and Kadhimain. He also expected that the referendum would pass easily in Najaf, without any difficulties, for two reasons. First, Sayid Muḥammad Kāzim al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Yazdī, a chief of Shiite religious authority, had not resisted, but cooperated with the British during the revolution of Najaf in 1918. Secondly, the failure of the revolution led to severe sanctions on the city's population, including the execution of eleven residents.⁵⁸² He believed that these sanctions had terrorised the residents of Najaf and the neighbouring areas of Kufa and Abu al-Khaseeb, and

⁵⁸⁰ IOR/L/PS/10/517/1 "Mesopotamia: Administration: Personal Officers' Papers, Telegram from Political Baghdad to Foreign Simla 4 October 1918, p.164".

⁵⁸¹ Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al-'Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, pp.72-73.

⁵⁸² 'Abbas, Alā', *Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī Wa Dawruh al-Siyāsī Fī Marḥalat al-'Iḥtilāl al-Birīṭānī (Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī And His Political Role in the Phase of the British Occupation of Iraq)* (University of Babylon, 2005), p.50.

that as a result they would not dare take any anti-British action during the referendum.⁵⁸³

The news of the Anglo-French agreement and several of the procedures taken by the British relating to the future of Iraq reached Najaf where it were discussed by a group of young people.⁵⁸⁴ They believed that it was the right time to call for independence and select an Arab government ruled by a son of al-Sharīf Ḥussein alongside a representative council; they sought to spread these ideas in Najaf.⁵⁸⁵

After the group realised that independent work would not lead them to achieving their goals, they sought to convince influential families in Najaf to work with them. The group succeeded in persuading Sheikh Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī,⁵⁸⁶ Sayid Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ṣafī, and Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā’irī.⁵⁸⁷ Thus, three influential families in Najaf, notably Āl al-Jazā’irī-, Āl al-Shibībī and Āl Sayid al-Ṣafī, joined in their understanding and established the Secret Party of Najaf (*Hizb Al-Najaf Al-Sirī*).⁵⁸⁸ They stated publicly their demands.⁵⁸⁹ They emphasised the common traits among Iraqi tribes and families such as brotherhood, unity, defence of the oppressed and others to achieve their goals, and especially that Iraqi society was based on families and tribes. This was a strategy that helped structure a feeling of commonality amongst Iraqis.

Many influential figures and tribal leaders joined the party.⁵⁹⁰ One of the party members, Sayid ‘Alwān al-Yāsirī incited the clans of Shamiyah, Mashkhab, Kufa,

⁵⁸³ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, pp.72-73.

⁵⁸⁴ *Muthakarāt Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn (Memoranda of Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn)*, (Baghdad, 1987), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.11. (The group included each of Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn, Sayid Aḥmad al-Ṣafī, Sayid Ḥussein Kamāl al-Dīn, Sa‘ad Ṣālih Jaryū and Sayid Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl al-Dīn).

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Furātī, *Alā Hāmish al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā (On the Sidelines of the Great Iraqi Revolution)* (Baghdad, 1952), p.20.

⁵⁸⁹ *Muthakarāt Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn (Memoranda of Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn)*, (Baghdad, 1987), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.11. “Its members included Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā’irī, Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī, Sayid Muḥammad Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn, Sayid Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ṣafī, Sheikh Bāqir al-Shibībī and Sayid Hussein Kamāl al-Dīn, Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā’irī, Sa‘ad Ṣālih Jaryū, Sayid Aḥmad al-Ṣafī, Sayid Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl al-Dīn, Yahyā al-Ḥabūbī and Muḥammad ‘Ali al-Dimashqī”.

⁵⁹⁰ Including Kāṭi‘ al-‘Awādī Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī, ‘Abdu al-Wāḥid al-Ḥāj Sakar Muḥsin Silāsh, Sayid Hādī Zuwīn, Kāṭi‘ al-‘Awādī and Sha‘lān Abū al-Jūn. See, Shubar, Ḥasan, *Al-Taḥaruk Al-Islāmī 1900–1957 (Islamic Movement 1900-1957)* (Qum, 1990), p.238.

Abu Sakhir, and those in other nearby areas to join the Secret Party.⁵⁹¹ Thus, the Secret Party of Najaf succeeded in uniting clerics, tribal leaders, and nationalists to face the British authorities and thwart the referendum.⁵⁹²

To obtain positive results for the referendum in Najaf, Wilson visited Sayid al-Yazdī, the chief of the Shiite religious authority, to persuade him to provide support for the British authorities. He did this because he knew the power and authority of al-Yazdī in Iraq. Wilson stated in a confidential report that al-Yazdī told him, “if appointed any Arab employee as a ruler of Iraq, it will lead to chaos, and until now, the residents of Iraq have not learned integrity yet, and they must remain under the authority of the British government. In addition, there is no Arab man acceptable to the people as a prince for Iraq”.⁵⁹³ It was obvious that al-Yazdī did not support those who called for the appointment of an Arab ruler in Iraq. Rather, he called for the continuation of the British authorities in Iraq because he believed that there was no Arab man acceptable to the people as a ruler. However, his reasoning is not fully convincing; the independence of Iraq became the main demand for most Iraqi people as is shown in Chapter Six, and, by virtue of his position, he should have played an active role in this issue.

However, the majority of clerics, tribal elders, and nationalists in Najaf demanded the appointment of a son of al-Sharīf Ḥussein as ruler of Iraq during a meeting held in the house of Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jawāhirī on 26 December

⁵⁹¹ *Muthakarāt Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn (Memoranda of Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn)*, (Baghdad, 1987), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, pp.11-12.

⁵⁹² The coordination between the members of Secret Najaf Party and nationalists was clear when Major Norbury began preparing for the referendum in Najaf and worked with Mustafā ‘Afandī Khurma, a man from Beirut who believed in nationalism. He informed his friends in Najaf about the procedures and preparations for the referendum and asked them to thwart it. Among these friends was Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn, who, along with party members. As a result the party members coordinated how to manage the dialogue and the meeting with Sir Arnold Wilson and Major Norbury. They also agreed that all speakers would confirm that what they were expressing only their own opinions, in order to show a lack of consensus. See, Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (Social Glimpses from the Modern History of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.73; *Muthakarāt Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn (Memoranda of Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn)*, (Baghdad, 1987), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.14.

⁵⁹³ F.O. 371/4148/13298 “ From Political Officer, Baghdad, 14 December 1918, Wilson Reported Interview with Muḥammad Kāzīm al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī al-Yazdī.”

1918.⁵⁹⁴ Ethnicity played a key role in unifying the demands of people.⁵⁹⁵ This can be inferred through the speech of ‘Abdu al-Wāhid al-Ḥāj Sakar during the meeting. He emphasised that ‘we have not matured yet to declare a republican system, and we are not Persians or Turks or British to choose the ruler of Mesopotamia from these nations, but we are Arabs, and therefore, we must be ruled by an Arab ruler’.⁵⁹⁶ He added that the highest family in the Arab world was al-Sharīf Ḥussein; therefore, they should demand the appointment of a son of al-Sharīf Ḥussein as the ruler of Iraq.⁵⁹⁷

Seeking the approval of the supreme Shiite cleric, a group of clerics and tribal elders went to al-Yazdī in Kufa and informed him about the outcome of the meeting. He apologised and refused to give his opinion and said to them, ‘I am a man of religion. I do not know about the politics, but I know this forbidden, and this is allowed’.⁵⁹⁸ It can be said that al-Yazdī supported the British.⁵⁹⁹ Despite al-Yazdī’s refusal to issue a statement concerning the referendum, they continued their efforts to gather signatures on a statement calling for Iraq’s independence. They held a meeting at the home of Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī in the area of al-Shamiyah to crystallise their goals. The police raided the house during the meeting and this forced the attendees to flee to their clans.⁶⁰⁰

Britain wanted a positive result from the referendum in Najaf. As a result, Major Norbury encouraged Iraqis who were loyal to the British to provide documents supporting the continuation of British rule. Major Norbury managed to obtain

⁵⁹⁴ *Muthakarāt Sayid Ḥussein Kamāl al-Dīn (Memoranda of Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn)*, (Baghdad, 1987), Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.13; *Muthakarāt Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn (Memoranda of Sayid Sa‘īd Kamāl al-Dīn)* Edited and Collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, (Baghdad, 1987), p.14; *Muthakarāt Sayid Ahmad al-Sāfī al-Najafī (Memorandum of Sayid Ahmad al-Sāfī al-Najafī)* Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, (Beirut, 2002), p.14.

⁵⁹⁵ Ethnicity: a group that shares a common of heritage, faith, ancestry, culture, language or other similarities. See, Muller, Jerry Z, *Us and Them: The Enduring Power of Ethnic Nationalism* (Foreign Affairs, Vol. 87, No. 2 (Mar. - Apr., 2008), pp.18-35, p.20.

⁵⁹⁶ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.59.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Al-Fr‘ūn, Mizhir, p.78.

⁵⁹⁹ Gertrude Bell, British Political Officer in Iraq stated that those who participated in this event would not forget the support that had been given by the Naqīb of Baghdad and Sayid Muḥammad Kāzim al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī al-Yazdī. Although Sayid Muḥammad Kāzim al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī al-Yazdī did not openly express his support for the British during the revolution in Najaf or the referendum, Bell argued that, if he had exceeded certain limits, his influence as a religious leader and his value to the British as a supporter might have been undermined. See, F.O. 311/4150/5394, ‘Self-Determination in Mesopotamia no.5, 24, Dated 22 February 1919, Baghdad: From A.T Wilson to Under Secretary of State for India’, p.3 and p.7.

⁶⁰⁰ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Najaf Al-Ashraf Wa Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Najaf and the Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 2005), p.30.

fourteen officially recognised statements. Of these, nine were signed by one person, and one by three people.⁶⁰¹ Among the four remaining statements, the first was signed by twenty-one people and asked the British to appoint an Arab prince who was a descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad.⁶⁰² The second statement was signed by thirty-six dignitaries, supported the continuation of British rule and the postponement of the appointment of an Arab prince in Iraq.⁶⁰³ The third statement was signed by twenty-one notables and merchants from Najaf in support of the continuation of British administration.⁶⁰⁴ The fourth and last statement, submitted to the political ruler of al-Shamiyah and Najaf on 28 December 1918, was signed by ten people and demanded an independent Iraq ruled by an Arab prince from the family of al-Sharīf Hussein.⁶⁰⁵

During the referendum in Najaf, there was cooperation between the nationalists, Shiite clerics, tribal leaders, and other influential personalities. This cooperation was based on the existence common elements, such as religion, ethnicity, and common traits among the Iraqi tribes. They agreed on a common goal: the independence of Iraq. Despite the lack of support from a chief of Shiite religious authority, these demands were made and led to the production of several signed statements.

5.3.2. Karbala

In Karbala, Major Bofil called a large number of notables and clan leaders to a meeting at the British headquarters. During the meeting, Major Taylor, the political ruler of the Hillah province, announced that Britain had decided to fulfil its promise to the Arabs and wanted to learn about the Iraqi people's opinions on what type of government should govern them.⁶⁰⁶ Sayid 'Abdu al-Wahāb al-Wahāb argued that the meeting did not adequately represent Karbala and that not enough time was provided to obtain accurate results. Major Taylor agreed to postpone the meeting for three

⁶⁰¹ F.O. 882/23/3505, 'Self-Determination in Iraq: Secret Compilation of Declarations and Telegram—no.7 (2–13)', pp.15–16.

⁶⁰² Ibid., Telegram—no.7 (10), p.14.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., Telegram—no.7 (9), p.15.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., Telegram—no.7 (10), p.15.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., Telegram—no.7 (14), p.16.

⁶⁰⁶ Al-Wardī, 'Alī, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al-'Iraq al-Ḥadīth (Social Glimpses from the Modern History of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.79.

days.⁶⁰⁷ It was clear that ‘Abdu al-Wahāb al-Wahāb asked to postpone the meeting to unify the opinions of the residents of Karbala about the referendum through obtaining support from Shiite clerics. As a result, a meeting was held in the Samarra area at the house of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, where one of the sons of Sharīf Ḥussein was elected to be the king of Iraq.⁶⁰⁸ Thus, the anti-British sentiment in Karbala succeeded in obtaining support from a second chief of Shiite religious authority, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, to thwart the referendum.

The opponents of the British administration in the Middle Euphrates region demanded that Sheikh al-Shīrāzī move to Najaf in response to Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī’s stance on the revolution and the referendum. Al-Shīrāzī decided to move to Karbala in order to support public interest and to avoid posing as a challenge to al-Yazdī.⁶⁰⁹ The relocation of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī from Samarra to Karbala increased his activity against the British authorities for several reasons. First, Karbala is considered to be the second religious city after Najaf. Secondly, its geographical location is near the most important clans in the Middle Euphrates region. Thirdly, he held the support of many people.

Most importantly, during the referendum process in Karbala, al-Shīrāzī’s issued a *fatwa* prohibiting the election of a non-Muslim to rule Muslims.⁶¹⁰ Seventeen scholars in Karbala supported this *fatwa*,⁶¹¹ and it influenced the people in Karbala and throughout Iraq. The *fatwa* contributed to a convergence in the ideas and thoughts between clerics and nationalists. Before this *fatwa* many nationalists believed that the Shiite clerics sought to establish an Islamic state and impose a ruler who was a chief of Shiite religious authority. However, this *fatwa* stipulated that the ruler should only be a Muslim; it did not have any other conditions.

⁶⁰⁷ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.48.

⁶⁰⁸ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents Of Great Iraqi Revolution Introductions And Results) “The Answer of the people of Karbala to the Question of Sir Arnold Wilson on 19 December 1918”* (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 2, pp.174-179.

⁶⁰⁹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Najaf Al-Ashraf Wa Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Najaf and the Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 2005), p.31

⁶¹⁰ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results) ‘Fatwa of Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī on 23 January 1919’*, (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 2, pp.212–213.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., ‘Telegram from the clerics of Karbala to Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī, Dated 23 January 1919’, Vol. 2, pp.214–215.

The al-Shīrāzī's *fatwa* came as a surprise to the British; it was the first *fatwa* they had faced after taking control of Baghdad. Compared to the *fatwas* of jihad issued in 1914, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī's *fatwa* was considered a greater political challenge because this *fatwa* was against the continuation of British rule in Iraq. Additionally, the *fatwa* was not issued by a chief Shiite religious authority in Iraq, al-Yazdī, but by a second chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq al-Shīrāzī. The British realised that all clerics (*Marji'*) in Iraq possessed power and influence. It is argued that if al-Shīrāzī's *fatwa* had been issued earlier in the referendum it could have created significant confusion in the British administration and might have prevented many statements from various parts of Iraq supporting the continuation of British rule in Iraq. It can be deduced through the *fatwa* that Sheikh al-Shīrāzī's relied on the existence of common denominator, specifically Islam, to unite the Iraqi people to face the British authorities.

5.3.3. Kadhimain and Baghdad

In Kadhimain, the British faced another challenge during the referendum because the city possessed three distinct characteristics. First, Kadhimain is the third holiest Shiite city in Iraq, and many Shiite clerics lived there.⁶¹² Secondly, Najaf and Karbala significantly affected Kadhimain through doctrine, ideology, and approach. Thirdly, Kadhimain is close to Baghdad, which was then the main centre of activity for nationalists demanding independence.⁶¹³ These characteristics had the most impact on the referendum in Kadhimain.

A group of Shiite clerics in Kadhimain led the opposition against the British and sought to thwart the referendum.⁶¹⁴ In addition, Abū al-Qāsim al-Kāshānī established a secret association called the Islamic Association, supported by Sheikh

⁶¹² Robert, Jarman, "Administration Report of the Kadhimain District from March to 31st December 1917", Vol. 1, p.47.

⁶¹³ Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al-'Iraq al-Ḥadīth (Social Glimpses from the Modern History of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, pp.80-81.

⁶¹⁴ F.O. 311/4150/5394 "Self-Determination in Mesopotamia, Memorandum no.5, 24, Dated 22 February, 1919, Baghdad, From A.T. Wilson to Under-Secretary of State for India, p.4". The group included each of Sayid Ḥasan al-Ṣadir, his sons, his cousin, Sayid Ḥasan al-Ṣadir, Sheikh Mahdī al-Khālīsī and his son. Sayid Ḥasan al-Ṣadir and Sayid Ḥasan al-Ṣadir were among the very few clerics to refuse to ratify the *fatwa* for jihad against British forces when they occupied Mesopotamia in 1914, but they completely changed their positions during the referendum and were at the forefront of opposition to the British. This highlights the deterioration of the relationship between the Shiite scholars and the British authorities.

Faṭḥallah al-ʿAṣfahānī.⁶¹⁵ As a result, one hundred and forty-three people signed a statement demanding an Arab Muslim government ruled by a king chosen from the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein. They were advised by a local council during a meeting that was held to discuss the referendum on 8 January 1919.⁶¹⁶ The clerics in Kadhimain also threatened anyone who voted to support the British with exclusion from mosques.⁶¹⁷ It can be said that the clerics exploited the religious factor in order to prevent the continuation of British rule in Iraq, and to thwart the referendum. The cooperation and coordination played key roles in uniting the demands of several people in Kadhimain; some of the educated class (*al-ʿAfandiya*) from Baghdad went to Kadhimain to help the clerics to foil the referendum.

By contrast twenty-five people, including merchants, tribal leaders, pro-British individuals and others, signed a statement calling for continued British rule in Iraq and the return of Sir Percy Cox as ruler of Iraq. Indeed, they protested against the suggested appointment of an Arab prince to rule Iraq.⁶¹⁸

Sir Arnold Wilson realised that the city of Baghdad was of vital importance to the referendum for several reasons. Most notably, Baghdad was Iraq's capital, and the centre of political activity. It was most heavily populated city, and home to influential leaders and members of all religious sects including Sunnis, Shiites, Christians, and Jews. Sir Arnold Wilson recognised the power of national trends on the most influential leaders in Baghdad and decided that it would be the last city in Iraq to hold the referendum.⁶¹⁹

Wilson sought to obtain positive results during the referendum in Baghdad in order to achieve his objectives. Therefore, he asked ʿAbdu al-Raḥmān al-Qilānī, who was Sunni, but opposing the establishment of an Arab government to select twenty-

⁶¹⁵ Shubar, Ḥasan, *Al-Taḥaruk Al-Islāmī 1900–1957 (Islamic Movement 1900-1957)* (Qum, 1990), p.239.

⁶¹⁶ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathāʿiq al-Thawra al-ʿIrāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natāʾijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results) 'A Meeting Held in the City of Kadhimain on 8 January 1919' 'The Answer of the People of Kadhimain to the Question of Sir Arnold Wilson on 8 January 1919'*, Vol. 2, pp.191–194 and pp.195-205; F.O. 882/23/3505, 'Self-Determination in Iraq: Secret Compilation of Declarations and Telegram—no.13 (8)', p.25. (A meeting was held at the home of Aghā Ḥasan al-Nuwā and was attended by Colonel Balfour and clerics and dignitaries from Kadhimain).

⁶¹⁷ F.O. 882/23/MES/19/7, 'Telegram No.1077, Dated 25 January 1919:From Political Baghdad to Secretary of State of India in London'.

⁶¹⁸ F.O. 882/23/3505, 'Self-Determination in Iraq: Secret Compilation of Declarations and Telegram—no.13 (9)', p.25; F.O. 882/23/MES/19/7, 'Telegram No.1077, Dated 25 January 1919:From Political Baghdad to Secretary of State of India in London'.

⁶¹⁹ F.O. 882/23/MES/19/7 "From Political Baghdad to Secretary of State for India, Telegram No. 1077, Dated 25 January 1919".

five people from their sects to answer the referendum questions.⁶²⁰ The Shiite judge Sheikh Shukr Allah, who owed his job to the British administration in Iraq, was selected to select twenty-five people from their sects to answer the referendum questions.⁶²¹ He also asked a rabbi to choose twenty people and the heads of Christian denominations to nominate ten people.⁶²² It was clear that Wilson asked a rabbi and the heads of Christian to nominate because he was confident of support from Christians and Jews. In addition, he asked Sheikh Shukr Allah because he owed his job to the British administration in Iraq. He also chose ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qilānī because his opinions opposed the establishment of an Arab government.⁶²³ Wilson expected ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qilānī to choose Sunni delegates who agreed with his opinions.

However, ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qilānī refused to participate in the referendum process,⁶²⁴ and suggested that the Sunni judge of Baghdad, ‘Ali al-’Alūsī, should replace him.⁶²⁵ This refusal was the first disappointment faced by Sir Arnold Wilson in Baghdad. Gertrude Bell explained that ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qilānī’s refused to participate in the referendum based on his habit of refraining from interfering in public political affairs’.⁶²⁶ She added that Judge ‘Ali al-’Alūsī was under the strong influence of ‘Abdu al-Wahāb al-Nā’ib, the head of the Magistrate’s Court under the British administration, and Sa‘īd al-Naqshabandī; both opposed the British.⁶²⁷

Wilson encountered another disappointment when the Sunni and Shiite judges ‘Ali al-’Alūsī and Sheikh Shukr Allah refused to choose delegates; they requested that notables from both sects hold a meeting to choose their delegates.⁶²⁸ From previous events, it can be inferred that they did not want to take responsibility for public opinion. The notables of the Sunni and Shiite sects in Baghdad, especially the

⁶²⁰ Ibid., Telegram no.11669, Dated 29 December 1918”.

⁶²¹ Rush, Alan, “From Political Baghdad to Government of India and to General Baghdad, 26 January 1918”, Vol. 2, p.168.

⁶²² F.O. 882/23/MES/19/7, “From Political Baghdad to Secretary of State of India in London, Telegram No.1077, Dated 25 January 1919”.

⁶²³ Ibid., no.11669, Dated 29 December 1918”.

⁶²⁴ Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917-1920 a Clash of Loyalties: A Personal and Historical Record* (London, 1930), p.339.

⁶²⁵ F.O. 311/4150/5394 “ Self-Determination in Mesopotamia, Memorandum no. 5,24, Dated 22 February 1919, From A.T Wilson, Baghdad, to Under Secretary state for India, p.4-5”

⁶²⁶ Bell, Gertrude, *Fusūl Min Tārīkh Al-Iraq Al-Qarīb (Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner)* (Beirut, 2010), Translated by Ja‘far al-Khayāt, p.465.

