Colonel Ibrahim Abdul Rahman Al Husseini
Syrian Officer and Arab Nationalist



(1911–1968)

PREFACE

This collection of personal photos and notes documents the life and career of Syria's Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini (1911–1968), a prominent member of Syria's political and military leadership of the 1940s and 1950s, and a leading contributor to the formation of Saudi Arabia's modern National Guard during the early 1960s. While the photographs are mostly selected from the private collection of his wife, Mrs. Myassar Bach Imam Al Husseini (1925–2003), a few maps and photos are included from public sources.



Mrs. Myassar Bach Imam Al Husseini

CHAPTER 1

Career Highlights, Decorations and Distinctions

Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini was born in 1911 to Abdul Rahman ibn Othman Al Husseini and Lam'an Arnaout, who lived in Acre (Akka) in Ottoman Palestine. The family moved to Ba'albeck in Ottoman Lebanon in the early 1900s where Abdul Rahman worked in the Ministry of Finance. After the Ottomans retreated from the Levant in 1918 at the end of World War I, France established mandates in Lebanon and Syria. During the mandate years the family lived in Homs in Syria, and Ibrahim attended the Frerés school from which he graduated in 1934.

Between 1934 and 1937 Ibrahim attended the Homs Military Academy, and upon graduating he joined the Troupes Spéciales in France's Army of Levant with the rank of Second-Lieutenant. In March 1941 he was promoted to the rank of First-Lieutenant in the Light Cavalry.

In July 1940 during World War II Germany occupied France and the Army of the Levant came under the command of France's Vichy government. In 1941 the Allied forces invaded Syria and Lebanon and defeated the Army of the Levant. Al Husseini and the Arab soldiers in the Troupes were transferred to the command of the Free French Forces in the Middle East.

In May 1945, at the conclusion of World War II, Syria's President Shukri Al Quwatli led a popular uprising against the French occupation and demanded full independence for Syria. In June 1945 Al Husseini joined the uprising and led his troops in the Al Jazira Province in an open rebellion against the French military. His troops secured several outposts and army barracks and clashed with the French occupation forces in Al Hasakah and Al Derbasiyah. After Syria gained its independence in 1945 he was given command of the Syrian forces in the Al Jazira Province.

At the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War on 15 May 1948, Al Husseini led the Badiyat Al Jazira Company along the Lebanese and Syrian front lines and distinguished himself for exceptional valor and leadership in combat. Throughout the war, however, his troops took heavy casualties and found themselves continuously short of ammunition and supplies. The war ended with the Syrian forces only succeeding in preventing Israel from occupying southern Lebanon and the Golan Heights of Syria.

The poor military outcome led to widespread unrest in Syria which was exacerbated by an economic breakdown and civilian and military recriminations. An attempt by President Al Quwatli to undermine the authority of General Husni Al Zaim, the Syrian Army's Commander-in-Chief, then led to a coup against the civilian authorities. To execute the coup, Al Zaim recruited Al Husseini, who was then a Major and the Chief of Military Police, into a small circle of key Syrian officers and tasked him with organizing the arrest of President Al Quwatli and the members of his cabinet.

The arrests were conducted during the night of 30 March 1949 in a precise operation without any violence. A few months later, on 14 August 1949, Al Zaim was executed during a second coup led by General Sami Al Hinnawi. That same night Al Husseini was attacked in his home by troops loyal to Al Hinnawi, and after a fire-fight he surrendered when his safety was assured by General Adib Al Shishakli. He was then detained for one month and tried by a military

tribunal who exonerated him from any wrongdoing associated with Al Zaim's leadership.

In late 1949 Al Shishakli became aware of Al Hinnawi's plans to unify Syria with Iraq's monarchy. On 19 December 1949 he exiled Al Hinnawi to Lebanon and dissolved the civilian government of Hashim Al Atassi. Al Shishakli recalled Al Husseini from a field command assignment on the Israeli border, promoted him to Lieutenant-Colonel and appointed him as Chief of Military Police and Head of Army Intelligence.

In 1951, as a result of continued subversion by Israeli infiltrators, Al Husseini was given a special assignment to re-organize and modernize the Syrian Army's School of Commandos and Special Forces. In early 1952, he attended an extended military course in armor and air force coordination tactics in France, and upon his return in late 1952 was promoted to full Colonel and appointed as Head of Police and Chief of National Security.

In January 1954, President Al Shishakli assigned Al Husseini to the Syrian diplomatic mission in the U.S. as Military Attaché. Two months later Al Shishakli resigned in order to avoid a civil war due to a rebellion by the Druze in southwestern Syria and turmoil elsewhere triggered by followers of former President Hashim Al Atassi.

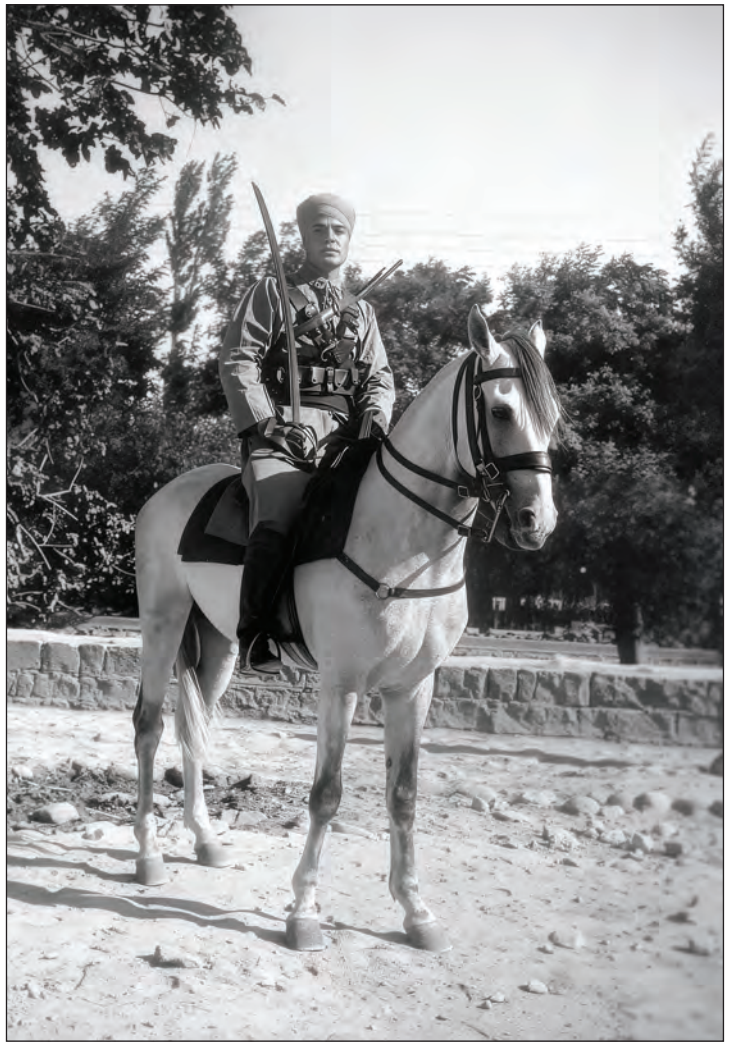
In August 1954 Al Husseini requested a closer assignment to Syria and he was reassigned as Military Attaché to the Syrian diplomatic mission in Italy. In August 1957 while serving in Italy, Al Husseini was accused of planning a coup with U.S. support to overthrow the Syrian government. The allegations were fabricated by a Syrian army faction that sought a union with Egypt under the leadership of Gamal Abdul Nasser. Al Husseini was tried in absentia and although the accusations were proven false, it was clear that his life was in jeopardy and he chose to remain in self-imposed exile in Rome.

