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**THE HISTORY OF SAUDI ARABIA**

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severe reprisals. As mentioned previously, smoking was prohibited, but not the tobacco trade itself.

The introduction of Wahhabi principles was combined with repressive measures against the Al Saud's political opponents. Taking part in meetings with the aim of spreading 'harmful ideas', 'false information' and 'dangerous rumours', as well as participation in anti-government meetings, involved a two- to five-year prison sentence or exile from the kingdom of Hijaz. A meeting, even for charitable purposes, might be convened only with the authorities' consent.<sup>19</sup> Strict observance of these rules in religious and daily life did not continue for long, however. When the Ikhwan withdrew from Hijaz, the prohibition on smoking was relaxed, alcohol became available and few people paid attention to the length of men's moustaches.

To demonstrate his concern for the 'purity' of religion and, at the same time, to control the Ikhwan's religious zeal, Ibn Saud founded the League of Public Morality - or, to be more accurate, the League for the Encouragement of Virtue and the Denunciation of Sin - in the summer of 1926. It was led by two *ulama* from the Al-Shaikh family.<sup>20</sup> Ibn Saud ordered the Ikhwan to inform the league about all deeds that were not permitted by the faith, although they were not allowed to take unauthorized reprisals.

The organization gradually acquired the functions of a religious police. (Indeed, the league's Committees of Public Morality were later placed under the control of the general directorate of police.) The league's responsibilities included: the prevention of cheating in markets, *zakat* evasion, non-observance of the fast, violation of the *hajj* rules, murder, mutilation and the consumption and sale of alcohol.<sup>21</sup> By the summer of 1928 the Committees of Public Morality were already taking an active part in government meetings and controlled the population of Hijaz with growing rigidity.<sup>22</sup> Feeling that the experiment was worth repeating throughout the country, Ibn Saud founded the directorate of public morality in Riyadh in the summer of 1929, when the Ikhwan revolt was in full swing.<sup>23</sup>

The leaders of the league anathematized Mustafa Kemal of Turkey and King Amanullah of Afghanistan for their reforms. Turakulov, the Soviet consul-general in Jidda, wrote:

It is difficult to expect another attitude to Kemal Pasha and Amanullah in a country that exists on incomes from the holy places, a country where any free-thinking jeopardizes the material interests of the majority.<sup>24</sup>

With the assistance of the League of Public Morality, the Ikhwan were debarred from supervising the observance of religious prescriptions. Tribal democracy in its religious form was sacrificed to the state apparatus of the centralized feudal kingdom.

The Ikhwan's actions seemed 'unbridled fanaticism' and 'savagery' to some European travellers and the more educated people in the royal entourage, but they were a manifestation of the ordinary Arabian people's striving for the simple way of life preached by the Wahhabis. The people only adopted the egalitarian aspect of the

its functions were the collection of radio information and the preparation of summaries of broadcasts in Arabic and foreign languages for the king.

17. The royal guard.
18. The health department – responsible for health matters in the royal palace.<sup>24</sup>

Al-Zirikli's description roughly corresponds with Nallino's account,<sup>25</sup> though with some differences. According to Nallino, the affairs of Hijaz, Asir and al-Hasa were managed by the royal *diwan*. He also mentions the departments of *zakat* and the state exchequer, whose functions overlapped with those of the ministry of finance and the ministry of religious readings and muezzins. Subdivisions of the royal court might be created or abolished, merged or divided, upgraded or disregarded, depending on the calibre of their head and their relations with the king. There were no written rules concerning the structure of the royal court. The decisive say in all matters belonged to the king. He gave directions to the heads of all departments and was the supreme arbiter in their disputes.<sup>26</sup>