⁶²⁷ F.O. 311/4150/5394 “ Self-Determination in Mesopotamia, Memorandum no. 5,24, Dated 22 February 1919, From A.T Wilson, Baghdad, to Under Secretary state for India, pp.4-5”

⁶²⁸ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (Social Glimpses from the Modern History of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.84.

nationalists, succeeded in unifying the demands of the two sects,⁶²⁹ through holding meetings, delivering speeches,⁶³⁰ and relying on the existence of common elements.⁶³¹

Twenty-five Sunnis and twenty-five Shiite were chosen to represent their sects at the referendum meeting with the British. However, when the selection was completed, Mūsā al-Jalabī al-Bājajī withdrew, and seven Sunni delegates resigned.⁶³² Ḥāj Mulā Riḍā was the only Shiite delegate to withdraw.⁶³³ The majority of those who withdrew were landowners and merchants who saw continuation of British rule as beneficial for their property and trade. They believed that rule by an Arab prince would negatively affect their property and businesses.⁶³⁴

Some of those who withdrew asserted their loyalty to the British before they withdrew or resigned, whereas others did not openly assert their views. For example, ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qilānī was influential but did not express his views.⁶³⁵ The four Sunnis from the families of Naqīb Zāda and Jamīl Zāda did not provide any explanation for their withdrawal.⁶³⁶ Ḥāj Mulā Riḍā, the Shiite who resigned, told the commander of the British military, ‘I could not face the religious embarrassment without giving any reason or explanation’.⁶³⁷ Wilson sent a telegraph to the Ministry of India stating that the seven Sunni representatives who withdrew were supporters

⁶²⁹ F.O. 311/4150/5394 “ Self-Determination in Mesopotamia, Memorandum no. 5,24, Dated 22 February 1919, From A.T Wilson, Baghdad, to Under Secretary state for India, p.5”

⁶³⁰ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā’iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (Social Glimpses from the Modern History of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.84.

⁶³¹ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.54.

⁶³² Bell, Gertrude, *Fusūl Min Tārīkh Al-Iraq Al-Qarīb (Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner)* (Beirut, 2010), translated by Ja‘far al-Khayāt, p.466.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ Mūsā al-Jalabī al-Bājajī was the head of a prominent family, who owned huge estates in Baghdad. He had also held high official positions during the reign of the Turks but had resigned after the announcement of the constitution. In addition, four Sunni delegates who resigned were from the families of Naqīb Zāda and Jamīl Zāda, considered to be among the richest in Baghdad. The only Shiite to withdraw was Ḥāj Mulā Riḍā, a landowner. See, F.O. 311/4150/5349, ‘Self-Determination in Mesopotamia, Memorandum no.5, Dated 22 February 1919, Baghdad: From A. T Wilson to Under-Secretary of State for India’, p.5; F.O. 311/4150/5349, ‘Self-Determination in Mesopotamia, appendix D no.5, Dated 22 February 1919, Baghdad: From A. T Wilson to Under-Secretary of State for India’, p.50; Bell, Gertrude, *Fusūl Min Tārīkh Al-Iraq Al-Qarīb (Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner)* (Beirut, 2010), translated by Ja‘far al-Khayāt, p.466.

⁶³⁵ F.O. 311/4150/5349, ‘Self-Determination in Mesopotamia, Memorandum no.5, Dated 22 February 1919, Baghdad: From A. T Wilson to Under-Secretary of State for India’, pp.49-50.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Bell, Gertrude, *Fusūl Min Tārīkh Al-Iraq Al-Qarīb (Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner)* (Beirut, 2010), translated by Ja‘far al-Khayāt, p.466.

of British rule in Iraq but were not prepared to face the religious controversy that would accompany the public expression of their views.⁶³⁸

After the withdrawal of the Sunni and Shiite delegates, Sheikh ‘Ali al-’Alūsī chose five delegates to replace the seven Sunnis who withdrew, while Sheikh Shukr Allah did not choose an alternative for the Shiite who withdrew. Thus, there were twenty-three Sunni,⁶³⁹ and twenty-four Shiite delegates.⁶⁴⁰ The Sunni and Shiite delegates chose one of the sons of Sharīf Ḥussein to be the ruler of Iraq. They also agreed on setting the borders of Iraq from the north to the Persian Gulf, alongside establishing a legislative council in Baghdad to observe the ruler – in keeping with modern forms of government.⁶⁴¹ Thus, the agreement of views between the delegates of the Shiite and Sunni sects in Baghdad played a key role in forming a national identity that contributed to the emergence of the signs of nation building. They also wanted support from Jewish and Christian delegates and hoped to achieve this through a reliance on common elements, such as language and ethnicity, in order to thwart the referendum. ‘Abdu al-Wahāb al-Nā’ib Ḥamīd al-Bājajī attempted to gain

⁶³⁸ F.O. 311/4150/5349, ‘Self-Determination in Mesopotamia, Memorandum no.5, Dated 22 February 1919, Baghdad: From A.T. Wilson to Under –Secretary of State for India’, p.5.

⁶³⁹ F.O. 371/4150/129679 “Signatories of Combined Sunni and Shi’a Declaration, Dated January 1919”. “The Sunni delegates were Sa’īd al-Naqshabandī, ‘Ibrāhīm al-Rāwī-Aḥmad al-Shawāf, ‘Abdu al-Rahmān al-Ḥaydarī, al-Wahāb al-Nā’ib’, Ismā’īl al-Wā’iz, Abdalhara, ‘Abdu al-Shāri, Ṭāhir Muḥammad Salīm, Sulaymān al-Sanāwī-‘Abdullah Salīm al-Ḥaydarī, Mulā Qāsim, Muzāḥim Muḥammad Nūrī Pāshā, Khālīd al-Shābandar, Zāfir al-Zahāwī, Aḥmad Munīr, Muḥammad Šālīḥ al-Bājajī, Muḥammad Mustafā al-Khalīl, ‘Abdu al-Bāqī al-‘Azamī, Muḥammad Yā Ghalmajī b. Sultān Āghā, Muḥammad Nāfi’ al-’Awarkhlī, ‘Abdu al-Laṭīf al-Mudalal, ‘Ali al-Bāzirkān and Ḥamīd al-Bājajī.”

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., “Signatories of Combined Sunni and Shi’i Declaration, Dated January 1919”. “The Shiite delegates were ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Ḥaydarī, Jwād al-Misībāwī, Aḥmad al-Zuhur al-Ḥāj ‘Abbās, Mahdī al-Khanāq, Kāzīm al-Ḥāj Dāwūd, Muḥammad Ḥussein, ‘Abdu al-Wahāb Sayid Yaḥyā, Ḥussein Sayid ‘Issā, ‘Abd al-’Amīr al-Ḥaydarī, ‘Abd al-Ḥussein Kuba, Šādiq Sayid Ja’far, Aḥmad al-Jarjafī, Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Jūhar, ‘Abdu al-Riḍā Yaḥyā, ‘Abdu al-Ghanī Kuba, Ja’far Abū al-Timan, Ḥamīd ‘Abdu Riḍā, Ḥamīd b. Mūsā, Muḥammad Rashīd Sayid ‘Issā, ‘Ali Sayid Ḥussein Shakāra, Muḥammad Sayid Ḥussein, Darwīsh ‘Ali Ḥīdar, Ḥussein al-Ḥāj ‘Alāwī, ‘Abdu al-Ḥussein al-Baḥrīnī.”

⁶⁴¹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā* (*Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results*), (Beirut, 2009), ‘Statement from the people of Najaf about the questions of the referendum’ Vol. 2, pp.208–209. (The British chose 22 January 1919 as the date for the Sunni and Shiite delegates to answer the referendum questions at a public park (Malt Balghja Si), near the Rusafi. Colonel Balfour and the orientalist D.S Margoliouth attended the meeting. During the meeting Margoliouth gave a speech in Arabic, urging the attendees to choose Britain to rule Iraq, or to be under its protection). See, Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā’iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth* (*Social Glimpses from the Modern History of Iraq*) (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.86; Al-Bāzirkān, ‘Ali, p.87. (The orientalist D.S Margoliouth, who came to Iraq to help the British General Command); Mūsawī, Muḥsin, *Reading Iraq: Culture and Power in Conflict* (London, 2006), p.62.

the support of Jewish and Christian delegates by promising them the right of representation in the proposed council, but they did not agree to sign the statement.⁶⁴²

These statements of loyalty to the British were not confined to the Sunni and Shiite Muslims but were also repeated by advocates amongst the Jews and Christians.⁶⁴³ Wilson asked a rabbi to choose twenty people and the heads of Christian denominations to nominate ten people.⁶⁴⁴ It was clear that Wilson asked a rabbi and the heads of Christian to nominate because he was confident of support from the Christians and Jews. The Jews and Christians signed three statements. Eighteen Jews signed a statement calling the appointment of an Arab prince of Iraq undesirable and the establishment of direct British rule absolutely imperative.⁶⁴⁵ The second statement was signed by three Christians representing Armenians in Baghdad, who denied that they belonged to Iraq, and demanded the establishment of direct British rule in Iraq.⁶⁴⁶ The third statement was signed by eight people representing Christian communities in Baghdad; they requested a British governor in Iraq who would be back by the government in London.⁶⁴⁷

5.4. Was Britain Serious About the Future of Iraq?

After the completion of the referendum in most parts of Iraq in January 1919, Wilson reported the results to the British government. He claimed that a majority of people in Iraq did not want to any changes to the current system of ruling the country. He also noted that there was a minority who wanted an Arab prince under British domination.⁶⁴⁸ Wilson stated that if the British government had allowed him to offer his option to the Iraqi people, where Iraq should be ruled by a British High Commissioner and assisted by some Iraqis, it would have been approved by all of the Iraqi people.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴² F.O. 882/23/3505, 'Self-Determination in Iraq: Secret Compilation of Declaration and Telegram no.13 (3)', p.25.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., Telegram no.13 (1), p.23.

⁶⁴⁴ F.O. 882/23/MES/19/7, "From Political Baghdad to Secretary of State of India in London, Telegram No.1077, Dated 25 January 1919".

⁶⁴⁵ F.O. 882/23/3505, 'Self-Determination in Iraq: Secret Compilation of Declaration and Telegram no.13 (3)', p.23.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid., Telegram no.13 (6), p.24.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-'Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.62.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

The results from the referendum were as predicted by Wilson. The areas of Basra, Qurna, Amara, al-Kut, Nasiriyah, Samarra, Hillah, Kirkuk, Khanaqin, and Mosul asked for the continuation of British rule in Iraq. However, in the areas of Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad, and Kadhimain, the majority of residents opposed the continuation of British authority in Iraq and demanded that a son of al-Sharīf Ḥussein, should rule instead. Three factors explain the emergence of this religious consensus, without the need to consider the sect from which the ruler would come. First, since the early twentieth century, the political situation in Mesopotamia had been favourable to faith in religious authority. Secondly, political awareness in Iraq began in 1906 under the auspices of religion, as when debating the constitution, the people did not discuss its strengths or weaknesses. Rather, they discussed whether it was acceptable (*halal*) or forbidden (*haram*) under Islamic Law (*Sharia*). Thirdly, support for a Muslim ruler arose as a reaction to the colonial powers seeking to occupy a Muslim country.

Importantly, the majority of the opinions and views that rejected the continuation of British rule in Iraq were ignored. This was done on the basis that they did not represent the views and desires of the Iraqi people. For example, the statement issued by the Sunni and Shiite delegates from Baghdad was omitted from the official reports on the pretext that it did not represent the will of the whole population of the city. In addition, the opinion of the people of Karbala was excluded from official reports, again on the basis that it did not represent the will of the people in the city. The statement of the residents of Samarra was similarly ignored.

In addition, Wilson did not seek the opinions of the Kurds, who made up about one fifth of the population. The province of Dilim, including the Fallujah and Ramadi regions, was prevented from taking part in the referendum.

On 16 February 1919, Edwin Montagu requested Wilson to send an outline of a constitution for an Arab state or a group of Arab countries which was proposed to be established based on the wishes of the population in Iraq. Edwin Montagu explained that the British government aimed to create a flexible basic law representing all residents and containing provisions to help Arabs gradually take part in the governance of the country.⁶⁵⁰ Wilson went to London on 14 April 1919 and

⁶⁵⁰ Al-Nifisī, ‘Abdullah, p.127.

presented his proposals.⁶⁵¹ The British government agreed to Wilson's proposals but stipulated that they would be temporary, not final, and would not be put into practice until the signing of the peace treaty with Turkey at the Paris Peace Conference.⁶⁵²

In conclusion, the referendum failed to represent public opinion, because there was a dark figure in the results. As a result of Wilson's instructions, the personal interviews conducted with certain people by the political rulers of different regions of Iraq made the referendum results an inaccurate reflection of Iraqi sentiments towards the British government in London. Iraqis felt disappointed and unable to express their true opinions, so they decided to use another passive resistance method to gain independence and claim their usurped rights. Despite the Iraqi people's failure to express their views during the referendum, there was a consensus of views between the Sunni and Shiite sects along with the tribal and nationalist leaders in different parts of Iraq, about its future. This played a role in creating the base of the coalition that contributed to nation building. During this period, several features of the state emerged whereby several people in Baghdad and holy cities demanded the appointment of one of the sons of Sharīf Ḥussein as a ruler of Iraq, the establishment of a legislative council through elections, and state borders that would extend from Mosul to Basra.

5.5. The Rise of the Iraqi Issue at Regional and International Levels

The Shiite clerics, nationalists, and tribal leaders realised the impossibility of achieving their goals due to the measures taken by the British authorities during the referendum process. As a result, they believed that they could only claim their rights through peaceful means if there was collaboration between all political parties, secret societies, sects, and races throughout Iraq. They also believed that they should put forward their case internationally so that pressure might be brought to bear on the British. The existing political parties and secret societies (e.g. Secret Najaf Party, Islamic Association in Karbala, Islamic Association in Kadhimain) continued their peaceful activities against the British, whilst trying to recruit more tribal leaders and influential people in Iraq.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., p.128.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī, a second chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq, played a major role in raising the independence issue at regional and international levels. He worked alongside Sheikh Faḥallāh Sheikh al-Sharī'a al-'Aṣfahānī.⁶⁵³ They sent two telegrams in Persian and Arabic to the United States President, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, on 6 and 13 February 1919, where they demanded that the President should support the Iraqi people's right to self-determination.⁶⁵⁴ These letters were sent to President Woodrow Wilson because he had announced his support for the principle of self-determination. Besides, the United States was not a colonial state, unlike Britain and France. It can be concluded that the power and influence of Shiite clerics could not be confined to a chief of Shiite religious authority.

Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī died on 30 April 1919,⁶⁵⁵ and Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī became a chief of Shiite religious authority. The British authorities considered his death to be a great loss because he had not opposed them during the Najaf revolution in 1918 or the referendum.⁶⁵⁶ In addition, the British were very uneasy about the rising tide of opposition in the holy cities; Shīrāzī, the anti-British and anti-colonisation sentiment, dominated. Therefore, the British sought to persuade Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī to follow the same approach as Sayid al-Yazdī. This was made clear through a letter sent by Colonel Hawel, the assistant to the British governor in Iraq to Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, expressing his condolences for the death of Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī and reminding him of the wise policies towards the British that had been pursued by his predecessor. However, his attempt did not succeed.⁶⁵⁷ It was obvious that there was a difference between the leaders of Shiite religious authority in how they dealt with the British authorities and the Iraqi issue.

⁶⁵³ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā* (*Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results*), (Beirut, 2009), 'Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī and Sheikh Faḥallāh Sheikh al-Sharī'a al-'Aṣfahānī to U.S President Wilson, Dated 6 February 1919' Vol. 2, pp.220–221

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 'Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī and Sheikh Faḥallāh Sheikh al-Sharī'a al-'Aṣfahānī to U.S President Wilson, Dated 6 February 1919' 'Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī and Sheikh Faḥallāh Sheikh al-Sharī'a al-'Aṣfahānī to U.S President Wilson, Dated 13 February 1919' Vol. 2, pp.220–223.

⁶⁵⁵ Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-'Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.81.

⁶⁵⁶ F.O. 371/4149/ 77939 "From Political Officer, Baghdad, Dated 13 May 1919."

⁶⁵⁷ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā* (*Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results*), (Beirut, 2009), 'Telegram from Colonel Hawel to Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī, Dated 5 May 1919', Vol. 2, pp.228–229.

After becoming a chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī increased his activities in raising the Iraqi issue at both regional and international levels. For instance, he asked Faisal b. Ḥussein to present the Iraqi issue to the Paris Peace Conference and the League of Nations, whilst also requesting independence for Iraq.⁶⁵⁸ In addition, he gave support to political parties, tribal leaders, and dignitaries from different regions in preparing statements calling for Iraq's independence. He also demanded to send these statements to Faisal b. Ḥussein to submit to the International Peace Conference and the League of Nations. It can be inferred that Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī was trying to substantiate the idea that Iraq's independence was the aim for all citizens in Iraq, as this would give legitimacy to this demand at international conferences. As a result, Najaf's dignitaries,⁶⁵⁹ Karbala's leaders and clerics, and notables from Kadhimain,⁶⁶⁰ and Hillah,⁶⁶¹ wrote statements authorising Faisal b. Ḥussein to call for Iraq's independence and to nominate his brother Prince 'Abdullah as King of Iraq.⁶⁶² It can be concluded that the Iraqi people asked Faisal to present the Iraqi issue at international conferences and demand the right to self-determination for the Iraq people on two grounds. First, the Iraqis considered Prince Faisal as the representative of the Arabs at international conferences. Secondly, the common elements between the Iraqis and Prince Faisal, such as religion, ethnicity and language, led the Iraqi people to ask Faisal to defend their rights at international conferences.

In addition, a meeting was held in Najaf in late July 1919, where the attendees discussed the importance of sending similar statements to al-Sharīf Ḥussein b. 'Ali in al-Hijaz and they agreed that Sheikh Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī would deliver the statements.⁶⁶³ He left Najaf and arrived in Mecca where he met al-Sharīf Ḥussein b. 'Ali and gave him the statements and a letter from Sheikh Muḥammad al-

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 'Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī to Faisal b. Ḥussein, Dated 7 June 1919', Vol. 2, pp.242–243.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 'Telegram from Najaf dignitaries to Faisal b. Ḥussein, Dated 7 June 1919', Vol. 2, pp.243–246.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 'Statement of clerics and notables of Khdhimain to Faisal b. al-Ḥussein, Dated 27 June 1919', Vol. 2, pp.259–262.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 'Statement of Clerics and Notables of Hillah to Faisal b. al-Ḥussein, Dated 27 June 1919', Vol. 2, pp.263–264.

⁶⁶² Ibid., 'Telegram from leaders of Karbala to Faisal b. Ḥussein, Dated 11 June 1919', Vol. 2, pp. 249–252.

⁶⁶³ Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-'Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), pp.93-94. (The attendees of the meeting including Muḥsin Silāsh, Sayid 'Alwān al-Yāsirī, Sayid Nūrī al-Yāsirī and 'Abdu al-Wāḥid al-Ḥāj Shakar).

Shīrāzī.⁶⁶⁴ Al-Sharīf Ḥussein b. ‘Ali sent the statements to his son Faisal b. Ḥussein, who was attending the Peace Conference in Paris, and asked him to defend Iraq and the Iraqi people’s right to independence.⁶⁶⁵ He then sent a letter to Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, offering to do his best to support Iraqi independence and thanking him for his confidence in choosing him for this responsibility.⁶⁶⁶ Furthermore, the heads of Kadhimain demanded that Sheikh Mahdī al-Kālisī lead the peaceful resistance in Baghdad against the British.⁶⁶⁷ Thus, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī succeeded in creating a new approach for passive resistance through encouraging various parties and clan leaders in Iraq to participate in raising the Iraqi issue at regional and international levels. This was another factor that contributed to the emergence of signs of nation building.

As a result of the increasing amount of activities against the British, Wilson visited Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī in Karbala to persuade him to change his policy, but he failed.⁶⁶⁸ After failing to achieve any of his objectives, Sir Arnold Wilson described Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, the main jurist in Karbala, as a man who was the age of dementia surrounded by a group of wealth seekers who did not have consciences and only hoped to gain money by opposing the British.⁶⁶⁹ It was clear that Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī sought to achieve Iraqi independence through unifying the Sunnis and Shiites; he would not bow to the attempts made by the British authorities to prevent him from achieving his goal.

It was clear that the British perceived Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī’s activities as a serious threat to their interests in the Middle Euphrates region. This was

⁶⁶⁴ Shanāwah, ‘Ali, *Sheikh Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī Wa Dawruh al-Fikrī wa al-Siyāsī Hatā ‘Ām 1932 (Sheikh Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shibībī and His Intellectual and Political Role Until 1932)* (Baghdad, 1995), pp.128-129.

⁶⁶⁵ *Al-Arabi Magazine*, February 1972.

⁶⁶⁶ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘Telegram from al-Sharīf Ḥussein b. ‘Ali Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī, Dated 20 September 1919’, Vol. 2, pp.315–316.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., ‘Telegram from the heads of Kadhimain to Sheikh Mahdī al-Kālisī, Dated 27 October 1919’, Vol. 3, p.29.

⁶⁶⁸ Sir Arnold Wilson asked Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī to appoint persons from the Shiite sect to replace the Kalidār of Samarra who was from the Sunni sect, but he refused because he did not distinguish between Sunnis and Shiites. In addition, Sir Arnold Wilson asked Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī to support the pact the British government planned to sign with the Iranian government, but the sheikh replied that this was a matter for the Iranian people in which he should not interfere. In addition, Sir Arnold Wilson requested a *fatwa* prohibiting fighting British forces in Iran, but Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī refused. See, Al-Wahāb, ‘Abdu al-Razāq, *Karbala Fī Al-Tārīkh (Karbala in History)* (Baghdad, 1935), Vol. 3, pp.59-60.

⁶⁶⁹ F.O. 371/4148/89082 “ From Political Officer, Baghdad, Dated 11 June 1919.”

specifically true of the activities of the Islamic Association in Karbala, which was led by his son, Muḥammad Riḍā. Therefore, on 2 August 1919, British officials arrested a number of members of the Islamic Association in Karbala.⁶⁷⁰ In response to these arbitrary arrests, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī sent a letter to the British expressing his opposition to these measures and his desire to emigrate to Persia.⁶⁷¹ As a result, clerics from Najaf, members of the Secret Party of Najaf, and a group of youths from Najaf wrote a letter to Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, agreeing with his protest but asking him not to go to Persia. They also declared their intention to leave with him if necessary.⁶⁷²

Sheikh Muḥammad's decision raised the fears of the British authorities for two reasons. First, it would affect British interests in Persia because he had wide influence and religious authority over Shiites throughout the world. Secondly, he might issue a religious *fatwa* against the British from Persia. Concerned, as to what to do, Sir Arnold Wilson sent a letter to Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī justifying the detentions based on the suspects' actions against the British.⁶⁷³ The British decided to deport Sayid Muḥammad 'Ali Ṭabāṭabā'ī to Samarra where he would stay under surveillance and to deport Sayid Muḥammad Mahdī al-Mawlūdī to India.⁶⁷⁴ However, the detention lasted only four months until the British released the suspects due to Wilson's fear of the consequences.⁶⁷⁵ He also sent a large amount of money to Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī through Muḥammad Ḥussein Khān al-Kābulī. They

⁶⁷⁰ Shubar, Ḥasan, *Al-Taḥaruk Al-Islāmī 1900–1957 (Islamic Movement 1900-1957)* (Qum, 1990), p.241. (Including 'Umar al-'Alwān, 'Abdu al-Karīm al-'Awād, Ṭulīfih al-Hassūn, Muḥammad 'Ali Abū al-Hub, Muḥammad Mahdī al-Mawlūdī and Muḥammad 'Ali Ṭabāṭabā'ī).