In late 1961 Colonel Al Husseini accepted an invitation by the Saudi Arabian government to serve as Security Advisor to the Council of Ministers under Prime Minister and Crown Prince Faisal ibn Abdul Aziz. He also took on a post as Special Military Advisor to Prince Abd Allah ibn Abdul Aziz in the formation of the modern Saudi Arabian National Guard. This task was completed with exceptional success within five years as demonstrated by high visibility military exercises outside of Ar Riyadh in 1966.

In 1968 as a result of the disastrous setbacks in Syria following the Six Day War of June 1967, Al Husseini formed a Syrian government-in-exile with the intent of overthrowing the Ba'athist regime in Syria. These plans were in an advanced stage of execution when they were derailed by his death on 18 December 1968 in a car accident in northern Saudi Arabia.

Al Husseini's body was flown to Al Madina Al Munawwarah on Friday 29 Ramadan in a special flight provided by the Saudi Royal Court and was buried by his family in the Janatul Baqi Cemetery.

At the time of his death, he was survived by his wife Myassar Bach Imam, his daughter Najat, and sons Hassan, Sadad, Haitham, Moujahed and Ihsan, all of whom remained in Saudi Arabia as Saudi Arabian citizens.



14 July 1938, Homs, Syria. Upon completing his initial officer training at the Homs Military Academy in 1937, Ibrahim Al Husseini was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the light cavalry of the Troupes Spéciales du Levant.









17 April 1953, Damascus, Syria.
Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini at National Day Parade.

Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini's Military Awards and Distinctions







Syrian Order of Honor medal.

6 December 1948, Syria. Certificate accompanying Syria's Silver medal of Honor in the Third Grade awarded on the recommendation of the Prime Minister Jamil Mardam Bey by President Shukri Al Quwatli to Captain Ibrahim Al Husseini.



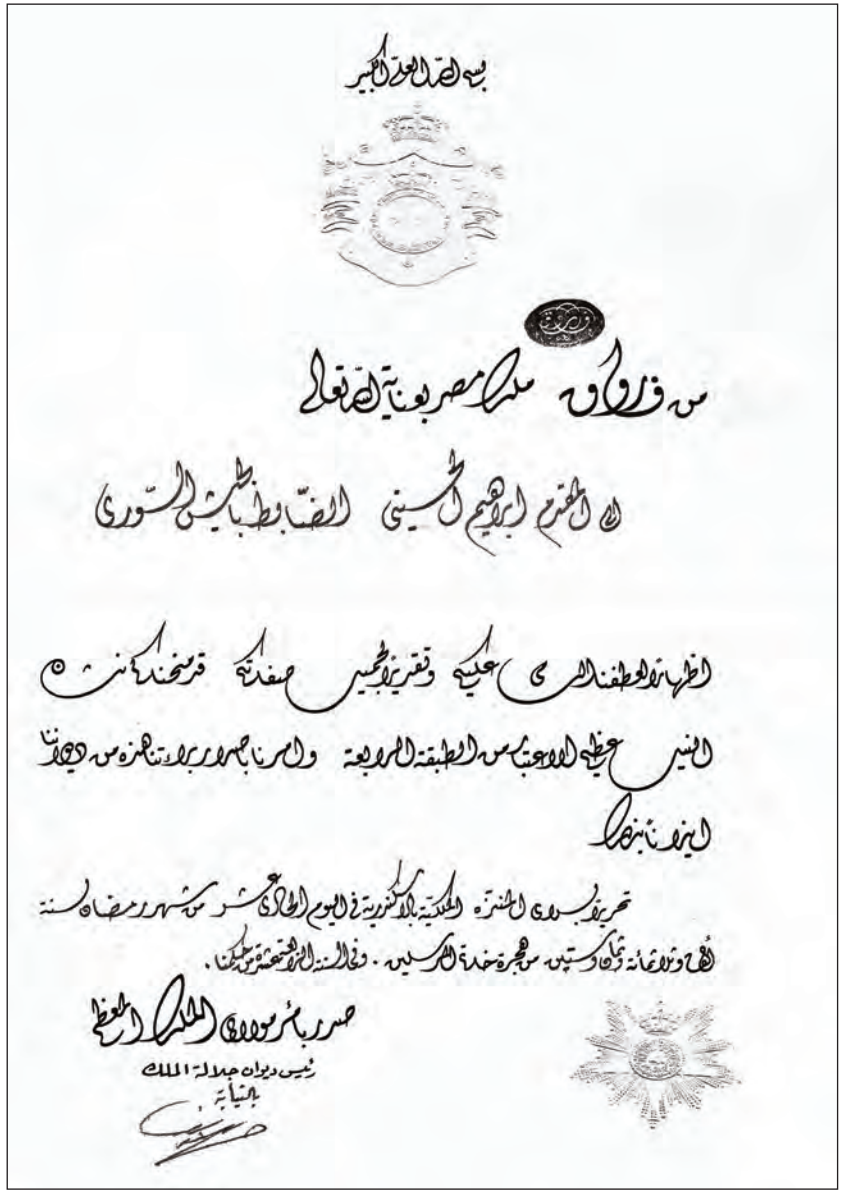


Syrian Palestine Campaign medal.