As for the administration of the main provinces, their governor-emirs were appointed and dismissed by the king. There were no codes or laws concerning the local administration in Najd and its dependencies in the 1930s. Minor emirs were appointed by the governors, but the king might interfere in their choice. According to Fuad Hamza, the territories outside Hijaz were initially divided into five large provinces – Najd proper (including al-Arid and the neighbouring areas); Qasim; Jabal Shammar; al-Hasa, ruled by the Al Jiluwi; and Asir.<sup>27</sup> The province of Wadi Sirhan was virtually separated from Jabal Shammar, and Asir was divided into Asir proper and centres in Abha, Tihama and Najran.<sup>28</sup>

The nomadic tribes were put under the control of the provincial authorities. According to MacKie Froom, the Ataiba, a part of the Mutair, the Dawasir, the Qahtan and the Subai were ruled by the governor of al-Arid; the Ajman, Bani Hajir, Bani Khalid, Hawazim, Manasir, Al Murra and another part of the Mutair by the governor of al-Hasa; and the Shammar, the Shararat and the rest of the Mutair by the emir of Jabal Shammar.<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that the Mutair, who resisted the Saudis' power, were divided into three parts.

The autonomy of al-Hasa (the Eastern Province) was not established by special decree, but by the late 1930s it had its own bureaucratic agencies under Ibn Jiluwi, whose close relatives ruled the most important oases. The departments of police, financial affairs, customs and the coastguard and a branch of the Jidda mining department were set up in Hufuf.<sup>30</sup>

#### *State power and the administration of Hijaz*

As mentioned previously, Ibn Saud preferred the creation of a more sophisticated system of state power in Hijaz. In August 1926 the king promulgated the 'fundamental

*The Socio-political Structure of Saudi Arabia after its Creation*

provisions of the kingdom of Hijaz', sometimes referred to as the 'constitution'. They read:

The kingdom of Hijaz within its defined boundaries shall be an integral whole, whose parts shall be interconnected and shall not be divided or separated in whatsoever manner. [Hijaz] shall be a monarchic state with consultative bodies, an Islamic state, independent in both its internal and external affairs . . . Holy Mecca shall be the capital of the state of Hijaz . . . The whole government of the kingdom of Hijaz shall be in the hands of His Majesty King Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd al-Rahman Al Faisal Al Saud. His Majesty shall be bound by the provisions of the glorious *sharia*.

All court decisions should:

correspond to Allah's Book, the Sunna of His Prophet (Allah's blessing be upon Him) and the rules to which the Prophet's Companions and the first pious generations adhered.<sup>31</sup>

The 'fundamental provisions' stipulated that the king should appoint the viceroy of Hijaz and the heads of departments: the former was responsible to the king and the latter were responsible to the viceroy.<sup>32</sup> The affairs of Hijaz were to be divided into six main divisions: *sharia* affairs; home affairs; foreign affairs; financial affairs; educational affairs; and military affairs. A special article stressed that 'military affairs shall be managed and all related functions shall be performed under the guidance of His Majesty the King'.<sup>33</sup>

The *majlis al-shura* (advisory council) was to consist of the viceroy, his advisers and six representatives of the Hijazi nobility, appointed by the king 'from among experienced and able people'. The 'fundamental provisions' provided for administrative councils, with municipal functions, to be set up in the main towns. Their decisions would come into effect after approval by the king. The creation of councils was also planned for smaller administrative units.<sup>34</sup>

Ibn Saud considered that some provisions of the 'constitution' contradicted his absolute power. Articles 28-37, which dealt with the *majlis al-shura* and local councils, were ignored from 1927; and Articles 43-45, which provided for the setting up of bodies to control the exchequer's expenditure, were never applied and later became invalid. A notable feature of the 'constitution' was the almost complete lack of provisions concerning individual or collective rights and of those restricting the king's authority, exercised on the basis of the *sharia*.<sup>35</sup>

In al-Zirikli's opinion - based on a study of the practical activities of those bodies that exercised power in Hijaz - the *majlis al-shura* approved the budgets of the state services and municipalities, issued permits for economic projects and concessions, adopted ordinances and solved problems related to local officials and foreigners. From 1932 its functions included the care of pilgrims.<sup>36</sup> Al-Zirikli claims that the *majlis al-*