⁶⁷¹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)*, (Beirut, 2009), 'Telegram from the cleric of Najaf to Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, Dated 9 August 1919', Vol. 2, pp.285–286.

⁶⁷² Ibid., 'Telegram from the cleric of Najaf to Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī, Dated 9 August 1919', Vol. 2, pp.285–286 and 'Telegram from members of the Secret Party of Najaf and a group of youths from the city of Najaf to Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, Dated 9 August 1919', Vol. 2, pp.287–288.

⁶⁷³ F.O. 371/6348/99 'Administration Reports, Hillah Division, 1919, Wilson's Letters to al-Shīrāzī, Aug 9 1919'.

⁶⁷⁴ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)*, (Beirut, 2009) 'Telegram from Wilson to Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī, 5 August 1920', Vol. 2, pp.288–289.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., 'Telegram from Wilson to Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī, 14 January 1920', Vol. 3, pp.37–38.

money was refused.⁶⁷⁶ Overall, Wilson's attempts to win the support of Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Shīrāzī failed.

Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, alongside other clerics and tribal leaders, peacefully resisted the British. They also adopted a new approach by raising the Iraqi issue at an international level. They delivered statements to Faisal b. al-Ḥussein to defend Iraq and the Iraqi people's right to independence at international conferences. However, these methods and strategies did not achieve their ambitions. Therefore, Iraqi leaders decided to continue their passive resistance against the British by using more effective strategies such as hold meetings and peaceful demonstrations.

5.6. Referendum led to Organised-Resistance (Meetings and peaceful demonstrations)

The important stage of passive resistance against the British began in late 1919, when 'Ali al-Bāzirkān, Ḥassan Riḍā and 'Ibrāhīm 'Uthmān requested permission to establish a private secondary school in Baghdad.⁶⁷⁷ With British approval, the official opening date was 21 November 1919;⁶⁷⁸ a group of people who believed in nationalistic ideas were elected to the school's administration.⁶⁷⁹ The school administration held weekly meetings, which were thought to be ostensibly literary, however they were actually political gatherings.⁶⁸⁰ The school became dedicated to political activity against the British and promoted nationalistic patriotic ideas.⁶⁸¹ In late 1919, the school founders decided to re-establish the Iraq Guards of Independence Association (*Jam'iyat Haras Al-'Istiqlāl*) and host it at the school.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁶ Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al-'Iraq al-Ḥadīth (Social Glimpses from the Modern History of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.99.

⁶⁷⁷ Al-Bāzirkān, 'Ali, p.110.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.111.

⁶⁷⁹ Fayḍī, Sulaymān, *Fī Ghamrat al-Niḍāl (In the Midst of the Struggle)* (Baghdad, 1952), p.241. (The group Each of 'Abdu al-Wahāb al-Nā'ib, Ḥassan Riḍā, Khālīd Shābandar, Jalāl Bābān, Bahjat Zīnal and Sulaymān Fayḍī, they made ceremony and was attend by Muḥammad Ḥassan Kubba, Munīr 'Affandī, Ja'far al-Shībībī, Kāzīm al-Dujīlī, Jamīl Sidqī al-Zahāwī and Sheikh Ahmad Dawūd).

⁶⁸⁰ Rush, Alan, "The Nationalist Movement", Vol. 2, p.265. (They recited poems which supporting the rights of the Iraqi people and encouraging students to claim them).

⁶⁸¹ Al-Mūšīlī, Muḥammad, Vol. 2, p.59.

⁶⁸² 'Abbās, 'Alī, *Za'im al-Thawra Al-'Irāqiya; Saḥāb Wa Ḥayāt al-Sayid al-Ṣadir (Iraqi Leader of the Revolution: Pages and Life of the Leader al-Sayid al-Ṣadir)* (Baghdad, 1950), p.49. A group of nationalists established the secret Guards of Independence Association (*Jam'iyat Haras Al-'Istiqlāl*) in late February 1919. It demanded the full independence of Iraq and the appointment a son of King Ḥussein b. 'Ali as a ruler of Iraq. The association will do its best to annex Iraq to the banner of Arab unity. At the same time, the Iraqi Covenant Association was founded in Baghdad as a branch of the Covenant Association in Damascus linked the association in Baghdad to the party

Thus, the nationalists in Baghdad succeeded in reorganising political action in their city secretly. There was no freedom in holding political meetings or to form any sort of organisation, as Iraq was under military rule by the British. This was considered to be a most ingenious move by the nationalists because it played a role in beginning a new phase of passive resistance against the British.

The Association had originally been confined to the educated class in Baghdad, but when it was re-established, the founders realised that political action needed the participation of all different classes, communities, races, and political parties in Iraq to achieve its goals, and especially the independence of Iraq. This was obvious through the principles of the Iraq Guards of Independence Association.⁶⁸³ It can be inferred that there were two reasons that led the nationalists to work as a team with all the sects and political parties in Iraq, especially the Shiites. First, the *fatwa* of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī which called for the election of a Muslim to rule Iraq encouraged the nationalists to work with the Shiite political parties in the holy cities. Secondly, the harmonisation of Shiite and nationalist demands about the future of Iraq, such as selecting one of the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein as ruler, played a role in creating a rapprochement between the nationalists in Baghdad and the Shiites in the holy cities. As a result, many traders and clerics joined, mostly notably Shiites such as al-Sayid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr, Sheikh Bāqir Shibībī and Ja‘far Abū al-Timan.⁶⁸⁴ Thus, the Association included nationalists and influential people from Sunni and Shiite sects. These people had a great influence on the Association due to their relationships with clerics and tribal leaders in the holy cities and in other cities in Iraq. In addition, Sayid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr was heavily influenced by the reformist ideas of Jamāl al-Dīn al-’Afghānī and Muḥammad ‘Abduh and by nationalist ideas that were spreading from Egypt and Syria.⁶⁸⁵ He refused to accede to the Turks

headquarters in Damascus. Shortly afterwards, a dispute between the Iraq Guards of Independence Association and the Iraqi Covenant Association arose as they accused the other of treason and turning away from nationalism. As a result, the two associations were dissolved. See, Abbās, ‘Alī, p.48; Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-’Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.81; Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ’Ijtimā’iyā Min Tārīkh al-’Iraq al-Ḥadīth (Social Glimpses from the Modern History of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.99; Al-Basīr, Muḥammad, p.145.

⁶⁸³ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu al-Razāq, *Tārīkh Al-Aḥzāb Al-Siyāsiya Al-’Irāqiya (The History of Iraqi Political Parties)* (Beirut, 1980), p.18

⁶⁸⁴ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ’Ijtimā’iyā Min Tārīkh al-’Iraq al-Ḥadīth (Social Glimpses from the Modern History of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.102.

⁶⁸⁵ ‘Abbās, ‘Alī, p.19.

because of their opposition to Arab nationalism.⁶⁸⁶ In addition, the Association persuaded the Youth Jaa‘fariya Association (*Jam‘iyat Al-Shabāb Al-Ja‘fariya*) to join and work collectively.⁶⁸⁷ It should also be noted that the Association attracted many in Baghdad, including Sāmī Kūnd and Qāsim al-‘Alawī.⁶⁸⁸ Thus, the Association succeeded in persuading some political parties in Baghdad and influential figures in the Middle Euphrates region to join the Association and work collectively to achieve common goals.

As a result of the increasing number of members and the activities of the Association, tasks were distributed among members and a governing body was formed. Sayid Muḥammad al-Ṣadr was selected as president of the association, Ja‘far Abū al-Timan as secretary and liaison between the clerics and tribal leaders in the Middle Euphrates region, and ‘Ali al-Bāzirkān as the director responsible for communication among members.⁶⁸⁹ The Russian orientalist Kotlov describes the Association’s administrative board as an “educated bourgeoisie of traders, feudal lords, and clerics”.⁶⁹⁰ Thus, the various social classes merged into the Association; this gave the Association more strength to achieve its common goal; the full independence of Iraq. Such a goal played a major role in the merger of the various social classes into the Association. The Association also sought to disseminate its ideas in different areas of Iraq. Therefore, it set up branches in Kadhimain, Najaf, Hillah, al-Shamiyah, and other areas.⁶⁹¹

The members of the Association met to discuss political issues and develop plans.⁶⁹² This led to a decision to post leaflets against British authority amongst Baghdad’s residents and to their urging Iraqi youth to claim their rights. They also sought to increase the Association’s members and supporters.⁶⁹³ In addition, they

⁶⁸⁶ ‘Abbās, ‘Alī, pp.20–23.

⁶⁸⁷ Al-Darājī, ‘Abdu al-Razāq, *Ja‘far Abū al-Timan Wa Dawruh Fī al-Istiqlāl (Ja‘far Abū al-Timan and His Role in the Independence)* (Baghdad, 1978), pp.77–78. (The Youth ‘Jaa‘fariya Association was established by leaders, including Muḥammad Ḥussin Kubba, Ṣādiq al-Basām, Ṣādiq Ḥabah, Muḥammad al-Shāmma‘, Kāzīm al-Shāmma‘, Muḥammad Mirzā, Bāqir Sarkashīk, ‘Abdu al-Razāq al-‘Azrī, ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz Al-Qaṭān, Ṣādiq al-Shahrabānī, Ja‘far Ḥamandī, Dhibān al-Ghībān, Ra‘ūf Bahrānī and Salīm Harīrī).

⁶⁸⁸ Al-Darājī, ‘Abdu al-Razāq, pp.77–78.

⁶⁸⁹ Nājī, Shawkat, *Sīrat Wa Thikrayāt Thimānīn ‘Ām (Biography and Memories of Eighty Years)* (Baghdad, 1974), p.12.

⁶⁹⁰ Kotlov, p.143.

⁶⁹¹ Al-‘Alawī, Hādī, p.49.

⁶⁹² Nājī, Shawkat, p.13; Al-Darājī, ‘Abdu al-Razāq, p.83.

⁶⁹³ *Al-‘Istiqlāl Newspaper*, ‘Muthakrāt ‘Abdu al-Ghafūr al-Badrī; Safḥāt Min Thikrayātī’ (Memoirs of ‘Abdu al-Ghafūr al-Badrī: Pages of My Memories), 23 July 1932.

decided to increase the number of activities that they were engaged in, in order to attract more important people in the Middle Euphrates region. They did this for three reasons. First, the Shiite clerics and the leaders of the clans in the Middle Euphrates region had a large amount of influence throughout Iraq. Secondly, the Association aimed to increase teamwork across Iraq. It entrusted this role to Sheikh Muḥammad Bāqir al-Shibībī because he had already established good social relations with clerics and tribal leaders in the Middle Euphrates region. He made several visits to the region during March 1920 and convinced many influential people to participate in the Iraq Guards of Independence Association's activities. One such person was Hadī Zuwīn and Muḥsin Silāsh, who went to Baghdad to learn about the Association's objectives.⁶⁹⁴ Thirdly, the tribes in Middle Euphrates region were considered to be a military force in Iraq because they possessed quantities of weapons. It was believed that they would have supported the Association when its members decided to launch an armed revolution against the British.⁶⁹⁵

There are three reasons that led the Association to succeed in attracting many influential people in the Middle Euphrates region. First, there were an increasing number of young educated nationalists among its members who had imbibed nationalists ideas and were active in spreading party propaganda. Secondly, the party attempted to unite the long rival sects, Sunni and Shiite, in the national struggle against the British administration. Thirdly, common elements such as ethnicity, language, religion, and others, played key roles in the convergence of ideas between the nationalists and influential people in the Middle Euphrates region. Thus, the features of forming a coalition between nationalists, clerics, and clans emerged; they contributed to the emergence of signs of nation building.

In addition, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī played a significant role in this phase of passive resistance through his use of religious authority, and his ability to work collectively and in cooperation with all the sects and races in Iraq against the British. He issued a *fatwa* forbidding working for the British, and in response, a large number of Iraqis resigned from their jobs.⁶⁹⁶ It was clear that the Sheikh was seeking to exert pressure on the British administration through this *fatwa*. He also wrote to

⁶⁹⁴ Al-Darājī, 'Abdu al-Razāq, p.84.

⁶⁹⁵ Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al- 'Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.371.

⁶⁹⁶ F.O. 882/23/MES 'To Secretary of State for India, No.3496, 18 March 1920'.

tribal leaders in various parts of Iraq encouraging them to unite and put aside their differences to work collectively to gain Iraq's independence. He sent letters to the heads of the Muntafiq tribes,⁶⁹⁷ 'Ali Faḍil,⁶⁹⁸ and Nāyif al-Mushārī,⁶⁹⁹ requesting that they end their disagreements and work together against the British.⁷⁰⁰ He also used his religious authority to achieve his objectives. He sent a letter to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsiri, authorising him to use religious funds (*khoums*), to serve the struggle for Iraqi independence.⁷⁰¹ It was obvious through the activities of the Association and Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī and other clerics that they were starting to work together to achieve their common goal: independence.

As a result of the activities of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī and the Association, the nationalists and clerics and tribal leaders in the Middle Euphrates agreed during a meeting that was held in the house of Sayid Abū al-Qāsim al-Kāshānī as to the need to begin armed revolution against the British administration.⁷⁰² However, they were divided on the best way to go about such a mission. They agreed to ask Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī for his opinion as he represented a chief of Shiite religious authority.⁷⁰³ They met with Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī and he told them, 'If these are your decisions and these are your beliefs, God will help you'.⁷⁰⁴ It can be concluded from previous events and from the answer of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī that he supported an armed revolution against the British. However, he wanted the decision of conducting an armed revolution to be supported by the majority of the Iraqi people in order that the likelihood of its achieving its goals was maximised. He did not want the situation to replicate the Najaf revolution of 1918 which had failed and did not achieve its goals due to a lack of support from a majority of the Iraqi people.

⁶⁹⁷ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā* (*Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results*) (Beirut, 2009), 'Telegram form Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī to Muntafiq tribes, Dated 23 March 1920', Vol. 3, pp.48-49.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 'Telegram form Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī to 'Ali Faḍil, Dated 23 March 1920', Vol. 3, pp.50-51.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 'Telegram form Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī to Nāyif al-Mushārī, Dated 23 March 1920', Vol. 3, pp.52-53.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 'Telegram form Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī to Muntafiq tribes, 'Ali Faḍil and Nāyif al-Mushārī, Dated 23 March 1920', Vol. 3, pp.48-53.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 'Telegram form Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsiri, Dated 6 April 1920', Vol. 3, p.55.

⁷⁰² Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Al-'Ashraf Wa Al-Thawra Al-'Irāqīya (Al-Najaf and the Iraq Revolution)* (Beirut, 2005), p.50.

⁷⁰³ Ibid., pp.50-51.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., p.51.

At another meeting, all the participants from the previous meeting agreed to continue their resistance for independence through peaceful means. They also agreed that if the British rejected their demands, they would resort to armed resistance.⁷⁰⁵ This meeting marked the declaration of a coalition among the nationalists, clerics, and clans to oppose British rule. Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī sought to involve the influential tribes in the Middle Euphrates region in the coalition to increase its strength in order to achieve its objectives. To this end, he sent a letter through Sheikh Rḥūm al-Zuwālmī on 6 May 1920, informing the clans and leaders of the Rumaiṭha and Summawa regions about the decisions reached at the meeting. He also invited them to prepare for the next phase of resistance.⁷⁰⁶ Thus, Sheikh Muḥammad played a major role in the declaration and organisation of the coalition due to his position and the power that he wielded in Iraq.

After the formation of the coalition and the political developments that took place in the holy cities, the nationalists decided to increase their activities against the British by holding more meetings. They also sought to involve the Sunni and Shiite sects within Iraqi society in their activities.⁷⁰⁷ They chose the mosques as a place to hold their meetings and activities.⁷⁰⁸ These locations were decided upon because the mosque and other religious places were immune from government intervention. Mosques were not only for prayer, they were also a place where preaching and teaching took place. On Fridays and other sacred days, special meetings were normally held at which the orator delivered a speech dealing with other issues, including politics. Therefore, the nationalists exploited the mosques and the common element between the two communities, namely Islam, in order to achieve their goals. As a result, many meetings were held in Sunni and Shiite mosques.⁷⁰⁹ These were attended by many nationalists, clerics, and tribal leaders from Baghdad and the Middle Euphrates. Shortly thereafter, similar meetings were held in Najaf, Karbala,

⁷⁰⁵ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.86; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Al-Najaf Al-‘Ashraf Wa Al-Thawra Al-‘Irāqīya (Al-Najaf and the Iraq Revolution)* (Beirut, 2005), p.51.

⁷⁰⁶ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā‘iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā‘ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā‘irī to the clans and leaders of al-Rumaiṭha and Summawa regions, Dated 5 May 1920’, Vol. 3, p.65.

⁷⁰⁷ F.O. 371/5076 ‘Mesopotamia Police, Abstract of Intelligence, No. 21, 22 May 1920, Paragraph 386’.

⁷⁰⁸ Rush, Alan, “The Nationalist Movement”, Vol. 2, p.153.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid. (In Sunni mosques held *Maulud* (Celebration of the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad) and in Shiite mosques held a *Ta‘ziya* (Shi‘i ritual mourning the martyrdom of the Imam Hussein).

Hillah, and Mosul.⁷¹⁰ Cumulatively, they succeeded in creating a rapprochement between the Shiites and Sunnis through these meetings in the mosques. In addition, the members of the coalition sought to create a rapprochement and a sense of unity with the Christian and Jewish communities through common elements such as the need for a homeland and the concept of destiny.⁷¹¹ Thus, the coalition relied on the common elements found among the Iraqi people to confront the British authorities; this contributed to nation building.

These meetings and the rapprochement between the various communities in Iraq raised concerns amongst members of the British administration; they considered these meetings to be a direct threat to their interests and their continued rule of Iraq. This was obvious through the measures taken by the British troops in these meetings and organisers. In one case British force in two military vehicles fired on the audience during a meeting in the Ḥaydarī Khān Mosque, killing a man.⁷¹² In addition, Balfour, the military governor of Baghdad, summoned a group of the organisers of these meetings and he warned them that the British could suppress these meetings at any time.⁷¹³

The organisers of these meetings sought to thwart the British authorities and continued to hold meetings through obtaining support from Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī. Therefore, Ja‘far Abū al-Timan asked Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī to encourage the leaders and clans of the Middle Euphrates to attend subsequent meetings.⁷¹⁴ Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī wrote to Ja‘far Abū al-Timan, expressed joy at the convergence of Baghdad residents under the banner of independence of Iraq, whilst simultaneously encouraging him to obey the teachings of Islam and protect the rights of non-Muslims, foreigners, and strangers.⁷¹⁵ In addition, Sheikh

⁷¹⁰ F.O. 371/5229/E.10430.

⁷¹¹ F.O 371/5076, “Mesopotamia Police, Abstract of Intelligence, Report no. 23, Dated 5 June 1920, Paragraph 442 and 421”; F.O 371/5076, “Mesopotamia Police, Abstract of Intelligence, Report no. 22, Dated 27 May 1920, Paragraph 418”.

⁷¹² Rush, Alan, “Mesopotamia Police; Abstract of Intelligence, Baghdad, Dated 22 May 1920”, Vol. 2, p.313.

⁷¹³ Ibid., p.317; Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), pp.88–89. (The group including each of Ja‘far Abū al-Timan, ‘Ali ‘Affandī, Muḥammad Mahdī al-Basīr and Sheikh Aḥmad al-Dāwūd).

⁷¹⁴ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā‘iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātihā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘ Telegram from Ja‘far Abū al-Timan to Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī, Dated 25 May 1920’, Vol. 3, p.69.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., ‘ Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī to Ja‘far Abū al-Timan, Dated 25 May 1920’, Vol. 3, p.71.

Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī sent letters to the tribal leaders and informed them that the residents of Baghdad, Kadhimain, Najaf, and Karbala had agreed to hold peaceful demonstrations calling for Iraq's independence.⁷¹⁶ He also asked them to peacefully demonstrate their rights and to send their demands to Baghdad, while maintaining public security and respecting the rights of others from various denominations and sects.⁷¹⁷ It was clear that the leadership role of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī at this stage was one of passive resistance in facing the British authorities.

As a result, a group of scholars and clerics in Najaf met in the house of Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī. They agreed to call for independence under an Arab government and to demonstrate peacefully in support of the people of Baghdad, before electing a number of eminent people from the al-Shamiyah and Najaf provinces to submit their demands to Sir Arnold Wilson.⁷¹⁸ Additionally, another group of clerics, tribal leaders from al-Shamiyah and Najaf,⁷¹⁹ and tribal elders from Rumaiṭha met and expressed support for the delegates delivering demands to the civil administrator in Baghdad.⁷²⁰ Moreover, on 3 June 1920, a group of clerics and leaders in Karbala elected delegates for the same purpose.⁷²¹ Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī,⁷²² and Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī⁷²³ sent a letter to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī, who had been appointed as a representative of the provinces of Shamiyah and Najaf. They asked him to work diligently and faithfully

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., ‘Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī to all leaders and people in Iraq, Dated 28 May 1920’ Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī to Sha’lān Abū al-Jūn and Ghithīth al-Ḥarjān, the heads of al-Zuwālim tribe’ Vol. 3, pp.81-85.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., ‘Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī to all leaders and people in Iraq, Dated 28 May 1920’ Vol. 3, pp.81-83.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid., ‘The first statement of Najaf residents of which authorize the delegates of Najaf, Dated 3 June 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.105-106. (The people chosen their delegates and the delegates including, Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā’irī, Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā’irī, al-Mīrżā Aḥmad al-Khurāsānī, Sheikh ‘Ishāq al-Jīlanī, Sheikh Abdul-Redha al-Shīkh, Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī, Sheikh ‘Alwān al-Yāsirī and Muḥsin Silāsh and they were supported by nineteen clerics from Najaf).