Syrian Order of Military Merit medal.

In December 1948 Syria’s President Shukri Al Quwatli, based on the recommendation of Prime Minister Jamil Mardam Bey, awarded Captain Ibrahim Al Husseini the Order of Military Merit and Order of Palestine Campaign medals.





His Majesty King Farouk of Egypt.



Egyptian Order of the Nile medal.

On 15 Ramadan 1368 AH (April 1949), Egypt's King Farouk awarded Major Ibrahim Al Husseini the Order of the Nile of Great Distinction medal (Nishan Al Nil) in the Fourth Rank issued by royal command to the Head of the Royal Court.

Copy of General Order Number 13 issued in Beirut, Lebanon, on 11 July 1949 by General Farouk Chehab, the Commander-in-Chief of the Lebanese Army. A decade later in 1958 General Chehab was elected as the President of Lebanon.

The order refers to the war medal with frond awarded to Ibrahim Al Husseini, commander of a bedouin troop in the Syrian Army, for his leadership role at the Battle of Al Malikiya in the Holy Land. General Chehab commends the bravery of Al Husseini during the entire ecounter of June 5, 1948, in attacking the fortifcations of the enemy forces which had entrenched themselves in Al Malikia. He secured the objective under a hail of enemy fire and was able to overwhelm their fierce resistance and force them to retreat after inflicting on them terrible losses. The outstanding determination by Al Husseini set a superior example for his troops of valor.



امر عام رقم (١) ١٣

ان الزعيم القائد العام للجيش ينوّه على الجيش المقدم من الجيش السوري ابراهيم الحسيني مع منحه وسام الحرب مع السعف
" قائد سرية في قدس الدبابة اشترك مع سريته بمايوه ضد العدو في ١٩٤٨ في الهجوم والاستيلاء على تحصينات العدو المتمركز
في المالكية – قدس – فتميز بشجاعته ورباطة جأشه طيلة فترة القتال ضارباً لجنوده مثلاً اعلى في البسالة والاقدام فاهمل
الهدف الصين له تحت وابل من نيران العدو وقد تمكن من تحطيم مقاومته الضارية واجباره على التراجع
بعد ان كبّده خسائر فادحة "

(١) بيروت في ١١ تموز سنة ١٩٤٩
الزعيم القائد العام
الامضاء فؤاد شهاب

نسخة طبق الاصل
(٢) اللواء قائد الجيش اللبناني

(١) يذكر رقم الامر العام وتاريخه واسم قائد الجيش في المحلات المخصصة لها
(٢) يذكر اسم ورتبة قائد القطعة







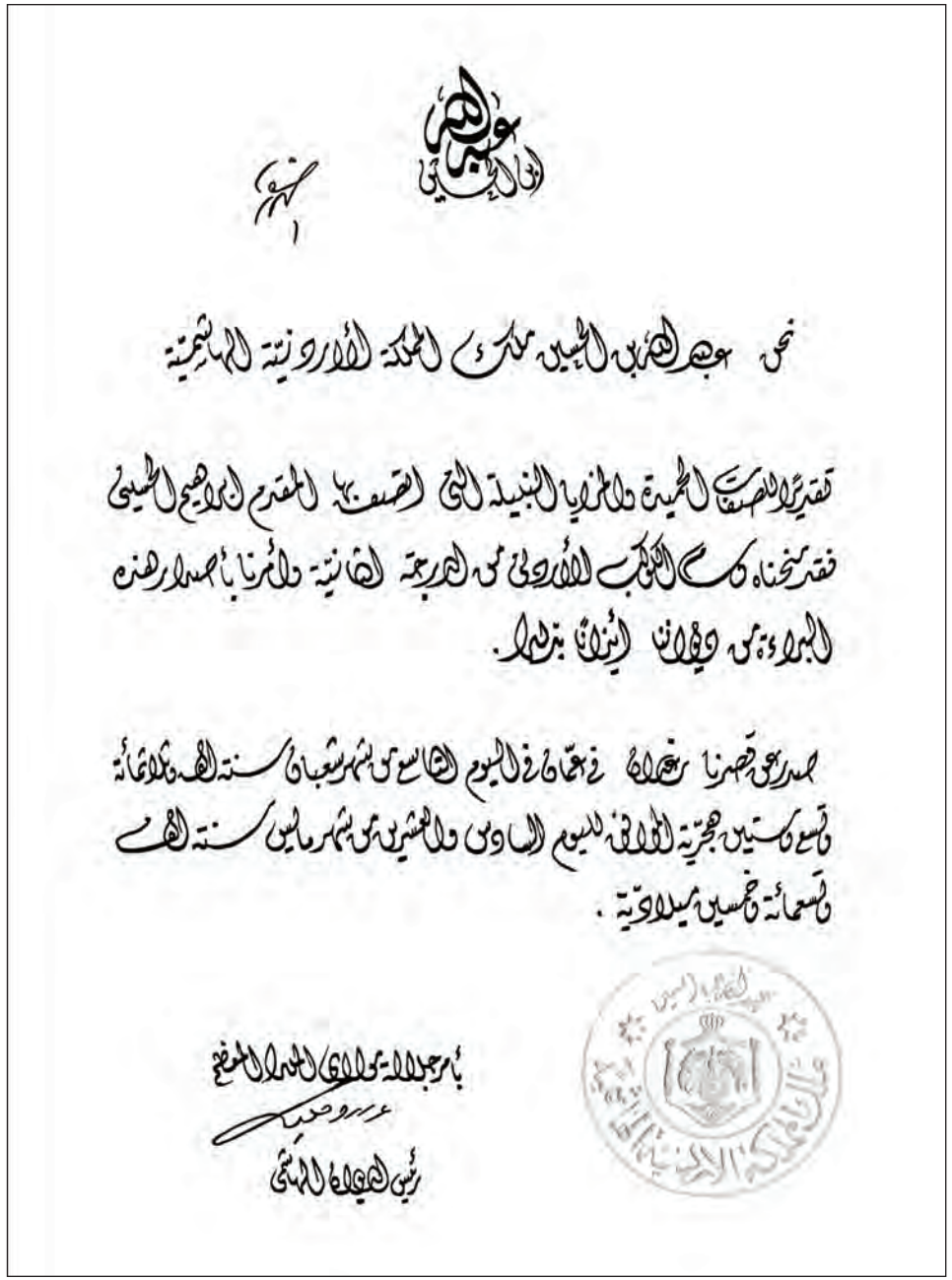
11 July 1949, Beirut, Lebanon. Lebanon's Order of the Cedars medal awarded personally by President Bechara Al Khouri to Major Ibrahim Al Husseini, Chief of Syria's Military Police. Certificate accompanying the medal signed on behalf of the President by Prime Minister Riad Al Solh.



11 July 1949, Beirut, Lebanon. Lebanese Prime Minister Riad Al Solh awarding Palestine War medal to Major Ibrahim Al Husseini.



Lebanon’s Palestine War medal.



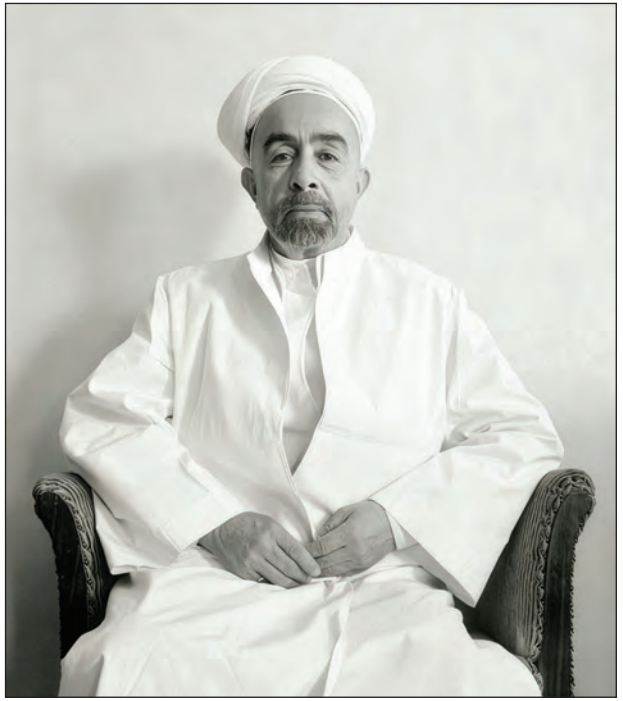
نحن عبد الله بن الحسين ملك المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية

تقديراً للصفات الحميدة والمزايا النبيلة التي اتصف بها المقدم ابراهيم الحسيني فقد منحناه وسام الكوكب الأردني من الدرجة الثانية والمرتبة باصدار هذه البراءة من ديواننا الخاص بعمان.

صدر في قصرنا بعمان في اليوم التاسع من شهر شعبان سنة ألف وثلاثمائة وتسع وستين هجرية الموافق لليوم السادس والعشرين من شهر مايس سنة ألف وتسعمائة وخمسين ميلادية.

بأمر جلالة مولاي المعظم

رئيس الديوان الهاشمي



His Majesty King Abd Allah of Jordan.





26 May 1950. King Abd Allah awarded the Star of Jordan of the Second Grade (Wisam Al Kawkab) to Lieutenant-Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini for military and civil merit.



الجمهورية السورية

براءة وسام الاستحقاق السوري

رقم المرسوم ورقمه وتاريخه
١٥ في ١٩٤٩/٧/١١

بمرسوم رئيس الجمهورية السورية بناء على اقتراح رئيس مجلس الوزراء المعد ابراهيم حسيني
وسام الاستحقاق السوري من الدرجة الثانية تقديرا لخدماته الجلى

دمشق في ١٨ رمضان سنة ١٣٧١ وفي ١٠ حزيران سنة ١٩٥٢



Syria's Order of
Civil Merit medal.



10 June 1952, Syria. General Fawzi Selu, Syria's President and Army Chief-of-Staff and Lieutenant-Colonel Al Husseini.

Ibrahim Al Husseini fought the French occupation forces from June 1945 until Syria's independence on 24 October 1945. He secured Syria's eastern borders through 1947 and led the Badiyat Al Jazira Company in the 1948 Palestine War. After the war he was Chief of Syria's Military Police until 14 August 1949, Commander of the Syrian Army on the Israeli border in late 1949, Chief of Military Police and Head of Army Intelligence from late December 1949 to 21 July 1950, and Head of Police and Chief of National Security from July 1952 to December 1953.



21 April 1953. Certificate accompanying Lebanon's Order of Honorable Merit medal awarded to Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini, Syria's Chief-of-Police and National Security, by the Lebanese President Camille Chamoun.



Lebanon's Order of Merit medal.



April 1953, Damascus, Syria. During his visit to Syria in April 1953, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Saud ibn Abdul Aziz received Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini at a welcoming ceremony in Damascus in which he honored him with the award of a commemorative traditional Saudi Arabian sword. Prince Saud became the King of Saudi Arabia on November 9, 1953, and ruled the Kingdom until November 2, 1964. Also present at the ceremony was His Excellency Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Syria Abdul Aziz Al Zaid (standing at far right) and a number of Syrian dignitaries.



CHAPTER 2

A Brief History of the Levant

1916 to 1918: Arab Revolt against the Ottomans

In 1914, the British having already occupied Egypt and Sudan in 1882 declared both territories British protectorates and sought to eliminate any residual Ottoman influence in the Middle East by evicting the Ottomans from the Arabian Peninsula.To this end, Lt. Colonel Sir Arthur McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Cairo, began corresponding with Sharif Hussain ibn Ali Al Hashemi (1853–1931), the ruler of Al Hejaz appointed by the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II.