⁷¹⁹ Ibid., ‘The second statement of Najaf residents of which authorize the delegates of Najaf, Dated 6 June 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.108-112.

⁷²⁰ Ibid., ‘The statement of Rumaiṭha leaders which authorize the delegates of Najaf’, Vol. 3, pp.118-119.

⁷²¹ Ibid., ‘The statement of choose delegates of Karbala, Dated 3 June 1920’, Vol. 3, p.102. (The delegates including, ‘Abdu al Ḥussain al-Shīrāzī, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Khālīsī, Sayid Muḥammad ‘Ali al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, Sheikh Ṣadīr al-Dīn al-Māzindānī, ‘Abdu al-Wahāb Āl-Wahāb, Sheikh Muḥammad Ḥassan Abū al-Maḥāsīn and Sheikh ‘Umar al-Ḥāj ‘Alwān).

⁷²² Ibid., ‘Telegram form Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī, Dated 4 June 1920’, Vol. 3, p.114.

⁷²³ Ibid., ‘Telegram form Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī, Dated 4 June 1920’ Vol. 3, p.116.

to serve Islam and Iraqi independence.⁷²⁴ The objective of this letter was to give confidence and support to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī and other delegates.

The delegates of al-Shamiyah and Najaf met in the city of Najaf on 6 June 1920 and decided to request a meeting with Major Norbury to discuss the Iraqi issue.⁷²⁵ Sheikh Faḥallāh Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī reinforced this request in a separate letter to Major Norbury.⁷²⁶ As a result, a meeting was held between Major Norbury and the delegates; they presented him with their demands.⁷²⁷ The first demand was to hold a conference in Baghdad to form an independent Arab government headed by an Arab Muslim King. The second demand was the recognition of the freedom of the press and publishing, and the third was permission to establish political rallies in all parts of Iraq.⁷²⁸ The delegates did not receive a reply from the civil ruler.⁷²⁹ Therefore, the delegates decided to publish their demands in all regions of Iraq by sending a letter to the civil ruler asking him to implement their demands.⁷³⁰

Arnold Wilson sent a letter to the delegates of the provinces of al-Shamiyah and Najaf summarising British policy in Iraq. First, an independent government would be established to ensure Iraq’s independence under the League of Nations but it would be supervised by the British government. Secondly, the British government would be responsible for maintaining the internal and external security of Iraq. Thirdly, Britain would be compelled to form a basic law for Iraq. Fourthly, His

⁷²⁴ Ibid., ‘Telegram from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā’irī al-Shīrāzī and Sheikh Faḥallāh Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī, Dated 4 June 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.114–116.

⁷²⁵ Ibid., ‘Telegram from the delegates of province al-Shamiyah and Najaf to Political Ruler of Major Norbury, Dated 6 June 1920’, Vol. 3, p.123.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., ‘Telegram of Political Ruler of Shamiyah and Najaf to Sheikh Faḥallāh Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī, Dated 11 June 1920’ Vol. 3, p.133.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., ‘Telegram of Political Ruler of Shamiyah and Najaf to Sheikh Faḥallāh Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī, Dated 11 June 1920’, Vol. 3, p.133. (The delegates first met 11 June 1920 in the house of Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā’irī to agree on the demands to be presented to the political ruler. They also appointed Sheikh Muḥammad Jawād al-Jazā’irī their official spokesman for the meeting). See, *Muthakarāt Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl Al-Dīn (Memorandum of Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl Al-Dīn)* Edited and collected by Kamil Al-Jbūrī (Baghdad, 1980), pp.43-44.

⁷²⁸ *Muthakarāt Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl Al-Dīn (Memorandum of Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl Al-Dīn)* Edited and collected by Kamil Al-Jbūrī (Baghdad, 1980), pp.44-46.

⁷²⁹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-’Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘Telegram of Political Ruler to the delegates of province al-Shamiyah and Najaf, Dated 13 June 1920’, Vol. 3, p.138.

⁷³⁰ *Muthakarāt Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl Al-Dīn (Memorandum of Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl Al-Dīn)*, Edited and collected by Kamil Al-Jbūrī, (Baghdad, 1980), p.51; Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-’Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009) ‘Telegram sent by the delegates of al-Shamiyah and Najaf to the General Commander of the British Army in Baghdad, Dated 15 June 1920’, Vol. 3, p.147.

Majesty's government would appoint Sir Percy Cox to carry out these tasks. Sir Percy Cox would return to Iraq in the autumn of 1920 and assume the post of the supreme representative of the British government in Iraq after the termination of the existing military administration. He would have the power to regulate the Shura Council under the chairmanship of an Arab person and to organise an Arab conference representing all the sects of the Iraqi people.⁷³¹ It was obvious that the British administration sought to continue their rule in Iraq. Therefore, demonstrations and protests against British authority were held in the Middle Euphrates region. The most important of these meetings was held in Karbala inside the shrine of Al-Ḥussein b. 'Ali on June 21 1920.⁷³² Thus, the cooperation and coordination between nationalists, Sunnis, and Shiites resulted in the formation of a coalition which had unified demands about the future of Iraq. This process contributed to the emergence of the signs of nation building.

As a result, British officials arrested a number of prominent people in an attempt to calm the situation, one of those arrested was Hindāwī R'ūf 'Amīn, the leader of the Association, in Hillah and exiled him to Hinjam Island.⁷³³ In addition, the British arrested twelve prominent men in Karbala;⁷³⁴ who were all deported to Hinjam Island,⁷³⁵ except for Ḥibat al-Dīn Shihristānī as he was ill.⁷³⁶ The arrests sparked a storm of political protests, meetings, petitions, and demonstrations that were stronger than the earlier ones; these gave rise to the idea of armed revolt against the British.⁷³⁷

⁷³¹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), 'Report of Deputy Civil Administrator in Baghdad about future of Iraq, Dated 16 June 1920', Vol. 3, pp.163-164.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp.157-160. (This meeting was attended by residents of Karbala and by Sheikh Muḥammad Riḍā and Sheikh Muḥammad al-Khālīsī, who delivered speeches instigating demonstrations against the British).

⁷³³ Al-Dīn, Kamil, Muḥammad, *'Mal'umāt Wa Mushāhdāt Fī Al-Thawra Al-'Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (Information and Views: Great Iraq Revolution)* (Baghdad, 1971), pp.241–243. (In addition, the British troops arrived in Karbala on 22 June 1920 and the political ruler informed Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī that the British intended to restore law and order in the region. Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī's warned the British against using force against the residents of Karbala, as it would incite more resistance. The political ruler of Karbala did not take this advice).

⁷³⁴ I.O.R/L/PS/11/175, NO.8542, Dated 16 July 1920, p.2. (Including Muḥammad Riḍā, son of Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī's; Ḥibat al-Dīn Shihristānī; Muḥammad 'Ali Baḥar al-'Ulūm, and 'Umar al-'Alwān).

⁷³⁵ Rush, Alan, "From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad 28 June 1920 to Simla, Constantinople, Cairo and Tehran", Vol. 2, p.337.

⁷³⁶ I.O.R/L/PS/11/175, NO.8542, Dated 16 July 1920, p.2.

⁷³⁷ Rush, Alan, "From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad 28 June 1920 to Simla, Constantinople, Cairo and Tehran", Vol. 2, p.337.

5.7. Conclusion

The referendum illustrated the limits of colonial contrivance. This chapter discussed the independence movements in Iraq during its heyday (1918-1920). This analytical discussion demonstrated how this movement had potential for substantial change as is discussed in Chapter Six. The referendum showed the unwillingness of the British administration to concede to demands for self-governance. Furthermore, the referendum illustrated the two choices that were put to the Iraqis in the referendum: one was to accept a puppet government under the British mandate. The other was direct British military rule. Therefore, it can be said that Britain sought to continue its rule of Iraq and that it was unwilling to grant independence to the Iraqi people.

During the period of passive resistance, from 1918 to 1920, cooperation and coordination came into being between Sunnis, Shiites, and nationalists against the British administration. The first signs of cooperation and coordination emerged when the British administration decided to hold a referendum for the Iraqi people about the future of the rule of Iraq. The people sought to thwart the British referendum. In addition, they succeeded in uniting their demands, which included the full independence of Iraq without the custodianship or mandate of a foreign country, the appointment of an Arab government headed by an Arab Muslim king from one of the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein, and an elected legislative council. They did not succeed, except in areas directly under their influence (e.g. Baghdad, Kadhimain, Najaf, Karbala), because of the measures taken by the regional political rulers based on instructions from Wilson, the British civil commissioner in Baghdad.

Afterwards, the Shiite clerics sought to raise the Iraqi issue at the regional and international level. They also encouraged the people to write statements to Faisal b. al-Ḥussein to defend Iraq and the Iraqi people's right to independence at international conferences. However, this method did not achieve its objectives.

During this period, the level of organisation and collective action increased between nationalists, Sunnis, and Shiites. This was achieved by holding meetings, distributing pamphlets, giving speeches, conducting peaceful demonstrations, and issuing *fatwas*. These efforts succeeded in creating a religious, tribal, and nationalist coalition in various parts of Iraq, particularly in Baghdad and the Middle Euphrates. The common elements amongst them, such as language, religion, ethnicity, destiny,

played key roles in forming a coalition. The coalition contributed to the emergence signs of nation building and unified the different sects and races to achieve a common goal: the independence of Iraq without mandate. This coalition repeatedly submitted demands to the British, to which the latter did not agree. Rather, it took measures, such as arrests and sentences of exile, to intimidate the Iraqi people. As a result of these actions, the passive resistance failed to achieve independence for Iraq. Despite the failure of passive resistance, however, the idea of an armed revolution against the British emerged and gained support from many important people in regions across Iraq during the period of passive resistance.

Chapter Six

Representing the 1920 Revolution in Iraq

This chapter continues the discussion about the role of religious institutions in Iraqi politics from the end of Ottoman rule to the events of the 1920 revolt against the British. This revolt, which came to be known as ‘The great Iraqi revolution’, is one of the most important events in the modern history of Iraq. The coalition of tribal leaders, nationalists, and Shiite clerics sought to achieve the independence of Iraq through armed resistance after the coalition’s failure to achieve its demands through peaceful resistance between 1918-1920. This stage began with the issuance of *fatwa*

by Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, a *fatwas* which called on the Iraqi people to claim their rights and to use force if the British refused to implement their demands. When the Iraqi Revolution started on 30 June 1920, the coalition sought to involve Iraqi people from various areas in the revolution against the British. However, Khdim opined that the British underestimated the level of influence that the Shiite clerics had over the tribes in the middle Euphrates.⁷³⁸ Mrs Bell wrote to her father that ‘the release of Sha‘lān Abū al-Jūn from al-Rumaitha locked up by his tribesmen set the Euphrates on fire’.⁷³⁹ This chapter argues that it was the clans and tribes, especially in the Middle Euphrates region, who led the resistance against the British.

This chapter provides a thorough examination of the historical period that led Iraq to form itself into a modern state. In doing so, this chapter analyses the role of the coalition of tribal leaders, nationalists, and Shiite clerics during the Iraqi Revolution. It also looks at how a coalition that included the nationalists in Baghdad, the Shiite clerics in the holy cities and the clans (especially in the Middle Euphrates region) was established to resist the British despite their differences in ideology. The chapter provides a detail discussion of the internal and external causes that led to the Iraqi Revolution.

In addition, the coalition played a major role in providing all that was needed to ensure the success of the revolution. The coalition sent representatives to different areas of Iraq to incite the tribes to participate in the revolution and collected the money needed to support the revolution. Moreover, councils were established by the coalition to lead the revolution. Newspapers were also founded by the coalition to spread news of the revolution inside and outside Iraq. Finally, the coalition held talks with the British. During the Iraqi Revolution, the coalition succeeded in unifying the various sects, races, and classes against Britain; this contributed to the emergence of the signs of nation-building.

6.1.The causes of the Iraqi Revolution

To understand the Iraqi Revolution, it is important to examine the causes that led to the armed revolution against the British. The factors which led to the revolution

⁷³⁸ Kadim, Abbs, pp.1, 69.

⁷³⁹ Bell, Lady, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (London: Ernest Benn, 1927), pp.404-405.

were internal and external. The 1920 revolt differed from previous examples of resistance against the British, including those already addressed within this thesis.

A huge political factor was that the British refused to grant Iraq full independence coupled with their false promises to the Iraqi people. During the First World War, the British made many promises to the Iraqi people to stand beside them against the Ottomans, and to help them gain independence and freedom.⁷⁴⁰ The most famous of these promises was the proclamation of General Sir Stanley Maude, which was issued on 19 March 1917, after the occupation of Baghdad.⁷⁴¹ The proclamation was distributed in the name of General Maude.⁷⁴² General Maude had protested against the proclamation because he saw it as unnecessary and ill timed. He held that the proclamation would create confusion in the minds of the Arabs as to the future intentions of Great Britain, and would unduly arouse their hopes and ambitions at a time when the authority of the British army had to remain supreme and unquestioned.⁷⁴³ Despite these reservations and misgivings, Sir Percy Cox stuck to the content of the proclamation; as a result, a dispute emerged between General Maude and Sir Percy Cox. Eventually, the crisis ended with Sir Percy Cox being granted the powers that he had requested.⁷⁴⁴

In addition, the Anglo-French announcement had a major impact on the Iraqi people. Captain Mann, the Assistant Officer in al-Shamiayah, stated that the Iraqi people had one genuine cry, namely that the allies including Britain did not keep their promises. He also mentioned that the Anglo-French Charter, published 18 November 1918, and the letter sent to the people of Baghdad in March 1917, made these sentiments obvious.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴⁰ Lloyd George, David, *The Truth About Peace Treaties* (London, Victor Gollanz, 1938), Vol.2, p.755.

⁷⁴¹ Hammond, J.M, *Battle in Iraq: Letters and Diaries of the First World War* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2009), p.5.

⁷⁴² IOR/L/PS/18/B273 "Middle East Committee. Mesopotamia: British Engagements as to future Status" [.31r], p.1 "The proclamation read as follows: The Arabs were assured that the British Government bore no enmity or ill-will against the populace; that it had no desire to treat them as enemies so long as they themselves remain friendly and neutral and refrain from taking up arms against her British troops. On the contrary, the British government hoped to prove to be good friends and protectors. The inhabitants were assured that, under the British flag, they would enjoy the benefits of liberty and justice with regard to religious and secular affairs, and that it was the wish of the British government to free the Arabs from the oppression of the Turks and bring about an advancement and increase of prosperity and trade." See, Ireland, Philip, p.71.

⁷⁴³ Ireland, Philip, p.71.

⁷⁴⁴ Mālik, Muḥammad, p.332.

⁷⁴⁵ Mann, James, *Administration in the Making* (London; New York: Longmans, Green, 1921), p.278.

When the British seized control of Iraq and organised its administrative structure, they did not fulfil their promises to the Iraqi people. As a result, the clerics, tribal leaders, nationalists, and intellectuals in Iraq asked the British to fulfil their promises, but they did not receive any response.⁷⁴⁶ In the middle Euphrates, tribes tried to achieve their demands through peaceful means.⁷⁴⁷ When these methods did not yield any positive results, the leaders of the tribes in al-Shmaiya and al-Mishkhab declared themselves in armed revolution against the British. This initially happened in the al-Rumaytha region;⁷⁴⁸ thereafter, the revolution spread into different areas within Iraq.⁷⁴⁹

Captain Mann met with the elders of the Āl Fatla tribe and attempted to dissuade them from participating in the revolution. During his meeting, he informed those who were gathered that Sayid ‘Alwān al-Yāsirī had told him ‘you offered us independence, we never asked for it, we have never dreamt of it till you put the idea into our head: for hundreds of years the country has lived in a state as far removed from independence as it is possible to conceive; then you come with your promise for independence, and every time we ask for it you imprison us’.⁷⁵⁰ Captain Mann commented on the words of Sayid ‘Alwān al-Yāsirī and stated that ‘he did not know what could be done with these false promises, which could only be made by politicians fools. However, he said, as these promises were approved, they became obligatory, and what they were trying to do as a department was unbearable’.⁷⁵¹

In addition, Gertrude Bell, in a letter to her father on 10 December 1920, showed her disapproval of such policies and stated that she believed that it was better to recognise the political aspirations of the Iraqis from the outset, as such policies made matters difficult for the British. The most important factor leading to the Iraqi Revolution on 30 June 1920 was the lack of implementation of the promises given by the British to the Iraqi people.⁷⁵²

⁷⁴⁶ Al-Fayāḍ, ‘Abduallah, pp.6-7.

⁷⁴⁷ See Chapter Five.

⁷⁴⁸ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.160.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁰ Mann, James, p.292.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

⁷⁵² Bell, Lady, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (London: Ernest Benn, 1927), pp.407-408. John Glub asserted that one cause of the revolution was the fact that the Iraqis felt frustrated because the British had not fulfilled the promises they had given to them at the beginning of the First World War. See, Glub, John, *Arabian Adventures* (London: Cassell, 1978), pp.28-29.

Internally, the British political rulers in Iraq did not have much experience. Most of the political rulers and their assistants who took administrative positions in the provinces of Iraq were young officers.⁷⁵³ They were typically of the rank of Major or Captain and were under forty years of age, with the majority being aged under thirty.⁷⁵⁴ Hubert Young mentions that Iraq was an important territory, so it was irrational for it to be ruled by young men such as Sir Arnold Wilson. He proposed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Sir Percy Cox be reinstated to rule Iraq as soon as possible because it was better for the British and the Iraqis.⁷⁵⁵

Of course, the political leaders did not know the Arabic language or the customs and values of the Arabs. This caused a lot of problems with tribal leaders and had negative consequences for the British authorities in Iraq.⁷⁵⁶ Haldane believed that ill treatment by the political rulers in various regions of Iraq was the cause of the revolution against the British.⁷⁵⁷ The most relevant example of this was the actions of Colonel G. E. Leachman. ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz al-Qassāb said that he met Colonel Leachman for the first time when he was assigned to the post of district commissioner. Leachman asked him to hold his horse, but al-Qassāb refused to do so. As a result, Colonel Leachman struck him with a stick on the back and accused him of being a traitor. ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz al-Qassāb replied, ‘I am not a traitor; I am the district commissioner’. Colonel Leachman replied that all of them were traitors.⁷⁵⁸ Colonel Leachman insulted ‘Ajīl al-Yāwir, a head of the tribe of Shammar, when he was in Mosul, and this was the cause of ‘Ajīl al-Yāwir's rebellion against the British. Al-Yāwir told Gertrude Bell that the reason for the rebellion was Leachman's insult, as he compared Al-Yāwir to a woman and did not respect his position as a tribal leader.⁷⁵⁹ In addition to this, Colonel Leachman insulted another tribal leader, Zūba‘ Dhārī al-Maḥmūd. As a result of this insult, the sons of Dhārī al-Maḥmūd killed Colonel Leachman. Gertrude Bell wrote to her father that Colonel Leachman was killed when he stopped at the tent of Sheikh Zūba ‘on his way to Fallujah and insulted

⁷⁵³ Halden, James, *Insurrection in Mesopotamia* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1920), pp.20-21.

⁷⁵⁴ F.O. 371/4150/139762 “Telegram from Arnold Wilson, Acting Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to India Office, dated 6 August 1919.”

⁷⁵⁵ Al-Nifisī, ‘Abdullah, pp.154-155.

⁷⁵⁶ Halden, James, pp.28-29; Mann, James, pp.236-237.

⁷⁵⁷ Halden, James, pp.20-21.

⁷⁵⁸ Al-Qassāb, ‘Abdu al-‘Azīz, *Min Thikrayātī (Of My Memories)* (Baghdad, 1962), pp.187-188.

⁷⁵⁹ Burgoyne, Elizabeth, *Gertrude Bell* (London: Ernest Benn, 1961), Vol. 2. p.273.

the guards for not preserving the security of the road'.⁷⁶⁰ Gertrude Bell wrote that she had expected this to happen because of the improper actions of Colonel Leachman towards the tribal leaders.⁷⁶¹

One of the cruellest British leaders was Major C. Daly, the political ruler of Diwaniyah, who was known for his ill treatment of the inhabitants of Diwaniyah.⁷⁶² An example of his improper conduct occurred when Major C. Daly issued orders that any traveller to the Diwaniyah area must dismount from their horse five hundred metres before their arrival into the city. The inhabitants of Diwaniyah did not accept these orders because they considered them to be an affront to their dignity. This order showed that Daly did not know either the habits or the traditions of the Arabs.⁷⁶³ Another person who transgressed the accepted norms of society was Captain Webb, the assistant political officer in the 'Afak district. He insulted one of the clan's elders, Şakbān Abū Jāsim. One day, an important Sheikh from the Āl-Badīr tribe named Şakbān Abū Jāsim was sitting in the office of Captain Webb when the Captain's dog came in and began sniffing the Sheikh's cloak. The Sheikh rudely yelled at the dog and had it removed. Captain Webb asked him for the reason for his behaviour and the Sheikh told him that the dog was *nejis* (impure). Captain Webb replied, 'He is cleaner than you because I bathe him twice a day'. The Sheikh stormed out of the office and cursed him.⁷⁶⁴ The lack of experience of the officers who were placed in positions of absolute power in different areas in Iraq was one of the reasons for the revolution against the British.

After the First World War, the British authorities introduced a series of economic, social and legal policies into Iraq which had positive and negative results. The negative consequences of these policies were among the factors that contributed to the revolution against the British. Creating a new legal system, the British introduced new laws and legal patterns using a variety of excuses – including the assertion that there was a lack of existent local laws. Although Ottoman laws were applied in Iraq before the British invasion, the tribes did not generally utilise judiciary officials and the courts to resolve disputes during the period of Ottoman rule. Instead,

⁷⁶⁰ Bell, Lady, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (London, 1927), pp.407-408.

⁷⁶¹ Burgoyne, Elizabeth, Vol. 2. pp.401-402.

⁷⁶² Kāshif al-Ghiṭā', Muḥammad, *'Uqūd Min Hyātī (Decades of My life)* (Najaf, 2012), p.114.

⁷⁶³ Fir'ūn, Mizhir, pp.455-456.