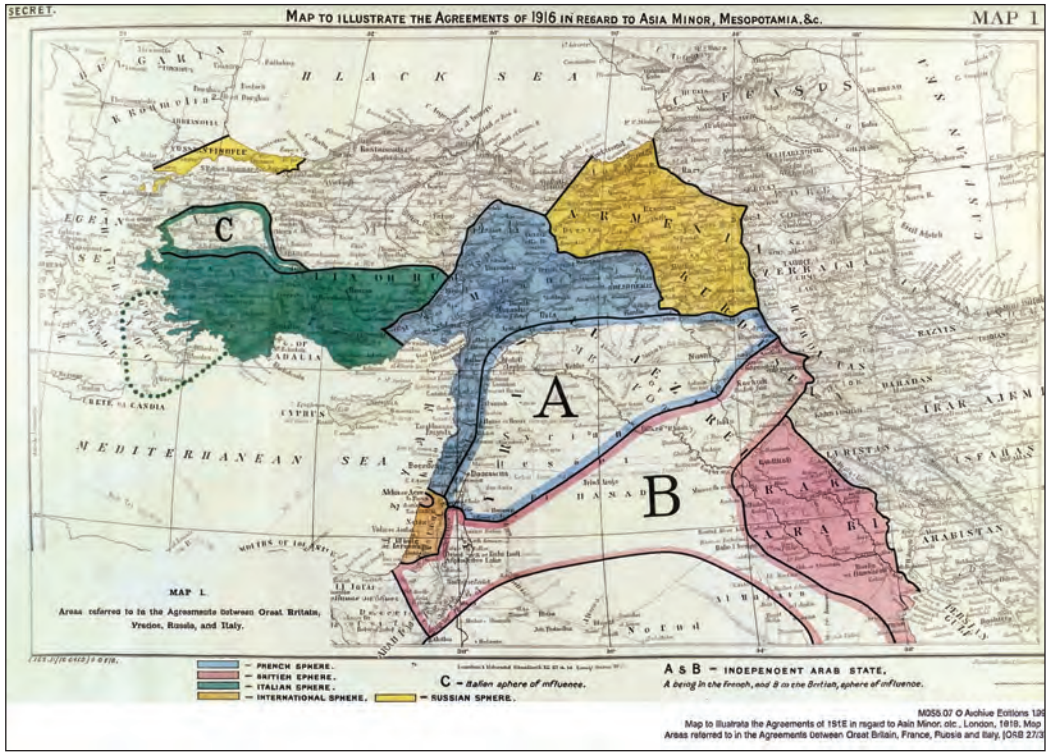
Al Hashemi and McMahon arrived at an agreement whereby Arab forces would fight alongside the British against the Ottomans in Al Hejaz and Britain would support the creation of a Hashemite Kingdom in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I.

An Arab uprising then followed in June 1916, led by Prince Faisal I, the son of Sharif Hussain, and by October 1918 the troops of Prince Faisal I entered Damascus accompanied by British troops under General Sir Edmund Allenby.

16 May 1916: Sykes–Picot Agreement

Contrary to the promises made by McMahon to the Hashemites, the British and French governments negotiated a secret agreement to retain all the Arabian regions that had been part of the Ottoman Empire as colonial territories. The pact was negotiated by Mark Sykes of Britain and Francois Georges-Picot of France and provided for France to occupy Syria and Lebanon at the end of World War I and Britain to occupy Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine. The agreement was signed on 16 May 1916 but became public in November 1917, and was published in The Manchester Guardian on 26 November 1917.

Sykes–Picot Proposed Partitioning of the former Ottoman Empire:



A - French Protectorate
B - British Protectorate
Blue - French control
Red - British control
Green - Italian control and sphere of influence
Yellow - Russian control
Orange - International control

2 November 1917: Balfour Declaration

Subsequent to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour issued a letter on 2 November 1917 to Walter Rothschild of the British Jewish community for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, promising to support the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Its text was published in the press on 9 November 1917.

1918 to 1920: Kingdom of Syria

On 11 November 1918, Prince Faisal I took control of Syria but Lebanon and Palestine remained under British control. In January 1919, Prince Faisal I attended the Paris Peace Conference and demanded the recognition of the Kingdom of Syria. The French government however refused his demand.

Hashim Al Atassi and Syria's National Congress

In March 1919, Syrian dignitaries representing all parts of Syria convened a National Congress in Damascus and elected Hashim Al Atassi as its spokesman. Al Atassi was a scion to a large feudal family who were native to Homs and were related to the Hashemites of Al Hejaz.

In May 1919, the Syrian National Congress elected Ali Al Rikabi as Prime Minister. This self-appointed administration formed local governments in the major cities, and the pan-Arab flag was raised all over Syria.

Shukri Al Quwatli and the Istiqlal Party

Concurrent with the convocation of the Syrian National Congress, a coalition of young Syrian activists who included Shukri Al Quwatli of Syria, and Riad Al Solh of Lebanon, established in 15 April 1919 the Istiqlal Party. Its platform was to create a pan-Arab, secularist, anti-British and anti-monarchist movement.



18 January 1919 Versailles, France. Prince Faisal I at the Paris Peace Conference. L to R: Rustum Haidar (aid to Prince Faisal), Nuri Al Said (led occupation of Damascus), Prince Faisal I of Al Hejaz, Captain Rosario Pisani (Faisal's French artillery officer), T.E. Lawrence (Faisal's British advisor), Faisal's manservant, and Captain Tahsin Kadr (Sharifian Army officer).

The King–Crane Commission

Widespread resistance to French and British colonial occupation followed at the end of World War I. An Allied commission, known as the King–Crane Commission, was sent to Syria in June 1919 to assess public sentiments in the region. The Commission visited 36 cities, met with more than 2,000 delegations from more than 300 villages, and received more than 3,000 petitions. It concluded that the people of Syria rejected French rule, opposed the Balfour Declaration, and demanded a unified greater Syria including Palestine. The conclusions of the Commission were rejected by both France and Britain.

French Occupation of Lebanon and the Conference of San Remo

On 18 November 1919, French forces commanded by High Commissioner General Henri Gouraud occupied the Lebanese coastal region, replacing British troops there. They immediately dissolved the local Arab governments and shortly thereafter deployed troops to the Beqaa Valley, between Beirut and Damascus. On 26 November 1919, all British forces withdrew from Damascus to avoid any confrontation with the French.

On 7 March 1920, Faisal I was proclaimed King of Syria by the Syrian National Congress and Hashim Al Atassi Prime Minister. On 3 May 1920, Al Atassi was elected Syria's first President.

The British, French, Italian, Japanese, Greek and Belgian governments however held a conference in San Remo in April 1920 and rejected the establishment of a monarchy in Syria under Faisal's leadership. Instead the Conference issued a resolution which was adopted on 25 April 1920 by the League of Nations that incorporated the 1917 Balfour Declaration and gave France a mandate over Syria and Lebanon, and Britain a mandate over Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan.

The French Occupation of Syria

On 14 July 1920, General Gouraud presented King Faisal I with an ultimatum demanding the surrender of Aleppo, the dismantling of the Syrian Army, the adoption of the French franc, and the dissolution of Al Atassi's government by 20 July 1920, or face a French invasion of Syria. On 18 July 1920, King Faisal I and the Syrian cabinet, with the exception of the Minister of Defense Yousef Al 'Azma, met and agreed to the French ultimatum.

23 July 1920: Battle of Maysalun

On 23 July 1920, French Army units estimated to total between 9,000 and 12,000 troops crossed into Syria under the command of General Mariano Goybet. They were confronted at Khan Maysalun by Syrian soldiers and civilian volunteers estimated to total 4,000 troops led by General Yousef Al 'Azma.

The French launched their offensive shortly after dawn on 24 July, and their artillery took a heavy toll among the Syrians. Yousef Al 'Azma was captured and executed later that morning. In the afternoon the Syrians retreated to Damascus with severe casualties under sustained French artillery fire.

Faisal I leaves Syria and Treaty of Sèvres

On 27 July 1920, King Faisal I was driven from Syria by the French forces and was compelled to flee to Haifa and from there in August 1920 to Britain.

At this time, negotiations were proceeding between the Allies and the Ottomans in France in the town of Sèvres. These negotiations resulted on 10 August in the Treaty of Sèvres which transfered non-Turkish territories to the Allies thereby confirming the status of the British and French mandates in Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon.



1920 Damascus, Syria. General Yousef Al ‘Azma, Minister of Defense, Kingdom of Syria. Led the resistance against the French invasion and died at the Battle of Maysalun.

The British mandate in Iraq however led to widespread demonstrations and unrest. This resulted in its replacement by the British with the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 23 August 1921 which established a semi-independent Hashemite Kingdom in Iraq under British administration with King Faisal 1 as its monarch.

At the start of 1920, France divided its mandated territories into a state in Lebanon and five states in Syria. The five Syrian states were Damascus, Aleppo, Latikia (the Alawite State), the Jabal Al Druze and the Sanjak of Alexandretta. In 1925, the French joined the States of Damascus and Aleppo linking all the central Syrian regions including the eastern desert and the northern border with Turkey into one State.

The Sanjak of Alexandretta in the northwestern corner of Syria, which had become an autonomous province after the French-Turkish treaty of 20 October 1921, was attached by France to the State of Aleppo in 1923. It was made part of the French mandate in Syria in 1925. There were however numerous rebellions against the French occupation by the Alawites in northwestern Syria and the Druze in southwestern Syria.

In the summer of 1925 the Druze leader Sultan Pasha Al Atrash led an insurrection which evolved into the Great Syrian Revolt that spread within months across Syria and Lebanon. France eventually sent thousands of troops from Morocco and Senegal to Syria, and ended all resistance in the spring of 1927. The French sentenced Al Atrash to death, but he escaped with rebels to Transjordan and was eventually pardoned and returned to Syria in 1937.

Syria’s Leadership during the French Mandate

Following sustained anti-French resistance in Syria, the French High Commissioner in Beirut, Maurice Sarrail, vested in 1925 limited political powers to Taj Al Din Al Hasani to lead a governing council in Syria. Al Hasani convened a Constituent Assembly, which drafted Syria’s first republican constitution. On 15 February 1928 he formed a cabinet consisting of prominent political leaders and was elected President through November 1931. He lost the subsequent election to Muhammad Ali Al Abed, who became President from 11 June 1932 until 21 December 1936.

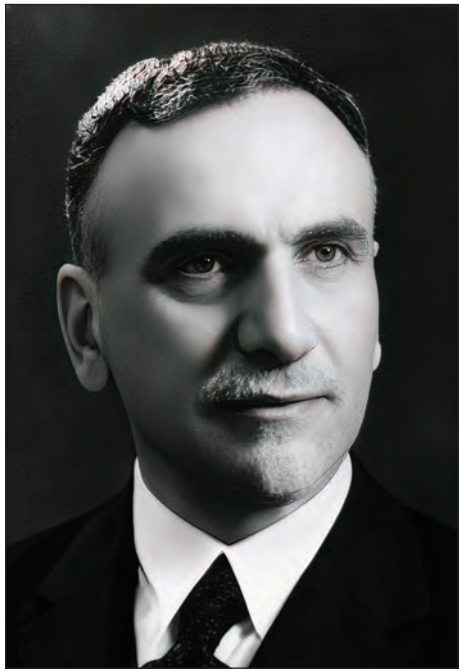
In 1934, France promised Syria’s leadership gradual independence except for plans to keep the mountains bordering Lebanon under its control. Meanwhile, Hashim Al Atassi, Syria’s former President, returned to politics and became the leader of the National Bloc. He opposed the French mandate and called for demonstrations against France leading to riots, arrests and imprisonments, including that of Shukri Al Quwatli of Syria’s Istiqlal Party.

In order to appease the Syrians, France agreed to recognize the National Bloc as the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people, and invited Al Atassi to Paris to begin negotiations for Syria’s independence. Al Atassi led a delegation there on 22 March 1936, and the outcome was a treaty that called for the immediate recognition of Syria as a sovereign republic with full independence to be granted over a 25-year period.