⁷⁶⁴ Kadim, Abbs, p.57.

they solved disputes through inherited customary laws.⁷⁶⁵ In every clan, there were people who specialised in inherited customary laws; these people were considered the judges of the clan. The tribes considered a person who resorted to official courts as a weak member of the clan; those who took revenge by themselves were considered strong.⁷⁶⁶ When the British occupied Iraq, they tried to keep the new laws as tools in the hands of loyal tribal leaders. This was done with the idea of maintaining security and order amongst the tribes.⁷⁶⁷ During the period of Ottoman rule, the officials of the Ottoman Empire did not apply the laws and regulations, and there was a lot of administrative corruption such as bribery and nepotism.⁷⁶⁸ During the era of British administration, the laws and regulations were applied and the impact of bribery and nepotism was reduced,⁷⁶⁹ this was not accepted by a large majority of the Iraqi people. This was due to the fact that people had been accustomed to the former regime.⁷⁷⁰ Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-‘Amrī expressed the indignation of many Iraqi people to such laws.⁷⁷¹ In particular, the British appointed some common folk to occupy government positions, and the government departments became full of Indians and Iranians and Iraqis of lower classes.⁷⁷² The Iraqi people were accustomed to respecting people of high status, so they complained about the personalities who had taken the senior positions.⁷⁷³ Carter, the advisor of the Iraqi Ministry of Justice in 1920, noted that abandoning the system with which the people were familiar was a cause of serious harassment and it turned out to be undesirable.⁷⁷⁴ The legal measures taken by the British did not receive acceptance from many Iraqis and they were amongst the reasons for the rejection of British administration in the country.

Economically, when the British occupied Iraq, their intentions had been to secure their economic interests, especially those related to oil. Herbert Asquith, the

⁷⁶⁵ Bell, Gertrude, *Review Of The Civil Administration Of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner* (London, 1920), pp.49-50.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁷ C.O. 696/4 “Administration Reports Muntafiq, 1921, p.3.”

⁷⁶⁸ ‘Azīz, Muḥammad, *Al-Nizām al-Siyāsī Fī Al-Iraq (The Political System in Iraq)* (Baghdad, 1954), p.33.

⁷⁶⁹ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā ‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al- Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, pp.21-22.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., p.22.

⁷⁷¹ Al-Mūşilī, Muḥammad, Vol. 3, pp.3-4.

⁷⁷² Ibid.

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴ Bonham Crater, *Iraq Administration Reports 1914-1932: Report on the Administration of Justice for the Year 1920*, Vol.6, pp. 441-448.

British Prime Minister (1908–1916), mentioned that the purpose of the occupation of Mesopotamia was to neutralise the Arabs, to protect the oil fields, and to maintain British authority in the East.⁷⁷⁵ After the British occupation of the Faw and Basra areas, the British decided to occupy the rest of Iraq including Mosul and Baghdad.⁷⁷⁶ As a result of this decision and the requirements of military operations, including food provisions, the modifications of roads and the construction of railways, there was unprecedented monetary inflation in Iraq.⁷⁷⁷ As a result, many merchants and farm owners achieved record profits through selling food.⁷⁷⁸ However, their success came at a price; a great many normal Iraqi people experienced shortages of food and higher food prices. The people in Khanaqin suffered from famine, and there was no cultivation, whilst in Samarra people suffered from a severe lack of food.⁷⁷⁹ In November 1918, the towns of al-Samawa, al-Rumaitha, and al-Diwaniyah had only enough supplies for four months, and the towns of Hillah, Musayyab, and Hindiya had supplies for only six months.⁷⁸⁰ Between 1917 and 1918, the price of a tag jar of wheat in Hillah jumped from £8 to £10 and then to £100.⁷⁸¹ The rising prices and the unavailability of food did not appeal to many Iraqi people, so they publicly expressed their discontent.⁷⁸²

Similarly, estate taxes rose during the time of British rule to three times the amount that had been charged and raised during the Ottoman period of rule. In 1909, these taxes increased to 33,11,412 R.s and in 1919, they grew to 114,45,500 R.s.⁷⁸³ Due to higher taxes, some landowners were forced to distribute their land among their kinsmen. One of these was Şakbān al-Jāsīm, the head of the Badir clan. He distributed a large part of his estate to members of his clan and asked them to pay the tax in exchange for ceding ownership.⁷⁸⁴ The collection of taxes resulted in many

⁷⁷⁵ Henry, Foster, pp.37-38.

⁷⁷⁶ Al-Wardī, ‘Alī, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, pp.23-24.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.24.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁹ F.O. 371/3406 “Administration Report, Department of Revenue, Baghdad, 1918, p.31.”

⁷⁸⁰ F.O. 371/3397/165202 “Collection of Fortnightly Reports to Secretary of State for India by the Civil Commissioner. Report No.2. 15 November to 1 December 1918”.

⁷⁸¹ C.O. 696/1 “Iraq, 1917-1918. Baghdad Wilaya, Hillah District, 1917, p.106”

⁷⁸² Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917-1920; A Clash Of Loyalties; A Personal And Historical Record* (London, 1931), p.311.

⁷⁸³ C.O. 696/3 “Administration Report of the Revenue Department, 1919, p.9.” (R.S is meaning Rupee the currency of India).

⁷⁸⁴ *Muthakrāt Ṣalāl al-Mūḥ (Memorandum of Ṣalāl al-Mūḥ)* (Baghdad, 1987) Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.67.

angry merchants, landlords and clan members; they were extremely annoyed at the British because the tax collection process was considered arbitrary and unjust.⁷⁸⁵ The validity of this viewpoint was confirmed by Wilson, who believed that one of the reasons for the revolution was the collection of taxes.⁷⁸⁶ In addition, the control of British companies over Iraq's foreign trade led to the breakdown of national trade companies.⁷⁸⁷ The economic changes wrought during the British rule of Iraq were an important factor in the revolution against the British.⁷⁸⁸

In social terms, the tribes were in constant dispute with the Ottoman authorities during their rule, and there were often bloody battles between them.⁷⁸⁹ The policy pursued by the British was different to that which had been used by the Ottomans; rural areas were directly managed by the British and their policies involved cooperation with tribal leaders and landowners in running such areas.⁷⁹⁰ The British government stood on the side lines when there were disputes between the clans.⁷⁹¹ The objectives of this policy were to protect their British interests, to promote the concept of chiefdom, and to encourage the active involvement of tribal leaders loyal to Britain in the prevention of disputes.⁷⁹²

In 1918, the British administration established tribal lawsuits to support the tribal system.⁷⁹³ This meant re-establishing the feudal regime against the principle of the development of political institutions. For example, the political ruler of Hillah, Major H. C. Pulley, reported in his annual report of 1918 that the main goal of that

⁷⁸⁵ Toby, Dodge, *Inventing: The Failure of Nation Building and History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p.8.

⁷⁸⁶ Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917-1920; A Clash Of Loyalties; A Personal And Historical Record* (London, 1931), p.312.

⁷⁸⁷ 'Issā, Nadīm, *Al-Fikir al-Siyāsī Li Thawart al-'Ishrīn (Political Thought of the Twentieth Revolution)* (Baghdad, 1992), p.21

⁷⁸⁸ Al-Wardī, 'Ali, *Lamḥāt 'Ijtimā'iyā Min Tārīkh al-'Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005) (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.26.

⁷⁸⁹ Fir'ūn, Mizhir pp.27-35.

⁷⁹⁰ F.O.371/4152 "From India Office to Secretary of State, No.9696, Dated 10 November 1918". The British authorities in Iraq followed the policy of Robert Sandman's, which he used in Baluchistan. With this policy, a sheikh from every region in Iraq or of each large clan was chosen, and they were given lands and tax incentives and many functions, such as the collection of taxes, the protection of roads and responsibility for maintaining security. See, Halden, James, p.31; *Taqrīr Sirī Li Dā'irat Al-'Istikhbārāt Al-Birīṭāniya 'An Al-'Ashāir Al-'Irāqiya (A Confidential Report of the British Intelligence about Iraqi Clans)*, Translated by Al-Ṭāhir, 'Abd Al-Jalīl (Beirut, 1958), p.9.

⁷⁹¹ *Taqrīr Sirī Li Dā'irat Al-'Istikhbārāt Al-Birīṭāniya 'An Al-'Ashāir Al-'Irāqiya (A Confidential Report of the British Intelligence about Iraqi Clans)*, Translated by Al-Ṭāhir, 'Abd Al-Jalīl (Beirut, 1958), pp.9-10.

⁷⁹² Ibid.

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

year was to strengthen the sheikh's position and to promote the tribal system.⁷⁹⁴ Major Nalder, the political ruler of Al-Ramadi, also mentioned in his report that he was exerting a lot of effort to support and install Sheikh Dhārī al-Maḥmūd.⁷⁹⁵ Major Dickson also reported that he had tried to place the power of each clan in the hands of one person, and that the government would choose that person three and a half years in advance.⁷⁹⁶ As a result of this policy, several tribal members lost their power and status in their tribes and, as a result, supported the revolution and stood beside the rebels, hoping to restore their previous status.⁷⁹⁷

The British instigated a number of measures that had negative outcomes and were not accepted by the Iraqi people. For example, by the end of 1916, the British had established a military force made up of clan members and several foreigners; this was called Shubana. Its purpose was to preserve security and order.⁷⁹⁸ Later, the Shubana used violence against the people. As a result, they became pariahs in Iraqi society.⁷⁹⁹ The measures taken by the British against political opponents, such as those who were arrested and exiled to Hengam Island, stirred up public opinion and led to calls for an armed revolution.⁸⁰⁰ The most important figures that were arrested were Muḥammad Riḍā, the son of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, and Sha'īlān Abū al-Jūn, the head of the Zuwālim tribe.⁸⁰¹ In addition, an execution carried out by the British against eleven people accused of participating in the murder of Captain Marshall had a significant impact on the people of Najaf in particular, as well as the people of Iraq in general.⁸⁰² The Iraqis believed that the judgment was contrary to Islamic law and that it was not permissible to execute eleven people because one person had been slaughtered. All of these events increased individual reasons for participation in the Iraqi Revolution. Individual Iraqis hoped to gain independence and to eliminate the injustices and the persecutions that had been imposed on them.

⁷⁹⁴ C.O. 696/1 "Administration Reports, Hillah Division, 1918, p.121".

⁷⁹⁵ C.O. 696/1 "Baghdad Wilayat, Administration Reports for the Year 1917, pp.43-44".

⁷⁹⁶ C.O. 696/1 "Administration Reports, Nasiriya District, 1918, p.351".

⁷⁹⁷ Glub, John, pp.28-29.

⁷⁹⁸ Bell, Gertrude, *Review Of The Civil Administration Of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner* (London, 1920), pp.58-59.

⁷⁹⁹ Wilson, Arnold, *Mesopotamia 1917-1920; A Clash Of Loyalties; A Personal And Historical Record* (London, 1931), p.70.

⁸⁰⁰ Al-Zubaydī, Muḥammad, *Al- 'Iraqiyūn al-Manfyūn Elā Jazīrat Hinjām (Iraqis Exiled to of Hingam Island)* (Baghdad, 1989), p.114.

⁸⁰¹ Glub, John, p.102.

⁸⁰² See Chapter Four.

In addition to internal causes, the revolution was also a result of various external causes. The neighbouring country of Iraq played an important role in the dissemination of hostile propaganda against the British. In turn, this encouraged the Iraqi people to carry out armed revolt against the British.

Concurrently, Syria was under an Arab government headed by Prince Faisal b. al-Ḥussein. He was assisted in the carrying out of his duties by a group of Iraqi officers who had previously been employed in the Ottoman army.⁸⁰³ These officers established a political party named *Al-‘Ahd*, under the chairmanship of Yāsīn Pāshā. The party had approximately three hundred members and operated branches in Damascus, Aleppo, Amman, and Madina.⁸⁰⁴ The main objective of the party was Iraq’s independence under the leadership of the Sharīf family.⁸⁰⁵ The party worked on the deployment of anti-British propaganda in all the regions of Iraq, as well as to the tribes that were based in the desert areas. The party published a newspaper called *al-‘Iqāb*, which was characterised by the enthusiastic manner in which it narrated Arab victories. This newspaper was regularly delivered secretly from Syria to Iraq via the Najaf road.⁸⁰⁶ In addition, letters from the officers were delivered to Sheikhs Maḥdī al-Khālīsī and Sayid Muḥammad Maḥdī al-Ṣadr.⁸⁰⁷ The *Al-‘Iqāb* Newspaper continued publishing Arab news, and when the Egyptian Revolution began in March 1919, the newspaper reported the news of the revolution extensively and showed how the Egyptians sabotaged the railways and attacked English artillery with sticks and stones.⁸⁰⁸ The party members in Syria succeeded in spreading propaganda against the British in Iraq as well as disseminating their call for the arrival of the sons of al-Sharīf al-Ḥussein to rule Iraq.

The link with Turkey was not as close, but was nevertheless still important. The Kemalists approached both the Shiite holy places as well as the Euphrates tribes by way of agents,⁸⁰⁹ of whom the most important was ‘Ajmī Pāshā al-Sa‘dūn. He was important because he maintained a small tribal force in the north of Iraq.⁸¹⁰ The

⁸⁰³ Rush, Alan, Vol. 2, pp.289-291.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁶ F.O. 371/4149/110528 “Confidential Report for week ending 7 June 1919 by the Criminal Investigation Department, Paragraph 237”.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ Al-Basīr, Muḥammad, pp.76-77.

⁸⁰⁹ F.O. 371/5081/E13603 “Extract from Police Report, Dated 24 April 1920. Two Kamalists Nadir Hasan and ‘Alla al-Din arrived in Sammara”.

⁸¹⁰ Atiyyah, Ghassan, p.329.

cooperation between the pan-Arabs and the pro-Turks in Baghdad facilitated a similar rapprochement in the holy places. However, the main factor in the strength of the relationship between Turkey and the holy places was that the Shiite clerics (who were mostly anti-British by 1920) had long supported the Ottoman forces against the British invaders.⁸¹¹ On 27 March 1920, a pro-British notable who visited Najaf and Karbala gave the following information to the British administration: ‘during my visit to Karbala I visited all the Chief Aliens and notables of the place. Their whole conversation was of the early return of the Turks to Iraq – not as in the old order of things but simply as advisers to a true Arab administration. They well all obviously engaged in the spreading of pan-Arab and pro-Turkish propaganda’.⁸¹² Thus, the pro-Turks succeeded in spreading propaganda against the British authorities in different parts of Iraq.

After the Russian Revolution, Lenin laid the foundations of Russian foreign policy and explained that there were deep connections between the struggle of the working class in seeking to further communism and the struggle of oppressed peoples to gain independence.⁸¹³ Lenin worked on a rapprochement with Muslims and the Eastern countries and, in so doing, delivered a speech to the Muslims inviting them to build their own lives because their fate was in their own hands.⁸¹⁴ As for the Eastern countries, such as Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey, he announced his support for them through defending their sovereignty and strengthening their economies.⁸¹⁵ Russia had relinquished the privileges that it had obtained during the reign of the Czars in these countries, and he tried to establish friendly relations with them.⁸¹⁶ In addition, Lenin directed several speeches to the people in various countries around the world, inviting them to join the global struggle against colonialism.⁸¹⁷

The hostile policy of Lenin against the British, combined with his policy and support for the countries of the East, resulted in many British politicians who were working in Iraq at that time stating that Bolshevik propaganda had a direct role in the Iraqi revolt. British reports noted that news of the Bolshevik revolution and their publications was circulated in the holy cities and included a book entitled *The*

⁸¹¹ Ibid.

⁸¹² F.O. 371/5081/E13603 “Extract from Police Report, Dated 27 March 1920.”

⁸¹³ Muḏafar, Kāẓim, Vol.1, p.85.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid., pp.85-86.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid., p.86.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

Bolshevik Principles.⁸¹⁸ The reports also indicated that Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī issued a *fatwa* announcing that the Bolsheviks should be considered as friends of Islam.⁸¹⁹ As for the British politicians who were working in Iraq at that time, the political ruler of Sulaymaniyah, Major Soun, said that the principles of Bolshevism were well known.⁸²⁰ Gertrude Bell mentioned that there was evidence of the existence of an association founded by the Bolsheviks in cooperation with the Turks and that this organisation had been in contact with extreme Iraqi political associations for a long time in order to exploit common links between the Arabs and the Turks to embarrass the British in the Middle East.⁸²¹ Muḥammad Riḍā, the son of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, was one of those who worked with the Bolsheviks; his name was mentioned in a telegram issued by the Bolsheviks in Rasht. The telegram explained that he was working for the Bolsheviks in Karbala.⁸²²

The British reports and the views of British politicians did not give definitive proof of the existence of cooperation between the rebels and the Bolsheviks, but they were certain that the Bolshevik's propaganda and principles had arrived in Iraq as they had in the rest of the world. The *Al-Furāt* newspaper, which was published in Najaf, reported that the effects of a revolution varied according to objectives of the given revolutionaries. Such objectives might include overthrowing a particular system and replacing it by another system, or changing the entire world's system.⁸²³ The *Al-Furāt* newspaper promoted the need to decide on a final plan, to secure the future of Iraq through fighting the Bolsheviks with the British after taking sufficient guarantees to obtain independence, or to go to war against the British with the Bolsheviks for independence.⁸²⁴ It became clear that there were no direct links between the rebels and the Bolsheviks; the rebels considered themselves independent and ready to cooperate with any party to achieve their demands. As for the *fatwa* of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, it did not resonate with Iraqi society, although the *fatwa* was issued by the highest religious authority. It was unlike the previous *fatwas*

⁸¹⁸ F.O. 371/5074 "Extract from Police Abstract of Intelligence, No.13, Baghdad, Dated 27 March 1920, Paragraph 204, 205."

⁸¹⁹ F.O. 371/5230/E12339 "Mesopotamia Preliminary Report on Causes of Unrest by Major N.Bary, India Office, Dated 14 September 1920".

⁸²⁰ Wilson, Arnold, *Loyalties Mesopotamia* (London, 1936), Vol. 2, p.155.

⁸²¹ Bell, Gertrude, *Fusūl Min Tārīkh Al-'Iraq Al-Qarīb (Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia; Iraq. Civil Commissioner)*, (Beirut, 2010), Translated by Ja'far al-Khayāt, p.439.

⁸²² *Ibid.*, p.443.

⁸²³ *Al-Furāt Newspaper*, No.2, Dated 14 August 1920, 28 Dhi al-Qu'da 1338.

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*, No.3, Dated 20 August 1920, 5 Dhi al-Hu'ja 1338.

of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī against the British, which were spread all over Iraq by his followers. The Syrian, Kamalian, and Bolshevik propaganda had a significant impact upon the Iraqi revolt against the British, but the governments of these countries did not provide direct support, such as money or arms to the rebels. This was confirmed by many of the leaders of the revolution.⁸²⁵ The impact was that it promoted the idea of a revolution, not communism itself.

Another major event that was perhaps a motivating factor for Iraqis was the Egyptian Revolution of 1919.⁸²⁶ The Iraqi people were aware of the situation in Egypt from Syrian and Egyptian newspapers, which continually brought news of the Egyptian resistance to Iraq. No gathering went without the praise of Sa‘ad Zaghlul and his patriotism. In addition, as early as 1918, there was a bookstore in Najaf that was owned by a man named ‘Abdu al-Hamīd al-Zāhidī, which was dedicated in part to the distribution and sale of Egyptian and Syrian newspapers. This bookstore later became the headquarters of the revolutionary movement in Najaf, with connections to all parts of the Middle Euphrates region.⁸²⁷ The Egyptian Revolution was also present in the minds of Middle Euphrates intellectuals in 1920. *Al-Furāt*, the first newspaper published during the 1920 revolution, referred, in its second issue, to the similarity between Iraq's revolution and its sisters, the Irish and the Egyptian revolutions.⁸²⁸ Moreover, some Iraqis who had been affected by the approach of the Egyptians sent delegations to the British administration to negotiate with them. The influence of the delegation experience on the Iraqis residing in Baghdad was clear from their attempt to form their own delegation to negotiate with the British administration. The British, however, thwarted the efforts of this delegation just as it had that of the Egyptians. This rejection helped to unite the social groups in Iraqi society and they all became involved in the 1920 Iraqi Revolution against the British administration through a desire for the independence of Iraq.

⁸²⁵ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), pp.294-321. (Such as Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā‘irī, Muḥammad Jawād al-Jawāhirī, Sayid Hibat al-Dīn al-Shahristānī, ‘Abdu al-Wāḥid al-Ḥāj Sakar and others).

⁸²⁶ See, Al-Rāfī, ‘Abdu al-Rahmān, *Thwara 1919: Tārīkh Masir al-Qawmī 1914-1921 (Revolution of 1919 Egypt's National History 1914-1921)*, (Cairo, 1987).

⁸²⁷ *Al-Furāt Newspaper*, No.2, Dated 14 August 1920, 28 Dhi al-Qu‘da 1338.

⁸²⁸ *Muthakarāt Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl Al-Dīn (Memorandum of Muḥammad ‘Ali Kamāl Al-Dīn)* edited and collected by Kamil Al-Jbūrī (Baghdad, 1980), p.25.

6.2. The Iraqi Revolution of 1920

Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī issued a *fatwa* to the Iraqi people to claim their rights and to use force if the British refused to implement their demands.⁸²⁹ This *fatwa* was explicit in its aims and was clear about the rights of the Iraqi people. Namely, independence and sovereignty, and their right to use all methods to achieve this goal if it was refused by the British administration. Achieving their goal required national unity; therefore, national, religious and sectarian divisions were to be avoided, and intellectual and political differences amongst the Iraqi people needed to be put aside for the greater good. After issuing this *fatwa*, the coalition began preparing for a revolution to ensure success. In the beginning, the members of the coalition sought to collect the money that would be needed to support the revolution. To this end, ‘Abdu-al-Ḥādī al-Ḥāj Jawād sent a letter to Sayid Abū al-Qāsim Kāshānī, one of the clergy supporters of the revolution, asking him to send an amount of money to finance the rebels.⁸³⁰ Sheikh al-Shīrāzī also sent a letter to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsiri, authorising him to use religious funds (*Khoums*) to support the revolution.⁸³¹

During the revolution, the members of the coalition worked in coordination and cooperation with the leaders of the clans in different regions of Iraq, especially the tribes of the Middle Euphrates region, because many tribal leaders were supportive of the coalition's ideas, and most of them had strong relationships with its leaders. The tribal leaders played a major role in influencing the members of their tribes and ensuring that they participated in the revolution. The tribes also possessed quantities of weapons; thus the members of the coalition considered the tribes to be the military force of the coalition. It was believed that such force would help them during the revolution against the British authorities.⁸³²

‘Abdu Wāḥid al-Ḥāj Sakar sent several letters to tribal leaders in the areas of Mushkab and al-Shamiyah, inviting them to a meeting in his home to discuss the

⁸²⁹ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.145.