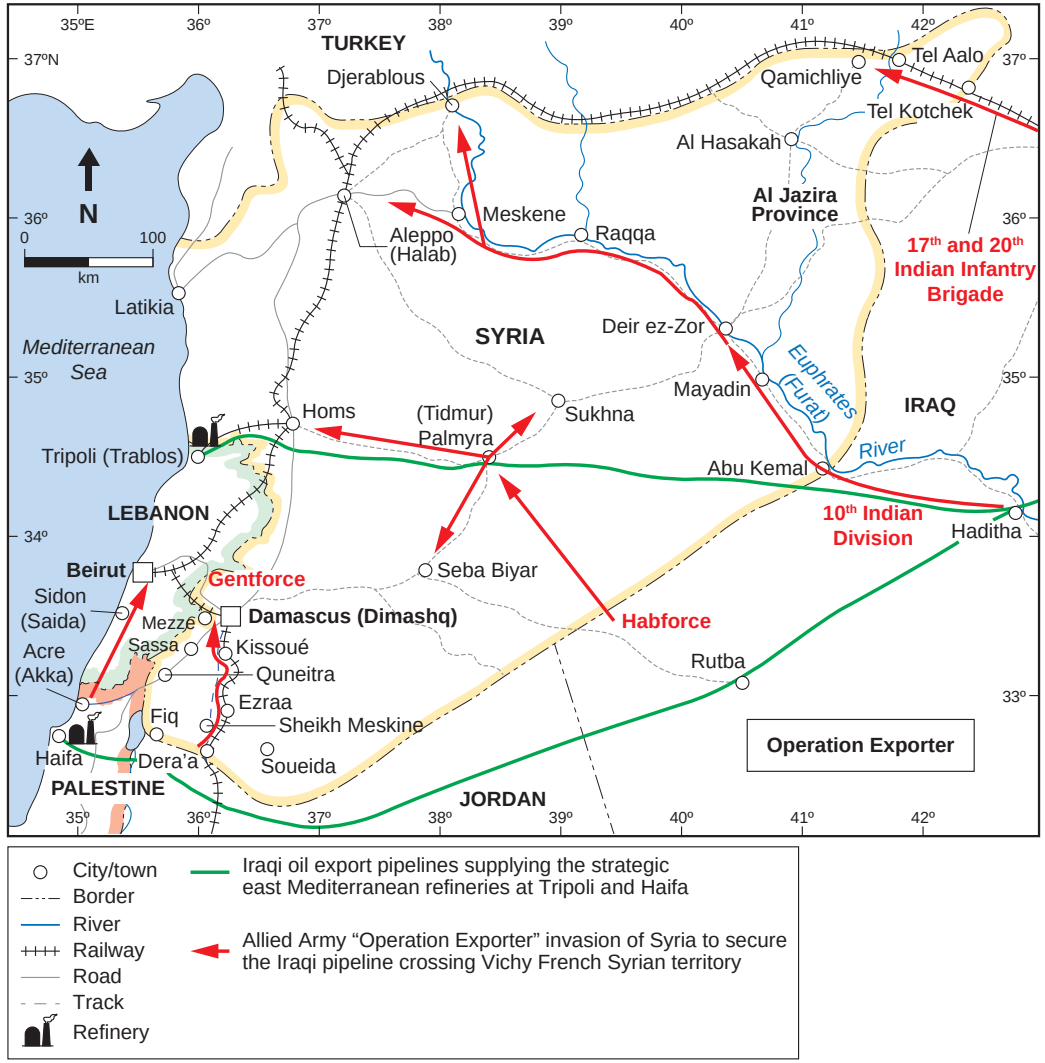
The treaty guaranteed the incorporation of the previously autonomous Druze and Alawite States into the Syrian Republic but not the State of Lebanon. France signed a similar treaty in November 1936 to establish an independent Republic of Lebanon, with its capital in Beirut. Al Atassi returned to Syria in triumph on 27 September 1936 and was elected President on 21 December 1936.

Within a short period of time however, the emerging threat of Nazi Germany caused France to reconsider this treaty and it was not ratified by the French Parliament.

Al Atassi resigned on 7 July 1939 and Syria’s negotiations for independence were suspended during World War II. Meanwhile in 1938 Turkish military entered Alexandretta and expelled its Armenian population. The Province was ceded fully by France to Turkey in 1939 at the outbreak of World War II.



1936, Hashim Al Atassi. Syria’s first President and a scion of a prominent family from Homs was a leading statesman and Syrian nationalist.



Oil Pipelines and Refineries

In May 1940, Nazi Germany and the Italian "Axis" invaded and occupied France, and the French mandates in Syria and Lebanon came under control of the pro-Nazi Vichy government of France.

At this time, there were two strategic oil pipelines carrying crude oil from Iraq to two refineries along the Mediterranean Sea. One pipeline started in Iraq at Haditha, crossed Transjordan, and supplied the Haifa refinery in Palestine, while the other started at Haditha and crossed Syria to supply a refinery in Tripoli, Lebanon. With the fall of the French government, the Tripoli refinery fell under the control of Vichy France and began to supply refined oil products to the Axis forces.

On 1 April 1941, the former Prime Minister of Iraq, Rashid Ali Al Gaylani, overthrew the Hashemite monarchy in Baghdad and attempted to prevent the British from using Iraq's military bases in the European conflict. When he refused to stop supplying Iraqi oil to the Vichy-controlled territories of Lebanon and Syria the British invaded Iraq in May 1941, defeated the Iraqi Army, and restored the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq.

On 28 May 1941, at the time of the Axis campaigns in North Africa and the Balkans, Vichy France signed an agreement with the Axis government granting access to its military facilities and airbases in Syria. This agreement now threatened the position of the Allies across the entire Mediterranean.

8 June–14 July 1941: Operation Exporter

In early June 1941, the Allied forces in the Middle East launched Operation Exporter aimed at defeating the Vichy Army of the Levant. Two Allied columns crossed from Palestine into Syria and one fought its way to Damascus and captured it on 21 June, while the second fought its way along the coast and captured Beirut on 12 July. On 21 June a third column crossed into Syria from Transjordan, captured Palmyra, and secured the Haditha-Tripoli pipeline crossing Syria from Iraq. A fourth Allied front was opened on the northeastern border of Syria and two columns advanced from Iraq and captured Deir Ez-Zor which brought Operation Exporter to an end.

On 12 July 1941, the Armistice of Saint Jean d'Acre was initialed by the Allied command and the Vichy forces in the Levant and on 14 July, the Vichy High Command transferred the mandate authority over Syria and Lebanon to the Allied forces. French troops were allowed to evacuate Syria and Lebanon while the native troops were transfered to the British Allied command.

On 21 July 1941, General Charles de Gaulle demanded that Free France be given authority in Lebanon and Syria which the British agreed to on 25 July.

17 April 1946: Syria's Independence Day

In August 1943 Shukri Al Quwatli was elected Syria's President and continued to press for Syria's full independence. In September 1944, the U.S. recognized both Lebanon and Syria as independent states while Syrians continued to hold countrywide demonstrations against the French. This led on 29 May France's President de Gaulle to order an air raid on Damascus, which destroyed the Parliament and the Ministry of Defense buildings. At Al Quwatli's request the U.S. intervened and France agreed to withdraw its troops from Syria bringing its occupation to an official end on 17 April 1946.