⁸³⁰ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā‘iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā‘ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘Telegram form ‘Abdu-al-Ḥādī al-Ḥāj Jawād to Sayid Abū al-Qāsim Kāshānī, Dated 21 June 1920’, Vol. 3, p.161.

⁸³¹ Ibid., ‘Telegram form Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā‘irī al-Shīrāzī to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsiri, Dated 6 April 1920’, Vol.3, p.55. You cannot use Ibid if there are two sources in the preceding reference

⁸³² Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 5, p.371.

situation. A meeting was held and attended by a group of leaders and they agreed to hold an extended meeting to decide how to address the actions of the British through armed revolution.⁸³³ They also decided that the al-Rumaitha area would be the area from which the revolution would start. In order to enable this to happen, they decided to send Muḥsin (the son of Sayid ‘Ali al-Yāsirī) to the al-Rumaitha leaders to explain what was going on. They also asked him to go to Najaf and carry letters from the clerics and Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī to the Banī Ḥakīm leaders urging them to revolt and resist the British troops. Sayid Muḥsin went to Najaf and gave the letters to the Banī Ḥakīm leaders (Al-Zuwālim, Al-Zayād, and Al-Sāda al-Yāsirī).⁸³⁴ It was clear that they sought to give legitimacy to their decisions and plans about the armed revolution through letters from the clerics that had been sent to the leaders of Banī Ḥakīm.

Meanwhile, al-Shamiyah leaders held a meeting where they agreed to resort to armed revolution if the British did not agree to their demands. They sent a letter that was carried by Muḥsin, the son of Sayid ‘Ali al-Yāsirī, to the Banī Ḥakīm leaders, informing them of this decision and asking them to be ready to revolt.⁸³⁵ When Muḥsin arrived in al-Rumaitha on 30 June 1920, the Zuwālim clan had already attacked the centre of British authority in an attempt to release Sheikh Sha‘lān Abū al-Jūn, who had been arrested by the British.⁸³⁶ Muḥsin went to Gaithīth al-Harjān, Sha‘lān Abū al-Jūn and Nāsir Ḥussain al-‘Urī‘ir and handed them the letters from the clergy; he told them about the decision of the clerics and the leaders concerning the need to start a revolution.⁸³⁷ Afterwards, Sha‘lān Abū al-Jūn wrote a letter to Sayid ‘Alwān al-Yāsirī explaining to him the situation in al-Rumaitha, and asked Sayid Muḥsin to return to al-Mushkhab as soon as possible to inform ‘Alwān al-Yāsirī, Sheikh ‘Abdu Wāḥid al-Ḥāj Sakar and the heads of the clans of al-Shamiyah and al-

⁸³³ Al-Yāsirī, ‘Abdu Al-Shahīd, p.120.

⁸³⁴ Ibid., pp.120-121.

⁸³⁵ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘Telegram for Al-Shamiyah leaders to al-Rumaitha leaders’, Dated 29 June 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.184-185. (The meeting was held in the house of ‘Abdu al-Kāzīm al-Ḥāj Sakar on 29 June 1920).

⁸³⁶ Rush, Alan, Vol. 2, p.372.

⁸³⁷ Al-Yāsirī, ‘Abdu Al-Shahīd, pp.131-134. Then, after a brief break, he went to ‘Abdu al-Mun‘im al-Yāsirī and handed him the letters and told him to prepare to start the revolution. ‘Abdu al-Mun‘im told him that the British had gained the support of prominent leaders from the Āl-Zayād clan with the aid of someone called Ma’yūf, to whom the British had given money and weapons. Muḥsin asked ‘Abdu al-Mun‘im al-Yāsirī to bring Ma’yūf and some leaders of Āl-Zayād who were loyal to Britain to meet him. During the meeting, he told them that the clerics in Najaf and the leaders in al-Shamiyah and al-Mushkhab had decided to confront the British and that the jihad had become a religious duty. As a result, they agreed to join the jihad and to cooperate with the clerics and clan elders.

Mushkhab about the situation in al-Rumaitha. Sha‘lān Abū al-Jūn asked the heads of the clans of al-Shamiyah and al-Mushkhab to start the revolution in different areas to avoid leaving the burden of facing the British entirely to the al-Rumaitha area alone.⁸³⁸

When the revolution began in the al-Rumaitha region on 30 June 1920, the coalition worked to make a success of the revolution. First, the coalition provided moral support. For example, after the clans’ victory over the British troops in the al-Raranjiya battle (and with a number of prisoners of war in the hands of the Iraqis), Sheikh Faṭḥallah sent a letter to those responsible for the prisoners of war. He asked them to respect the human dignity of the prisoners, and he added that this order was a religious obligation.⁸³⁹ Upon the Sheik's request, the prisoners were sent to Najaf.⁸⁴⁰ Thus, Sheikh Faṭḥallah held a leadership role during the revolution because of his religious position and his influence in the coalition.

The rebels in different areas of Iraq were continually consulting with the leaders of the coalition and a chief of Shiite authority, telling them the details of the battles during the revolution. For example, the militants of al-Samawa sent a letter to Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī concerning the battles in their area.⁸⁴¹ After the Battle of al-Khudir, the rebels sent a letter to Sheikh Faṭḥallah informing him of their victory on 27 August 1920.⁸⁴² In addition, Muḥammad al-Khilkālī sent a letter to Sheikh Faṭḥallah asking him to incite the tribes of Nasiriyah and Basra to participate in the revolution, and he told him about the victory of the rebels in Hillah.⁸⁴³ After the death of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, the coordination and consultation between the rebels and the chief of Shiite authority continued, so when Sheikh Faṭḥallah took over the religious authority in Iraq, he sent a letter to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī and Sayid ‘Alwān al-Yāsirī, asking them to do more for the

⁸³⁸ Ibid., pp.135-136.

⁸³⁹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-’Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā* (*Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results*) (Beirut, 2009), ‘ Telegram for Sheikh Faṭḥallah to responsible for prisoners’, Dated 24 July 1920’, Vol. 3, p.231.

⁸⁴⁰ *Mutthkrāt Kāṭi’ al-’Awādī* (*Memorandum of Kāṭi’ al-’Awādī*) (Baghdad, 1987) Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.26.

⁸⁴¹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-’Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā* (*Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results*) (Beirut, 2009), ‘ Telegram from the Militants of Samawa to Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī’, Dated 13 Aug 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.253-254.

⁸⁴² Ibid., ‘ Telegram for the rebels to Sheikh Faṭḥallah’, Dated 18 Aug 1920’, Vol. 3, p.280.

⁸⁴³ Ibid., ‘ Telegram for Muḥammad al-Khilkālī to Sheikh Faṭḥallah’, Dated 18 Aug 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.293-295.

liberation of Iraq.⁸⁴⁴ It can be inferred that the coalition experienced success in leading the revolution. This demonstrates the confidence of the rebels in the coalition and their belief in the ability of the coalition to achieve Iraq's independence and nation building.

The coalition also sent representatives to different areas of Iraq to incite the tribes to participate in the revolution. In addition, the coalition sought to provide money and weapons to the tribes who participated in the revolution. Some members of the coalition joined the fighting against the British. On 30 July 1920, Sayid Ḥādī Mukhūtar arrived in al-Samawa from Najaf to provide support to the rebels, bringing money with him. He also incited the tribes in the Gharraf, Shatra, and Khudir areas to participate in jihad. He was supported by a group of scholars and clerics in this matter.⁸⁴⁵ Sheikh Faṭḥallah also sent a letter to his representative in al-Samawa, Sayid Ḥādī Mukhūtar, asking him to exert all possible efforts to unify people under the banner of Muslims and keep the military equipment that they had gained from the British so that they could fruitfully use it in the future.⁸⁴⁶

In the battle of Hillah, clerics such as Abū al-Qāsim al-Kāshānī, Sheikh Muḥammed Jawād al-Jazā'irī, and Hibat al-Dīn al-Shahristānī, fought side by side with the rebels against the British. The latter managed to defeat the rebels.⁸⁴⁷ The representative of Sheikh Faṭḥallah in the al-Dewaniyah area and of Sheikh al-Mīrzā Maḥmūd also played an important part in uniting the clans to confront the British forces.⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid., 'Telegram for Sheikh Faṭḥallah to Sayid Nūr al-Yāsirī and Sayid 'Alwān al-Yāsirī', Vol. 3, p.276.

⁸⁴⁵ Al-Ḥasanī, 'Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-'Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)*, (Beirut, 1982), (First Published 1965), p.145.

⁸⁴⁶ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), 'Telegram for Sheikh Faṭḥallah to Sayid Ḥādī Mukhūtar', Dated 18 Aug 1920', Vol. 3, pp.271-273. (He also told them that he would send Muḥammad al-Khilkālī and Muḥammad Riḍā to help the jihadists in combat and that they would also help to incite the tribes).

⁸⁴⁷ Al-Yāsirī, 'Abdu Al-Shahīd, pp.155-159. When the news reached Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, he sent a letter to 'Alwān al-Yāsirī inquiring about the situation in Hillah and seeking advice as to how best to continue the revolution. On 15 August 1920, Sayid 'Alwān al-Yāsirī replied by explaining the situation in Hillah and informed him that the tribe of Āl-Bū Sultān did not fulfil the role required of them. See, Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), 'Telegram for Sayid 'Alwān al-Yāsirī to Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī', Dated 5 Aug 1920', Vol. 3, pp.246-248.

⁸⁴⁸ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), 'Anonymous letter to Sheikh Faṭḥallah', Dated 3 Aug 1920', Vol. 3, pp.257-259.

In Qalat Sukkar, Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Ḥussein Muṭar successfully played a prominent role in encouraging the tribes to take part in the revolution, and the rebels managed to control the centre of the British authorities.⁸⁴⁹ In addition, Sheikh Faṭḥallah sent a letter to ‘Abdu al-Ḥussein Muṭar asking him to motivate the tribes of Al-Muntafiq to face the British,⁸⁵⁰ and to coordinate activities with Sayid Ḥadī Mkhūṭar in al-Samawa so that they could face the British together.⁸⁵¹ He also asked Muṭar to send money (*al-Khoums*) for him because he was in need of funds to support the revolution in different areas.⁸⁵² In addition, Sheikh Faṭḥallah played a role in agitating the revolutionaries against the British in Shatra, when he delegated Sheikh Maḥmūd al-Khalīlī to the area on 25 August 1920. Sheikh Maḥmūd played a prominent role in inciting the tribes against the British, which forced Thomas, the British ruler of Nasiriyah, to leave al-Shatra for fear of being killed.⁸⁵³

The members of the coalition played a significant role in the revolution in the Diyala area. Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥilī arrived at Baqubah and began imploring the tribes there to take part in the revolution.⁸⁵⁴ In addition, Sheikh Ḥabīb al-Khālīsī, a representative of Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī, was based in Daltawah, and when the revolution started in the Middle Euphrates region, Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī sent a letter carried by Muḥsin al-‘Āmilī to the leaders of the region, inducing them to revolt. The letters had a significant impact on the outbreak of the revolution.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁴⁹ *Memorandum of Bertram Thomas Political Ruler of Nasiriya Region 1918-1920*, Collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, Translated by ‘Abdu al-Ḥādī Finjān (Baghdad, 1986), p.129.

⁸⁵⁰ Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘Telegram from ‘Abdu al-Ḥussein Muṭar to Sheikh Faṭḥallah’, Dated 18 November 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.278-279.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ‘Telegram from ‘Abdu al-Ḥussein Muṭar to Sheikh Faṭḥallah’, Dated 18 November 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.278-279.

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*, ‘Telegram from ‘Abdu al-Ḥussein Muṭar to Sheikh Faṭḥallah’, Dated 18 November 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.278-279.

⁸⁵³ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā’iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, p.105. In Suq al-Shuyukh, ‘Abdu Karīm al-Sabūī and ‘Ali Dabūs and Ḥussein Muṭar played an important role in encouraging the tribes to revolt against the British. As a result, jihad spread in the region. Haldane mentioned that the situation in Suq al-Shuyukh began to get worse as jihad was everywhere, and the tribes had started to attack the British forces. Also, Sheikh Faṭḥallah managed to involve the al-Muntafiq front in the revolution through his representatives. Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtimā’iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, p.111; Muṭar, ‘Abdu al-Maḥdī, *Thikrā ‘Alamayn Min Āl Muṭar (The Memory of Two Personalities from Āl Muṭar)*, (Najaf 1957), p.28; Halden, James, pp.295-296; F.O. 371/5229/E.10625 “From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, No.10384, Dated 27 Aug 1920”.

⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.40.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.41.

When the revolution broke out in Daltawah, Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīṣī and Sayid Muḥammad al-Ṣadīr came to Daltawa from Kadhimain,⁸⁵⁶ and they were hosted in the house of Sheikh Ḥabīb al-Khālīṣī, the cousin of Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīṣī. This house became a centre for the management of the revolution in Daltawah.⁸⁵⁷ During his residence in Diyala, Sayid Muḥammad al-Ṣadīr incited the tribes, and joined the fighting against the British.⁸⁵⁸ He not only instigated the tribes of Diyala to revolt, he also motivated the clans of Samarra and fought with them.⁸⁵⁹

In Zuba‘, after the victory of the rebels in the al-Raranjiya battle, the rebels sent a delegate called Jadū‘ Abū Zīd to the elders of Fallujah and Muhmadiya. He carried a *fatwa* from Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, which called for jihad. He also carried a letter from Hibat al-Dīn al-Shahristānī, urging them to participate in the jihad against the British. Several of the sheikhs accepted this call.⁸⁶⁰ Sheikh Darī al-Maḥmūd was among the leaders who met the rebels and declared his readiness to participate in the revolution. Thus, there was Sunni-Shiite and clerics-nationalist cooperation during the revolution against the British for the sake of Iraq.⁸⁶¹ In addition, the armed revolution was not limited to the areas of the Middle Euphrates and Baghdad. The coalition was under the leadership of a chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq. Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī and Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī played a significant role in encouraging the tribes to take part in the revolution through inciting them and providing them with financial support.

Third, the coalition held negotiations with the British about the issues that concerned the rebels. For example, jihad was declared in the Mushkhab area on 11 July 1920, and the clans attacked the British centre in Abu Sakhir.⁸⁶² Faced with a strong siege, the British requested a four-day truce until they could communicate

⁸⁵⁶ Al-Bāzirkān, Ḥasān, p.146.

⁸⁵⁷ Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, p.49.

⁸⁵⁸ F.O. 371/5078 “From the Eastern Bank LTD, London, Dated 23 Aug 1920.”

⁸⁵⁹ C.O. 696/2 “Administration Report, Samarra Division, p.1.”

⁸⁶⁰ Including Khuḍayir al-Ḥāj ‘Āsī, the head of al-Janābīn, and Sheikh ‘Alwān Shalāl, the head of Āl-Bū Mahhyī. See, Al-Wardī, ‘Ali, *Lamḥāt ‘Ijtīmā‘iyā Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth (The Glimpses Social From The Modern History Of Iraq)* (Beirut, 2005), (First published 1969), Vol. 6, p.85.

⁸⁶¹ Davis, Eric, *Memories of State: Politics, History and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p.48.

⁸⁶² Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqīya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)* (Beirut, 1982) (First Published 1965), p.160.

with the civil commissioner in Baghdad to implement the demands of the coalition.⁸⁶³ The rebels replied that they could not take any decision without the consent of the clerics in Najaf and Karbala. They consulted Sheikh Faḥallāh, Sheikh Muḥammed Jawād Jawāhirī, and Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā’irī about the truce and they agreed.⁸⁶⁴ The truce was approved on 17 July 1920 and it was decided that Major Norbury should ask the British General Commissioner of Iraq to declare a public amnesty, to cease all military operations, and to form a national conference.⁸⁶⁵ In addition, the al-Samawa leaders sent a message to Sheikh Faḥallāh promising him to put all their forces under his control and asking him to take part in the negotiations with the British.⁸⁶⁶ As a result, Sheikh Faḥallāh sent a letter to the al-Rumaitha leaders giving them permission to hold negotiations with the British to reach a peace.⁸⁶⁷ Furthermore, Maḥmūd al-Khalīlī sent a letter to Sheikh Faḥallāh informing him that the British government wanted to open negotiations. However, al-Khalīlī responded that Sheikh Faḥallāh was the one responsible for the negotiations.⁸⁶⁸ A letter was also sent from ‘Abdu al-Ḥussein Muṭar to the political governor of al-Muntafiq, informing the latter that the negotiations could only be led by the chief of Shiite authority in Najaf: Sheikh Faḥallāh.⁸⁶⁹ It can be concluded that the rebels in different areas of Iraq were considered to be the leaders of the coalition. A chief of Shiite authority was the only legitimate representative for them and for the Iraqi cause; negotiations with the British administration were only issued by the coalition.

Fourth, councils were established by the coalition to lead the revolution. In Najaf, a religious body was established to oversee the revolution and manage its affairs. Sheikh Faḥallāh headed this religious body and the members were comprised

⁸⁶³ Al-Jbūrī, Fāris, *Wqā’i’ Thwrat al-‘Ishrīn Fī Dū’ Mawād Ṣaḥīfat al-Iraq (The Chronicle of Twentieth Revolution Through Iraq Newspaper.)* (Takret University, 2002), p.70.

⁸⁶⁴ Al-Yāsirī, ‘Abdu Al-Shahīd, p.145-146.

⁸⁶⁵ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results.)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘The Terms of the Truce Between the British and the Delegates of Najaf and Shamiyah’, Dated 17 July 1920’, Vol. 3, p.223.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid., ‘Telegram for Samawa leaders to Sheikh Faḥallāh’, Dated 18 Aug 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.345-347.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid., ‘Telegram for Sheikh Faḥallāh to Samawa leaders’, Dated 18 Aug 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.364-365.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid., ‘Telegram from Maḥmūd al-Khalīlī to Sheikh Faḥallāh’, Dated 15 November 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.282-284.

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid., ‘Telegram from ‘Abdu al-Ḥussein Muṭar to the Political Governor of Muntafiq’, Dated 18 November 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.285-287.

of clerics.⁸⁷⁰ In addition, in Karbala, two councils were formed. The first had the role of providing support to the rebels and the second was charged with managing Karbala.⁸⁷¹ Sayid Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh was appointed as the principal of Karbala on 2 September 1920,⁸⁷² and on this occasion, ‘Ali al-Bāzrikān delivered a speech.⁸⁷³ The councils were established in Najaf and Karbala due to the importance of these cities; politically and religiously. These cities were not under the control of the British, so the councils and its administration were able to carry out their tasks without facing any difficulties from the British authorities. These cities were also close to the Middle Euphrates clans, which comprised the military strength of the coalition. Fifth, newspapers were founded by the coalition to spread the news about the revolution inside and outside Iraq. In Najaf, the religious body, which was headed by Sheikh Faṭḥallah, worked to disseminate propaganda for the revolution through a publication named *A Report of the Revolutionaries*. This publication was published under the supervision of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Shabībī. The aim of this publication was to transfer news about the revolution and to describe what had actually happened on the battlefield to the people inside and outside Iraq. The overarching goal was to obtain the support and involvement of the Iraqi people in the revolution.⁸⁷⁴ In addition, two newspapers were established to serve the revolution. The first was called *Al-Furāt al-Najafiya* and was released on 16 August 1920 under the supervision of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Shabībī, with ‘Abdu al-Ḥamīd Zāhid as its distributor in Najaf.⁸⁷⁵ The second was the *’Istiqlāl* Newspaper, which was released on 15 September 1920 under the supervision of Muḥammad ‘Abdu Ḥussīn Kaẓīmī.⁸⁷⁶ The press played a prominent role in crystallising the objectives and tasks of the coalition, contributing to the expansion of the regions of the revolution, and fuelling the spirit of enthusiasm among the rebels. Furthermore, it became a weapon in the hands of the rebels against the British administration. In addition, it was a podium

⁸⁷⁰ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-’Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)*, (Beirut, 1982), (First Published 1965), pp.276-277.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp.278-279.

⁸⁷² Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-’Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘Appointment Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh, Dated 2 September 1920’, Vol. 3, p.288.

⁸⁷³ *Ibid.*, ‘Speech of ‘Ali al-Bāzrikān delivered, Dated 2 September 1920’, Vol. 3, p.289.

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp.9-45.

⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, ‘Announcement of the issuance of the Al-Furāt al-Najafiya Newspaper, Dated 6 Aug 1920’ (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 3, p.235.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, ‘Announcement of the issuance of the ’Istiqlāl Newspaper, Dated 15 September 1920’ (Beirut, 2009), Vol. 3, pp.297.

for several coalition leaders who wrote for the newspapers, where they were highlighting the problems that were facing society as well Britain's political and economic intentions in Iraq. They also explained the truth of the British claim to liberate Iraq from Ottoman domination and the reality of Iraq under colonial occupation.

The national, religious, and tribal coalition succeeded in engaging the Iraqi people in the revolution through a process of coordination with, and organisation of, the leaders of the clans, through sending representatives to the clans, and by providing financial and moral support and supervision to the rebels in various regions of Iraq. However, a chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq, namely Sheikh Faḥallāh, did not seize the opportunity to achieve success for the revolution or protect it from certain defeat. This was due to the lack of balance between the military abilities of both sides. The opportunity had come after the death of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī when Arnold Wilson had sent a letter to Sheikh Faḥallāh on 28 August 1920, asking him to conduct negotiations,⁸⁷⁷ but Sheikh Faḥallāh refused to negotiate.⁸⁷⁸ Sheikh Faḥallāh should have seized this opportunity to negotiate with the British, as it was clear that the British government was worried about the spread of the revolution and its uncontrollable nature.

After the defeat of the rebels, the leaders of the revolution decided to flee Iraq. Some decided to go to Persia, others went to Syria, and a further group decided to go to al-Sharīf Ḥussein in Hejaz.⁸⁷⁹ Before the migration of the leaders to Hejaz, Sheikh Faḥallāh sent a letter to al-Sharīf Ḥussein on 15 November 1920, informing him about the end of the revolution and asking him to take care of the leaders who would be his guests.⁸⁸⁰ The leaders arrived in Medina on 16 April 1921, and were hosted by Prince ‘Ali b. al Ḥussein. During their stay, al-Sharīf Ḥussein sent a letter to his son asking him to bring the leaders to Mecca on 18 April 1921. Upon their arrival in

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid., ‘Telegram from Arnold Wilson to Sheikh Faḥallāh, Dated 28 Aug 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.281-284.

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid., ‘Telegram from Sheikh Faḥallāh to Arnold Wilson, Dated 16 September 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.311-313.

⁸⁷⁹ *Muthakrāt Ṣalāl al-Mūḥ (Memorandum of Ṣalāl al-Mūḥ)* (Baghdad, 1987) Edited and collected by Kāmil Al-Jbūrī, p.81-82. (These were Sayid Nūr al-Yāsīrī, Sayid ‘Alwān al-Yāsīrī, Sayid Hadī Mkhūṭar, Rāyih al-‘Atīya, Marzūk al-‘Awād, Sha‘lān al-Jabir, ‘Umrān al-Hāj Sa‘dūn, ‘Alwān al-Hāj Sa‘dūn, Ja‘far Abū al-Timan, Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh and Ṣalāl al-Mūḥ Maḥdī al-Fāḍil).

⁸⁸⁰ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā‘iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadīmātuhā Wa Natā‘ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘Telegram from Sheikh Faḥallāh to al-Sharīf Ḥussein, Dated 10 November 1920’, Vol. 3, pp.378-379.

Mecca on 1 May 1921, they met al-Sharīf Ḥussein b. ‘Ali, who welcomed them and thanked them for their role in the revolution.⁸⁸¹ The rebellions failed, but the events of 1920 played an important role in the creation of nation building, and in shaping future British policy in Iraq.⁸⁸²

6.3. The appointment of Faisal b. al-Ḥussein as ruler of Iraq

The Iraqi revolution caused the death of 609 British troops, the loss of 2,467 Iraqi people, and the wounding of 671.⁸⁸³ The Iraqi revolution also cost the British treasury £100 million,⁸⁸⁴ which made British officials drastically reconsider their policy in Iraq and question whether Iraq was worth all these costs.⁸⁸⁵ As a result of these military and financial losses, the British press criticised British policy in Iraq. For example, *The Times* demanded that British politicians issue a statement on the current situation of the revolution, clarifying the causes of the revolution and the country’s future policy in Iraq.⁸⁸⁶ In addition, *The Times* stated that Iraq could not be rewarding to Britain even after a thousand years.⁸⁸⁷ It was clear that the motive of *The Times* was to elucidate the futility of the occupation of Iraq as a process of profit.⁸⁸⁸ *The Times* continued its criticism of British policy in Iraq and reported that Britain would encounter internal problems, such as high unemployment and an increase in prices, if the government continued to waste money in remote countries.⁸⁸⁹ This criticism was also made by the *Daily Mail* when it published an article written by Louvain Frazer, in which he stated, there is nothing in our whole history that can be compared to the folly of British politicians in Iraq.⁸⁹⁰ Although the Iraqi Revolution in 1920 failed to achieve its goals, it did succeed in creating internal British opposition against the British policy in the Middle East, especially in Iraq.

⁸⁸¹ Abū Ṭabīkh, Jamīl, pp.206-210.

⁸⁸² Simon, Reeva, Tejirian, Eleanor, *The Creation of Iraq 1914-1921* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p.31.

⁸⁸³ F.O. 371/5231/E.1330, Dated 25 October 1920.

⁸⁸⁴ Kamāl. Ahmad, p.59.

⁸⁸⁵ Monroe, Elizabeth, *Britain’s Moment in Middle East 1914-1956* (London: Methuen, 1965), p.61.

⁸⁸⁶ *The Times*, 16 Aug 1920.

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁸ Buckley, A.B, *Mesopotamia As Country for Farther Development* (Cairo, 1919), p.19.

⁸⁸⁹ *The Times*, 19 November 1920.

⁸⁹⁰ *The Daily Mail*, 12 July 1920, Appendix 5.

In contrast, there was a difference of views between British politicians, and between the British government and the India Office as to Britain's future in Iraq. For example, Colonel Lawrence believed that it was better to withdraw from Iraq and appoint Arab intellectuals rather than the British in Iraq.⁸⁹¹ Edwin Samuel Montagu, Secretary of State for India, believed in the establishment of an Arab state without a British mandate.⁸⁹² Sir Arthur Hirtzel, Under-Secretary of State for India, believed that it was better to establish Arab institutions under British oversight,⁸⁹³ whilst Lord Curzon thought that Britain should continue to exercise control over Iraq but that it must do so with the consent of the Iraqi people.⁸⁹⁴ Sir Percy Cox supported the idea of maintaining British interests in Iraq alongside the reduction of military and financial costs. He also agreed with the appointment of Faisal b. Ḥussein al-Sharīf as King of Iraq.⁸⁹⁵ Churchill was a supporter of this idea and believed that Faisal offered the best solution; he was a cheaper solution.⁸⁹⁶ However, Sir Arnold Wilson believed in the survival of the British in Iraq by force or withdrawal.⁸⁹⁷ As a result of the Iraqi revolution and the divergence of views between British politicians, two schools of thought appeared. One advocated withdrawal from Iraq, whilst the other sought the continuing dominance of British influence in Iraq but with the consent of the people.

When the idea of withdrawing from Iraq emerged, British companies tried to prevent the formal adoption of this position. The Baghdad Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to the Civil Commissioner asking him to accept the British Mandate over Iraq.⁸⁹⁸ Other British companies also sought assurances from the British government that it would not withdraw from Iraq.⁸⁹⁹ In addition, the India Office received a protest from the Chamber of Commerce in Baghdad about the proposed withdrawal of the British from Iraq.⁹⁰⁰ Commercial companies and the Chamber of Commerce lobbied the British administration to prevent Britain's withdrawal from Iraq.

⁸⁹¹ Ferment For Freedom: Colonel Lawrence on Eastern Problem. *Daily Herald*, 9 Aug 1920.

⁸⁹² F.O. 371/5068 "Minutes of I.D.C.P, Dated 13 April 1920."

⁸⁹³ Marlowe, John, *Late Victorian: The Life Of Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson* (London, 1967), pp.182-183.

⁸⁹⁴ F.O. 371/5226/14881 "Minutes of I.D.C.P, Dated 27 June 1920."

⁸⁹⁵ F.O. 371/6350 "From Churchill to Prime Minster, Cairo, Dated 21 March 1921."

⁸⁹⁶ F.O. 371/6349/222 "High Commissioner, No. 1485, dated 2 January 1920."

⁸⁹⁷ F.O. 371/5227/E.6509 "From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, Dated 16 June 1920."

⁸⁹⁸ F.O. 371/5282/E.9413.

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁰ F.O. 371/6349/218 "From Sir Percy Cox to India Office."

As a result, the British sought to establish a new regime in Iraq. Faisal b. Ḥussein was thought to be the right person to be the ruler of Iraq, as he was an ally of Britain, an Arab nationalist, and an acceptable person to the Iraqis and the leaders of the alliance. He was also considered to be the best solution for the implementation of the British administration's plans.

In July 1920, Sir Arnold Wilson suggested offering the position of King of Iraq to Faisal. He explained that Faisal could not lose sight of the importance of foreign aid to the continued existence of the Arab states.⁹⁰¹ He also informed the Ministry of India that the idea of the appointment of one of the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein as ruler of Iraq had the support and endorsement of the Muntafiq, Baghdad, Najaf, and Karbala leaders.⁹⁰² In August 1920, the British government raised the idea of choosing Faisal as Emir of Iraq to the High Commissioner Sir Percy Cox. It was made clear that this appointment would be under the condition that a body representing public opinion in Iraq had made the request. It was also stipulated that Faisal should accept the British mandate over Iraq.⁹⁰³ In response, Cox confirmed that a large majority in Iraq supported the inauguration of Faisal.⁹⁰⁴

One of the factors that precipitated the appointment of Faisal was that the Turkish candidate to rule Iraq, Burḥān al-Dīn, had enjoyed some support in Iraq. This sparked resentment within the British government. Some tribal leaders believed that abandoning the Turks would not take place unless an Arab government was formed in Iraq and Faisal was appointed ruler.⁹⁰⁵ If this was not done, it was believed that they would support the Turks.⁹⁰⁶ In addition, some people who were loyal to the Turks decided to support 'Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Naqīb to take over as ruler of Iraq.⁹⁰⁷ As a result, Sir Percy Cox sent a warning to Churchill about this matter.⁹⁰⁸ Gertrude Bell also suggested that if the British hesitated, public opinion in Iraq might turn to

⁹⁰¹ F.O. 141/444/12215 "From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to Secretary of State of India, No.9244, Dated 31 July 1920."

⁹⁰² F.O. 141/444/12215 "From Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, to Secretary of State of India, No.9752, Dated 13 Aug 1920."

⁹⁰³ F.O. 371/5229/5140 "Appointment of Sir Percy Cox as High Commissioner Instruction of H.M.G, Dated 28 Aug 1920, India Office."

⁹⁰⁴ F.O. 371/6349/215 "From High Commissioner to S.C, No.1235, Dated 26 December 1920."

⁹⁰⁵ F.O. 371/6349/12 "From High Commissioner, No 3635, Dated 13 Feb 1921."

⁹⁰⁶ F.O. 371/6351/6560 "From Sir Percy Cox to Winston Churchill, No. 152, Dated 1 June 1921."

⁹⁰⁷ F.O. 371/6351/16185 "Mesopotamia Intelligence, Reports No. 10-11, Dated 4 April 1921."

⁹⁰⁸ F.O. 371/6349/13 "From High Commissioner, No 3655, Dated 13 Feb 1921."

the Turkish side.⁹⁰⁹ In addition, Sheikh Kha‘zal was seeking to become the ruler of Iraq through the support of several important figures in Baghdad and clerics in Najaf and Karbala. However, he only obtained the support of Sheikh ‘Ali Al-Ja‘far Kāshif al-Ghiṭā⁹¹⁰ and Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā’irī;⁹¹¹ they sent a letter to Sheikh Kha‘zal asking him to present himself as a candidate to rule Iraq.⁹¹² Nūrī al-Sa‘īd and Ja‘far al-‘Askarī sent Sheikh Kha‘zal a letter, refusing to support his nomination.⁹¹³ It was clear that the majority of Shiite clerics in the holy cities and the nationalists supported Faisal b. al-Ḥussain to become the ruler of Iraq. As a result, the Cairo conference was held on 12 March 1921, and Churchill called Faisal one of the most important figures in the Middle East. The conference agreed that Faisal should head to Iraq to be crowned King of Iraq through a popular referendum under the British mandate.⁹¹⁴

The Iraqi leaders of the revolution arrived at Medina on 6 April 1921,⁹¹⁵ before travelling onwards to Mecca. In Mecca, they met al-Sharīf Ḥussein b. ‘Ali.⁹¹⁶ During the meeting, al-Sharīf Ḥussein explained that there was a problem and that the solution to it was in their hands. The problem was that a dispute had occurred between Faisal and the French government. This had led to Faisal being excluded from the rule of Syria. He added that the allies would not be able to persuade the French government to accept Faisal except by the appointment of ‘Abdullah as the ruler of Syria and Faisal as the ruler of Iraq.⁹¹⁷ The leaders replied that they wanted ‘Abdullah to be King of Iraq, not because of prior knowledge or mutual connections, but because he was one of his sons. They assured al-Sharīf Ḥussein that they would welcome whomever he chose to be the ruler of Iraq.⁹¹⁸ In addition, Sheikh Maḥdī al-

⁹⁰⁹ Bell, Lady, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (London, 1927) “ Letter dated 22 January 1921”, pp.472-474.

⁹¹⁰ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqīya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), ‘Telegram from Sheikh ‘Ali Al-Ja‘far Kāshif al-Ghiṭā to Sheikh Kha‘zal’, Dated 2 April 1921”, Vol. 5, p.15.

⁹¹¹ Ibid., ‘Telegram from Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā’irī to Sheikh Kha‘zal’, Dated 2 April 1921”, Vol. 5, p.16.

⁹¹² Ibid., ‘Telegram from Sheikh ‘Ali Al-Ja‘far Kāshif al-Ghiṭā and Sheikh ‘Abdu al-Karīm al-Jazā’irī to Sheikh Kha‘zal’, Dated 2 April 1921”, Vol. 5, pp.15-16.

⁹¹³ Ibid., ‘Telegram from Nūrī al-Sa‘īd and Ja‘far al-‘Askarī to Sheikh Kha‘zal’, Dated 27 April 1921”, Vol. 5, pp.18-19.

⁹¹⁴ Allawi, Ali, *Faisal of Iraq* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2014), pp.326-334.

⁹¹⁵ Abū Ṭabīkh, pp.206-207. (They were hosted by Prince ‘Ali b. Ḥussein. During their stay, al-Sharīf Ḥussein b. ‘Ali sent a letter to his son asking him to bring the leaders to Mecca).

⁹¹⁶ Ibid., pp.208-209.

⁹¹⁷ Ibid., pp.210-211.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid., p.211.

Khāliṣī sent a letter to al-Sharīf Ḥussein, asking him to send one of his sons to be King of Iraq.⁹¹⁹ It was obvious that al-Sharīf Ḥussein tried, through his political cleverness, to hide the resolutions of the Cairo conference, as he knew that the Iraqi leaders would never accept the British mandate over Iraq. According to him, this would cause an outcry in Iraq, which might lead to Faisal not being appointed the ruler of Iraq.

Shiite clerics chose one of the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein to be the governor of Iraq for several reasons. The Shiite clerics did not seek to establish an Islamic Shiite state in Iraq or appoint a chief of Shiite religious authority as the ruler of Iraq.⁹²⁰ The Shiite clerics also did not find any suitable family or man inside Iraq to become the ruler.⁹²¹ In addition, the choice of anyone inside Iraq as the ruler of Iraq could have led to the creation of disputes that could not have been solved. Furthermore, the choice of one of the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein as the ruler of Iraq was accepted by several Iraqi people of different sects, races, and political parties due to his role in supporting the Arab issues.⁹²² Therefore, this appointment would implement the Islamic principle of warding off evil and bringing benefits to society through preventing the occurrence of the conflict between the Iraqi people about the rule of Iraq.

Moreover, the Sharīfs of Mecca were direct lineal descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad through his daughter Fātima. The title Sharīf means noble or honourable, in recognition of the holder's connection to the household of the Prophet Muḥammad (*Ahl al-Bayt*), and this was consistent with the inclinations of the Shiite sect.⁹²³ Furthermore, the family of al-Sharīf was in conflict with Ibn Sa'ūd and the Wahhabis because of their differences in religious beliefs.⁹²⁴ At the same time, the Shiites of Iraq were in dispute with the Wahhabis due to repeated attacks by the Wahhabis on the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, and because of the ideological differences

⁹¹⁹ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), 'Telegram from Sheikh Mahdī al-Khāliṣī to al-Sharīf Ḥussein', Dated 12 April 1921, Vol. 5, pp.27-28.

⁹²⁰ See Chapter Five.

⁹²¹ See Chapter Five.

⁹²² See Chapter Five.

⁹²³ Allawī, Ali, p.5.

⁹²⁴ Dh̄lān, Aḥmad, *Kulāsat Al-Kalām Fī Bayān 'Umrā' Al-Blad Al-Harām (Summary Of Speech In The Statement Of Princes Of Holy Land)* (Cairo, 1305 H.A), p.297.

between them.⁹²⁵ Therefore, they supported Faisal to become the ruler of Iraq due to the convergence of ideas between them against the Wahhabis.

During the period when the revolution's leaders were in Mecca, Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh told Ja'far Abū al-Timan about the British mandate over Iraq; he.⁹²⁶ As a result, they decided to interview Faisal and ask him about the British mandate. During the interview, Faisal replied that Iraq would remain under the British mandate, but if the League of Nations was formed and if Iraq joined as a member by 1930, they could end the British mandate.⁹²⁷ When Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh and Ja'far Abū al-Timan left the interview, they spread the news to the rest of the leaders. The latter agreed to accept the British mandate but they disagreed on accompanying Faisal to Iraq. Those who refused to accompany Faisal were Muḥsin Abū Ṭabīkh, Ja'far Abū al-Timan, Rāyih al-‘Aṭiya, and Marzūk al-‘Awād. They did not want to be seen by the Iraqi people as leaders who had accepted the British mandate. However, the rest of the leaders decided to accompany Faisal back to Iraq.⁹²⁸ It can be inferred that the Iraqi leaders of the revolution in Mecca who knew about the British mandate issue in Iraq were divided on their views into two sections. The first section rejected the British mandate over Iraq; they refused to support Faisal and did not return with him to Iraq. The second section supported the British mandate over Iraq; they saw it was important to return with Faisal to Iraq and to support him.

Faisal b. Ḥussein left the port of Jeddah on 12 June 1921 in order to sail to Basra with the colonel and the Iraqi leaders; he joined Yūsif al-Siwīdī and Sayid Muḥammad al-Ṣadir.⁹²⁹ When they left, al-Sharīf Ḥussein sent a letter to ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī to inform him that his son had left for Basra.⁹³⁰ Faisal arrived at Basra on 23 June 1920, where he was received by five ministers who were delegated

⁹²⁵ Āl-Ḥabūbah, Ja'far, Vol.1, pp.324-330.

⁹²⁶ Abū Ṭabīkh, Jamīl, p.211.

⁹²⁷ Ibid., pp.211-212.

⁹²⁸ Ibid., pp.212-214.

⁹²⁹ *Baghdad Times*, June 1921.

⁹³⁰ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā'iq al-Thawra al-'Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā'ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)* (Beirut, 2009), 'Telegram from al-Sharīf Ḥussein to 'Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī', Dated 17 June 1921" "Telegram from Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī to al-Sharīf Ḥussein", Dated 17 June 1921" "Telegram from al-Sharīf Ḥussein to 'Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī', Dated 22 June 1921" "Telegram from 'Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī to al-Sharīf Ḥussein', Dated 22 June 1921", Vol. 5, pp.54-57. ('Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī replied that he was waiting for the arrival of Faisal. Before the arrival of Faisal to Basra, he sent a telegram to 'Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī on 22 June 1921, providing him with the time of Faisal's arrival. 'Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī quickly responded by welcoming him).

by ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī, the head of the provisional government that had been appointed by the British.⁹³¹

Iraq's provisional government met on 11 July 1920. During the meeting, ‘Abdu al-Raḥmān al-Qīlānī suggested nominating Faisal b. Ḥussein as King of Iraq, under the condition that his government would be a parliamentary democracy.⁹³² Sir Percy Cox rejected this suggestion and requested a referendum in all the regions of Iraq to choose the ruler.⁹³³ Based on the results of the referendum, the ruler was appointed. The British administration sought to implement its plan to appoint Faisal as the ruler of Iraq of Iraq by obtaining the support of the Iraqi people; this would give legitimacy to the appointment of Faisal as governor of Iraq. It was also an approach that would show the world that the appointment of Faisal as governor of Iraq was the choice of the Iraqi people and the British authorities did not intervene in this matter. In addition, the British authorities aimed to prevent the creation of internal opposition against the appointment of Faisal as governor of Iraq.

The provisional government asked the Interior Ministry to hold a referendum to obtain the official opinion of the Iraqi people on the selection of Faisal as the ruler of Iraq.⁹³⁴ During the referendum on 13 July 1921, Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī, a chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq, issued a *fatwa* to announce allegiance to Faisal and the obedience to the *fatwa* and thus the need to vote for him.⁹³⁵ After this *fatwa*, Faisal sent a letter to Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī on July 1921, promising him that they would work together to achieve their common goals.⁹³⁶ He also sent a letter to the scholars in Najaf on 15 July 1921, telling them that he had presented his ideas as how to run the state to Sayid Muḥammad ‘Ali Baḥr al-‘Ulūm, who would explain it to the rest of the clerics. He did not tell them about the British mandate for Iraq.⁹³⁷ It was

⁹³¹ Al-Ḥasanī, ‘Abdu Al-Razāq, *Al-Tawra Al-‘Irāqiya Al-Kubrā (The Major Iraqi Revolution)*, (Beirut, 1982), (First Published 1965), p.364.

⁹³² *Safaḥāt Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth 1914-1926: Takwīn al-Ḥukūm al-Waṭanī Fī al-‘Iraq; Muthakarātān Li Sir Percy Cox Wa Sir Henry Dobbs (Pages From the Modern History of Iraq 1914-1926: Configure the National Government in Iraq: Notes of Sir Percy Cox and Sir Henry Dobbs)*, (Mosul, 1951), Translated by Bashīr Farajū, p.51.

⁹³³ *Ibid.*, p.52.

⁹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.52.

⁹³⁵ Al-Jbūrī, Kāmil, *Wathā’iq al-Thawra al-‘Irāqiya al-Kubrā Muqadimātuhā Wa Natā’ijuhā (Documents of the Great Iraqi Revolution: Introductions and Results)*, (Beirut, 2009), ‘Telegram from Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī to Faisal b. al-Sharīf Ḥussein’, Dated 13 July 1921, Vol. 5, pp.73-74.

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*, ‘Telegram from Faisal b.al-Sharīf Ḥussein to Sheikh Maḥdī al-Khālīsī’, Dated 14 July 1921, Vol. 5, pp.75-76.

⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*, ‘Telegram from Faisal b. al-Sharīf Ḥussein to clerics’, Dated 16 July 1921, Vol. 5, pp.77-78.

clear from these letters that Faisal was seeking to obtain the support of the Shiite clerics due to their influence over the Iraqi people, especially in the Middle Euphrates region and the holy cities. In these areas, the clerics could have used a *fatwa* against him; the people of these areas considered a *fatwa* to be binding. He was trying to become King as soon as possible to avoid any obstacles that might stand in his way, especially since he knew that the Shiite clerics in the holy cities would never accept the British mandate. In addition, it was obvious that the nationalists supported Faisal to become the ruler of Iraq under the British mandate because Faisal did not seek their support. Alongside this, there was no opposition from the nationalists about the British mandate over Iraq.

Thus, the British succeeded in the implementation of their scheme and the appointment of Faisal as the ruler of Iraq without any opposition. The result of the referendum was 96 percent in favour of Faisal.⁹³⁸ Based on the outcome of the referendum, Faisal was crowned King of Iraq. He chose to be crowned on 23 August 1921,⁹³⁹ which coincided with Ghadīr Day. Ghadīr Day. This is the day that the Shiites are celebrated because the Prophet Muḥammad chose ‘Alī b. ‘Abī Ṭālib as his successor. Faisal chose this day because he had a political aim to obtain the loyalty of the Shiites through appealing to their feelings.

6.4. Conclusion

The roots of the 1920 revolt can be traced back to the armed struggle in Najaf in March 1918, and it gained momentum when it spread to the middle and lower Euphrates. Sheikh Mahdī Al-Khālīshī was a prominent Shi‘a leader of the revolt. Thus, it can be concluded that the revolution could not be established in cities like Baghdad, Basra and Mosul, because the British troops were centered there.

During the Iraqi Revolution, the coalition of tribal leaders, nationalists, and Shiite clerics played a major role in leading and organizing the resistance against the British forces. The coalition succeeded in uniting the Iraqi people through coordination and organisation with all the sects, races, and social classes in Iraq in

⁹³⁸ *Safahāt Min Tārīkh al-‘Iraq al-Ḥadīth 1914-1926: Takwīn al-Ḥukūm al-Waṭanī Fī al-‘Iraq; Muthakarātān Li Sir Percy Cox Wa Sir Henry Dobbs (Pages from the Modern History of Iraq 1914-1926: Configure the National Government in Iraq: Notes of Sir Percy Cox and Sir Henry Dobbs)* (Mosul, 1951), Translated by Bashīr Farajū, p.52.

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.52-53.

order to achieve the common goal; namely the full independence of Iraq without a mandate.

Although the revolt achieved some initial success, the British continued to control Iraq through indirect ways such as through their appointment of Faisal b. al-Sharīf Ḥusseīn as the ruler of Iraq under a British mandate. However, the 1920 revolution was considered by Iraqis as part of the founding of Iraqi nationalism.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions

This thesis has documented the history of Iraqi resistance focusing on Shiite resistance in the period between 1914 and 1921 and how this helped to form the modern state of Iraq. When considering the religious and ethnic composition of the population in Iraq in the period of the study, 52% of the population comprised Shiite Muslims. In addition, the Shiite faith is characterised by strict obedience and loyalty to the supreme religious authority in Najaf, as such, when the chief of Shiite religious authority announced a *fatwa* on jihad, its factions followed his *fatwa*. Indeed, this interrelationship between the Shiite religious authority and the masses provided strength to the Shiite entity. Finally, the Shiite resistance has not been addressed in most existent literature that has focused on the Iraqi revolution in 1920.

The thesis focused on the reasons that led to change and development in Shiite political ideology, specifically those led to creating organized resistance that played role in the formation of an identity that contributed to nation building in order to face the British invasion. Limiting the exploration to this period and to the role of Shiites, afforded the research with a degree of specificity that allowed an in-depth exploration

of a topic that has received little attention. The period, which this study addresses, may seem very short, but it witnessed many events that affected Iraq and the world. The First World War prompted the formation of international alliances, such as this between Germany and the Ottoman Empire, and between France and Britain, and the withdrawal of Russia from the War. On the national level, Iraq became an arena for warring forces and later was involved in the war. The arrival of British troops in the Faw region and their occupation of Basra in November 1914 began a causal chain of events and change which affected the Iraqi society in general and the holy cities (Najaf, Karbala, Samarra, Kadhimain) in particular. These events also led to the penetration of religious thought in the Iraqi society through *fatwas* issued by Shiite clerics in various parts of the country.

7.1. Findings

7.1.1. Iraq before the British Occupation

The British invasion of Iraq during World War One aimed at ensuring a sustained supply of resources after the Ottomans granted concessions to Germany to construct a railroad from south-eastern Turkey to Basra in southern Iraq. The British feared that a hostile German presence in Mesopotamia would threaten its interests in Persian oil and its routes to India. Therefore, the British interests in Iraq significantly increased. On capturing Baghdad in 1917, Britain proclaimed that the whole invasion of Iraq was part of its fighting against the Ottomans, and that they would return to the Arabs some control of their own affairs for the first time since 1258. However, the true colour of the British occupation was revealed when the people realised that these promises were not to aid Iraqi development. Rather it was there to enable full British control of the Arab lands. The intention of the British was made clear by their six years heavy-handed military administration of Iraq. Indeed, British brutality, excessive taxation, and the denial of nationalist aspirations, were all factors that played a role in the emergence of resistance against British forces. For the first time, all Iraqis, Sunni and Shiites, tribes and cities, were brought together in common effort to resist the foreign occupation.

Looking at Iraq before the British occupation,⁹⁴⁰ the historical legacies of three city-states (Baghdad, Mosul, Basra) represented the functional borders of Iraq, since they had fallen under the control Ottoman Empire in 1534. However, each state manifested a unique identity to which its people felt affinity. Since the conditions of an independent nation-state were not there, tribalism was able to take control due to the fact that it was able to provide perks and guarantees. Thus it played the role of the absent nation. However, the other predominant identity competing with the first was religious identity. It was incredibly prevalent, especially on religious occasions. Shiite ideology further entrenched religious thought as a form of identity, making its *Marja'* (religious authority, essentially Mujtahid, chiefly Shiite ideology) the ultimate authority in Shiite society. It was therefore obligatory upon them to follow the commands and teachings - normally in the form of a *fatwa* (religious verdict) - that the *Marja'* authority in Najaf or its representatives elsewhere imposed. The religious identity was unique and not mutually exclusive with the tribal one, such that one or many tribes could adhere to the Shiite sect. Sometimes, all Muslims are addressed by its authority. Shrines also aided significantly in the spread of this identity, as they helped create a connection and order among the Shiite community. Examples of these shrines include those in Karbala, Najaf, Kadhimain, and Samarra.

As was shown in Chapter Two, the ideas of Islamic reformers such as Muḥammad ‘Abdu, Rashīd Ridā, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afgānī and others played a major role in the emergence of a reformist movement in Iraq at the beginning of the twentieth century. In essence, the idea of the Islamic reformers was an assertion of the need to reinterpret and reapply Islamic principles to formulate new responses to the political, social and economic challenges faced from the west. This reformist movement succeeded in changing the political thoughts and develop the awareness of the Iraqi people politically before 1914. However, there were also external factors that contributed to the composition and development of the thoughts and objectives of the reformist movement in Iraq. These factors included the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911, the Ottoman coup of 1908-1909, and the Russian aggression against Iran in 1911. In this context two trends of Shi‘a Islam scholars emerged (conservative and progressive), and they contributed to the political life of the proto-nation through the issuance of *fatwas*. This matter was reflected in the

⁹⁴⁰ See above, section 2.1

events in Iraq between 1914 and 1921, where the Shiite clerics in Najaf and others holy cities played a significant role.

7.1.2. The Rise of Resistance

The thesis addressed the question of what were the main events of the resistance, its nature and its impact on the British occupation between 1914 -1917.⁹⁴¹ It found that Shiite resistance was characterized by continuity and diversity; it lasted from the first day of the British occupation of Iraq to the armed revolution. It was also diverse in its approach and methodology. As such, the Shiite resistance against the British occupation can be divided into four stages. The first stage began in 1914; the second stage began in 1917 in Najaf; the third stage was peaceful resistance between 1918-1920; the last stage was the armed revolution which began on 30 June 1920.

The analysis of Chapter Three showed that the first stage began after the British forces occupied Basra with the help of their regional allies such as Sheikh Kha'zal b. Jābir, the ruler of the al-Muhammarah region, Sheikh Mubārak Al-Ṣabāḥ, the ruler of Kuwait, and 'Abdu Al-'Azīz Ibn Su'ūd. The Ottoman Empire sought to involve the Shiites of Iraq in the war against the British through relying on the existence of common elements between them especially Islam. To achieve this goal, the Ottomans dispatched a delegation to Najaf, which, at that time, was considered to be the religious and political centre of thought for Shiites in Iraq and the world. The delegation succeeded in its goal. Sayid Muḥammad Kāzīm al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Yazdī, the highest Shiite religious cleric, acceded to this call despite the religious and ideological differences between them. On 16 December 1914, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī declared al-jihad and delivered a speech urging the people to defend the Islamic countries. More importantly, the signs of forming an alliance started to appear at this early stage of resistance against the British occupation. In fact, the main factors that led the Shiite resistance to succeed in influencing the political scene in Iraq and helped in the creation of this alliance was the language used by Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī in his speeches and *fatwas*; did not direct them to the Shiite community or any other specific sect or race in Iraq. Rather, his speeches and *fatwas* were addressed to all segments of society in order to unite them to work together

⁹⁴¹ See above, section 3.1.

collectively to face the British forces that threatened Islam. Here, therefore, began the first stage of Shiite resistance against Britain.

The observation made is that during the first stage, most Shiite clerics issued *fatwas* calling for jihad, and sent delegations to the tribes to incite them to participate ditto. Indeed, the Shiite clerics demanded that their representatives in different areas of Iraq encourage the tribes to participate in jihad and provide them with money and weapons. Moreover, the Shiite clerics sought to obtain support from neighbouring countries and to engage them in the jihad movement. They sent several letters to the rulers of Kuwait and Muhammarah, but they did not succeed in obtaining their support. This was due to the fact that these rulers had pre-existing interests and agreements with Britain. The Shiite clerics and mujahedeen participated with the Ottoman troops in battles against British forces during the first jihad movement including the important battles of al-Qurna, al-Shu'iba and Arab-Stan. However, these battles did not result in the defeat of the British. After the failure of the first jihad movement, the mujahedeen returned to their areas and established local governments to manage several cities, such as Karbala and Hillah.

Chapter Three has discussed,⁹⁴² the first stage of Shiite resistance which characterised by its close link with the religious authority were. Indeed, it started when some Shiite clerics declared jihad against the British forces in Iraq because they considered the British attack on Iraq as an attack on Islam and Britain to be a common enemy for all Muslims. Therefore, they supported the Ottoman Empire and fought with the mujahedeen from the Iraqi tribes beside the Ottoman forces against the British in order to defend Islam. The impact of the jihad movement was greater on the residents of the holy cities and the Middle Euphrates region than upon residents within the rest of Iraq because in these areas the residents had a long and close relationship with the Shiite clergy. The Shiite clerics had a strong influence and impact on the population of these areas; each clan had a cleric to resolve disputes according to Islamic law. Furthermore, the Shiite clerics succeeded in influencing the residents of neighbouring countries to participate in the jihad against Britain, such as Kuwait and Muhammarah through relying on the existence of common elements such as language, religion and ethnicity, as well by creating a common denominator amongst them to confront a common enemy. Some inhabitants of these countries

⁹⁴² See above, section 3.3.

tried to start a revolution, but these countries' rulers successfully thwarted the respective revolts. Further, some residents of neighbouring countries participated in the first and second jihad movement. In addition, the *fatwa* of jihad and the Shiite clerics succeeded in organizing resistance through uniting the different sects and races in Iraq to participate in the jihad movement. This also led to the formation of an alliance, which included Ottoman troops, and the mujahedeen from various race, sects and social groups in Iraq. This alliance contributed to the appearance of the signs of nation-building. The Ottoman Empire's policies, its mistreatment of the mujahedeen and its decision to dispense with the mujahedeen were the main reasons for the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the fall of Baghdad.

7.1.3. Najaf Revolution

As was discussed in Chapter Four, there were a number of factors which led to the emergence of the second stage of Shiite resistance, such as the political and military measures taken by the British in the Middle Euphrates region, and especially in the cities of Karbala and Najaf after the success of the British forces in occupying Baghdad and the withdrawal of Ottoman forces. In addition, stories began to leak to some of the Shiite clerics and intellectuals in the holy cities and Baghdad about British intentions with regard to the longer-term ruling and administration of Iraq. Concurrently, the Bolsheviks assumed power in Russia and secret treaties between the allies were leaked – including the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Therefore, a group of clerics in Najaf decided to establish the League of the Islamic Awakening (*Jim'iyat al-Nahḍa al-'Islamiya*) to resist the British. The second stage of the Shiite resistance against Britain in Najaf began at the end of 1917. The founder members formulated the League's principles and objectives, and one of its primary objectives was the revolution against the British troops in Najaf. It was obvious that the League sought to unify the Sunni and Shiite sects in Iraq under the banner of Islam so as to achieve independence. Through its principles and activities, an identity was formed which contributed to the emergence of the signs of nation-building. The League encouraged people to join the revolution and planned to assassinate Captain Marshall the British political ruler of Najaf. He was killed and, as a result, British forces surrounded the city of Najaf for about forty days. Eventually, the British authorities managed to arrest most of the rebels, except a small number who escaped. The British authorities

transferred the accused to a military court, and after an investigation, eleven defendants were sentenced to execution. The rest were exiled to India. Thus, the second stage of Shiite resistance ended.

Several reasons led to the failure of the revolution of Najaf.⁹⁴³ The League neither contacted nor coordinated its programme with the tribes and residents of neighbouring areas before starting its revolution. It also did not secure the support of the highest religious Shiite authority represented by Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī or the clans that inhabited the cities near Najaf. Further, during the siege of Najaf, the British authorities showed the world that they wanted to prevent the spread of the revolution into neighbouring areas and that the British forces besieging Najaf were not intending to destroy or sabotage the city's holy sites. The British used a strategy of intimidation, showing its power through displays of rifles and military aircraft, to spread terror among the inhabitants of Najaf and neighbouring cities. Importantly, the British administration adopted a strategy of 'divide and conquer' in dealing with the Najaf revolution and this policy contributed to the failure of the revolution. Despite the failure of the League to confront the British administration during the Najaf revolution and achieve its goals, the League succeeded in changing Shiite political ideology; from one central authority, which was represented by the chief of the Shiite religious authority, towards a decentralized authority. It was believed that a decentralized authority could help achieve organized resistance; this would play a vital role in forming an identity which would, in turn, contribute to the building of the nation. In addition, the League played a significant role in encouraging the Iraqi people to establish political associations in Karbala, Najaf, Samarra, Khadimain and Baghdad. It was hoped that these associations could lead political actions in Iraq against the British after the failure of the Najaf revolution. As part of its decentralization plan, the league led the Shiite clerics in the holy cities to teamwork with all social groups, and through these measures, the league contributed to uniting various sects, races and played a role in the convergence of their ideas and aspirations. The establishment of the League led to the first direct clash with the British authorities through the Najaf revolution.

⁹⁴³ See above, section 4.4.

7.1.4. Passive resistance

Chapter Five addressed the question of what led to the transformation of the armed resistance to be peaceful,⁹⁴⁴ and what were the peaceful methods carried out by the resistance against the British occupation. After the failure of the first and second stages of Shiite armed resistance, a group of Shiite clerics and tribal leaders decided to continue the resistance against the British, but through peaceful means. The first stage of passive resistance began when Britain decided to hold a referendum in 1918 in various parts of Iraq about the country's future government. Shiite clerics, tribal leaders, and intellectuals, decided to thwart the referendum through peaceful methods. In doing so, they encouraged clans to hold meetings and tried to coordinate the different groups and parties to undermine the referendum. In addition, they received support from Sheikh Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥā'irī al-Shīrāzī. He issued a *fatwa* prohibiting the election of a non-Muslim to rule Muslims. As a result of this *fatwa*, an intellectual affinity began between the Shiite clerics and the nationalists in Baghdad. Prior to this *fatwa* most nationalists believed that the Shiite clerics were seeking to establish an Islamic state and impose the chief of Shiite religious authority as the ruler of the country. However, this *fatwa* stipulated that the ruler should only be a Muslim, and did not have any other conditions. Thus, a process of cooperation and working together toward Iraq's independence began.

As seen in Chapter Five passive resistance succeeded in thwarting the referendum in Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad and Kadhimain, where the majority of residents opposed the continuation of the British authority in Iraq and demanded that a son of al-Sharīf Ḥussein rule the country.⁹⁴⁵ In contrast, in other areas in Iraq, the result of the referendum supported the continuation of British rule. For their own interests, merchants, landowners and the Christian and Jewish populations played an important role in supporting the continuation of British rule in Iraq. As a consequence, the results of the referendum were consistent with the plan of Sir Arnold Wilson and his instructions regarding the continuation of British administration in governing Iraq.

Passive resistance continued after the completion of the referendum but a different approach was adopted. Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī and Sheikh Faṭḥallah

⁹⁴⁴ See above, section 5.1.

⁹⁴⁵ See above, section 5.3.

Sheikh al-Sharī‘a al-’Aṣfahānī raised the Iraqi issue at the international level, and they delivered statements to Faisal b. al-Ḥussein to defend Iraq and the Iraqi people’s right to independence at international conferences. Beside that, under the leadership of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, the Shiite clerics sought to increase their organisation and coordination with all segments of the Iraqi society to unite them to work toward peaceful resistance against the British. This led to the establishment of a national, religious and tribal coalition. The coalition distributed leaflets, held meetings, called for peaceful demonstrations and presented petitions to the British authorities in an effort to achieve their demands. The British authorities did not, however, agree to the demands and instead arrested a number of prominent coalition figures and exiled them to the island of Hengam. After this, peaceful resistance, which had lasted from 1918–1920, ended.

This stage of the Shiite resistance had important consequences.⁹⁴⁶ During the peaceful resistance, the features of the nation building emerged clearly. At this time, most Iraqis called for the appointment of one of the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein to be the ruler of Iraq. They also demanded an elected legislative council, and that the borders of country should include the three states; Mosul, Baghdad and Basra. In addition, it had been observed that there were differences between Shiite clerics in their political role. For example, Sayid Muḥammad al-Yazdī, when he was chief of the Shiite religious authority, did not have a significant role against the British during the Najaf revolution and the referendum. In contrast, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī played an important role against the British when he became a chief of Shiite religious authority. Sheikh al-Shīrāzī tried to ensure the success of peaceful resistance and sought to encourage the British to accept the demands of the Iraqi people. Relying on the issuance of *fatwas* and the existence of shared common values amongst the Iraqi people, he additionally succeeded in creating rapprochement between the Sunni and Shiite sects as well as the wider nationalist movement, despite their ideological differences. This led to the establishment of a religious, nationalist and tribal coalition which sought to achieve Iraq’s full independence. This coalition played an important role in forming the identity that contributed to emergence of the signs of nation building. Indeed, this coalition led the next armed revolt against Britain.

⁹⁴⁶ See above, section 5.4.

7.1.5. Armed Revolution

After the coalition failed to achieve its demands through peaceful resistance, it decided to achieve its demands through armed resistance.⁹⁴⁷ Thus, the fourth stage of the Shiite resistance started. It began after a *fatwa* was issued by Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī calling for the use of force against Britain if it did not implement the Iraqi people's demand for full independence. There were many internal and external factors that encouraged the Iraqi people to resort to the armed revolution against the British. After issuing this *fatwa*, the coalition started preparing for the revolution by coordinating with tribal leaders, providing them with money and weapons.

On 30 June 1920, the Iraqi revolution was launched against the British authorities in the Rumaiṭha area, and during the revolution, the coalition worked under the leadership of the chief of Shiite religious authority in Iraq Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī. After his death, the coalition continued its work under the leadership of Sheikh Faṭḥallah Sheikh al-Sharī'a al-'Aṣfahānī. The coalition established councils to lead the revolution, and issued newspapers to spread news about the revolution both inside and outside Iraq. It is important to mention that the coalition held negotiations with the British about issues of concern to the revolutionaries. Nevertheless, the British troops succeeded in suppressing the revolt a few months after its commencement. The main reason for this was the asymmetry of the military powers between the two sides, as well the measures taken by the British administration. Consequently, the leaders of the revolution decided to leave Iraq. By these events, the fourth stage of the Shiite resistance ended.

The Iraqi revolution caused the death of 609 British troops, along with death and injury to 8,450 Iraqis. Moreover, the Iraqi revolution cost the British treasury £100,000,000; three times as much as Britain spent funding the entire Arab revolt against the Ottomans. As a result of these military and financial losses, the British press criticised British policy in Iraq. At the same time, there was a divergence of views amongst British politicians as to the future of Iraq. However, at the Cairo Conference held on 12 March 1921, they agreed that Faisal should head Iraq and be appointed as its King through a popular referendum under a British mandate.

⁹⁴⁷ See above, section 6.2.

7.1.6. A New Beginning: Iraq

The idea of appointing Faisal b. Ḥussein as a ruler of Iraq appeared during the passive resistance, thus, it can be argued that the resistance started to take more organized way of confronting the British occupation. Although Britain appointed Faisal to power, his appointment was decided upon to reconcile the various conflicting elements, so that Faisal could be made acceptable to the nationalists, to those who wanted close British control, and of course to the French. In June 1921, Faisal arrived in Basra. Immediately after his arrival, he sought the support of the Shiite clerics because he was aware of their influence over the Iraqi people, especially those who resided in the Middle of Euphrates region and in the holy cities. In these areas, the clerics could issue a *fatwa* against him and the people of these areas would have considered it to be binding, therefore, Faisal was trying to become a King as quickly as possible to avoid any obstacles that might result from the growing concern amongst the Iraqi people and clergy about the British mandate imposed on Iraq. It would hinder his selection as King if the Iraqi people refused the mandate because of their desire for the complete independence of Iraq. The British succeeded in implementing their scheme and appointed Faisal as the ruler of Iraq. Based on the outcome of the referendum, (which was 96 per cent in his favour), Faisal was crowned King of Iraq on 23 August 1921.

The Iraqi revolution had not succeeded in achieving the full independence of Iraq without tutelage or mandate, but it had managed to change Britain's policy with regard to the future of Iraq. In addition, the Iraqi revolution succeeded in consolidating the efforts of the Shiite resistance that it had been striving to achieve since the early days of the British occupation; nation-building. These efforts led to the formation of the modern state of Iraq, which included three *vilayets* Mosul, Baghdad and Basra under the rule of one of the sons of al-Sharīf Ḥussein. Britain was forced to appoint Faisal ruler of Iraq to avoid further financial and military losses. More importantly, the revolution contributed to the creation of a conscious generation demanding their rights and refusing autocracy. This would affect future events in Iraq.

7. 2. Recommendations for Future Studies

This thesis provided a thorough discussion of the Shiite resistance to the British occupation of Iraq during a specific historical period. It focused on the religious, military, political, and tribal aspects of the resistance setting new prospects for future studies. There are still some aspects related to the Iraqi resistance that would benefit from further examination at post-doctoral level. These include, for example, the role of women in the resistance against the British occupation of Iraq from 1914–1921; the role of women in social terms during the British occupation of Iraq. Existing literature has not adequately discussed the role of women in the national resistance before the 1920 revolution in Iraq, but according to local historians women had a role in the battles that took place against the British occupation, and carried out by the tribes of the Middle Euphrates. One of the battles near Diwaniyah in 1917, a woman named Ammārī, the wife of one of the leaders of Al-Jubūr, entered among the fighters and took off her headscarf. The clans raised and attacked the English forces and drove them from their positions, but she was hit by a shell that claimed her life.

Another area which would merit further study is the tribal alliances during the British occupation of Iraq. In relation to the resistance in a country such as Iraq, tribes can hardly be considered marginal, as they formed the majority of the population in the study period. In addition to the fact that the spark ignited the largest revolution in the modern history of Iraq was a minor dispute with Sha‘lān Abū al-Jūn, an important sheikh in the town of al-Rumaitha. Therefore, further studies and exploration of Iraqi resistance could focus on tribal alliances during the British occupation of Iraq.

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