Shukri Al Quwatli was born in 1891. He went to college in Turkey and after graduating he worked for the Ottoman civil service and later the Hashemite Kingdom of Syria.

During the French mandate he was condemned to death but escaped to Egypt and used his connections to help finance the Great Syrian Revolt of 1925 to 1927.

In 1930 the French pardoned him and he returned to Syria, where he became the leader of the National Bloc. He was elected President in 1943, 1948 and 1955 and led Syria into the union with Egypt and Yemen in 1958.



Flag of Syrian Republic 1932–1958 and 1961–1963.

CHAPTER 3

Al Husseini Ancestry: From Iraq to Palestine to Syria

Family history holds that the forefathers of Sharif Hussein Agha (born c.1725) are 'ashraf' who had left the Hejaz in the 7th or 8th Century and settled in the eastern Arabian Peninsula and southern Iraq. From there, they are presumed to have moved to northern Iraq, during the turmoil of the 13th and 14th centuries.

There are indications that they may have been associated with the Baban principality of northern Iraq and with Sulaiman Beg Baban, the prince who secured Ottoman recognition for the Baban hereditary rule in Iraq in 1678. The city of Sulaymaniyah itself was established by Ibrahim Pasha Baban in 1784 and was named Sulaymaniyah in honor of Sulaiman Pasha Baban, Ibrahim Pasha's father.

In time, internal rivalries and foreign pressure weakened the Babans and prince Ahmad Pasha Baban was defeated by the Ottomans near Koya in 1847, putting an end to the Baban rule.

Around this time in the 18th Century, Colonel Al Husseini's fourth grandfather, Sharif Hussain Agha was an affluent merchant in northern Iraq. He and two younger brothers left their community in Al Sulaymaniyah and traveled west and settled in the port city of Acre.

Acre had been a key harbor of Arab and Mamluk sultanates but had subsequently been captured by the Crusaders and become their main trading harbor in Palestine. It was recaptured by the Mamluks in the 14th Century and largely destroyed to deny it to any future Crusades. In 1517 it was captured by the Ottomans but remained largely in ruins through the 17th Century.

In 1746, the local Arab leader Zahir Al Umar (lived around 1690 to 1775) led an uprising in Acre and wrested its control from the Ottomans, making it the regional capital of his autonomous Palestinian Sultanate of Galilee. Al Umar transformed Acre into a fortified market hub and expanded Palestinian trade with Europe. His Sultanate underwent an economic boom which led to widespread immigration from other parts of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1775 the Ottomans recaptured Acre, killed Zahir Al Umar and established the Province of Saida, including parts of southern Lebanon. They appointed Ahmad Pasha Al Jazzar in 1777 as governor of the province with Acre as his capital.

In 1799, Al Jazzar led the defense of Acre against a siege by Napoleon Bonaparte's Army that had landed in Egypt and was intent on conquering the Ottoman Empire. At this time one of Sharif Hussein's grandsons was serving as an officer in Al Jazzar's forces. The French siege lasted for almost a year but failed to capture Acre and the French army was forced to subsequently depart from Egypt in 1801.

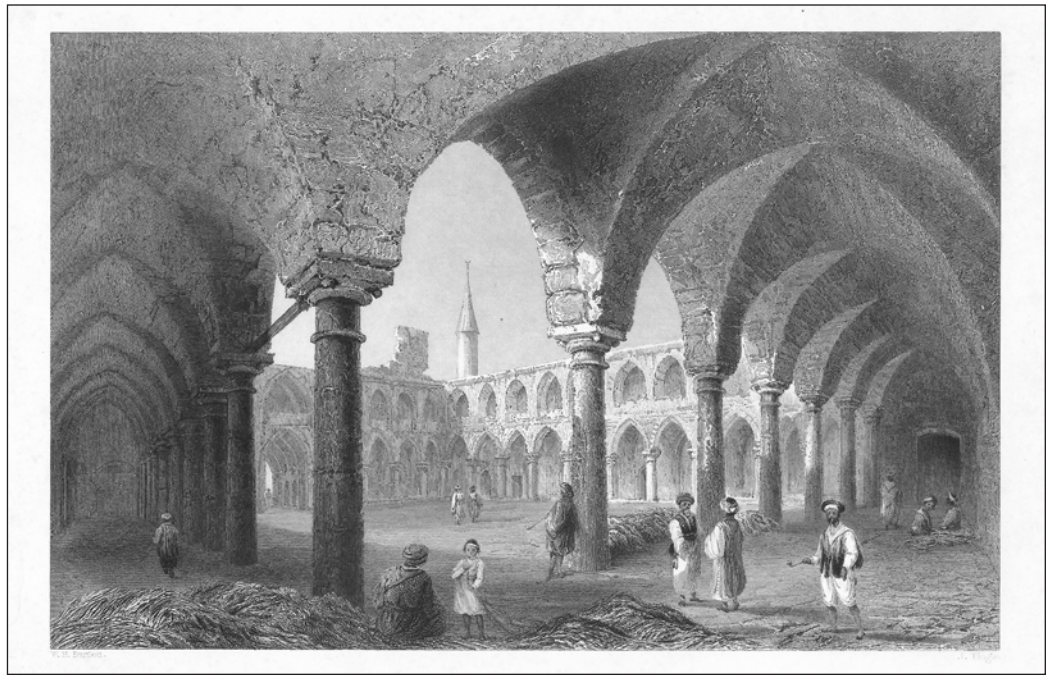
Al Jazzar died in 1804 and was succeeded by the Mamluk Wali Sulayman Basha Al Adil who governed from 1805 to 1819. Acre prospered during his rule and became a powerful regional center rivaling Damascus.

Acre saw several administrative changes and re-alignments thereafter and was renamed the Acre Eyalet with Acre as its capital through 1841.

In 1864 Acre was annexed into a newly created Syria Vilayet but in 1888 it was separated from the Syria Vilayet and transferred to the Beirut Vilayet.

The Al Husseini's in Acre

Sharif Hussain Agha, adopted the additional epithet of 'Al Sulaymani' in Acre, and bought a trading warehouse from Al Jazzar's Waqf in Acre's main market square, Khan Al Umdan. He started a wholesale trading and brokerage business which grew in scale over five generations. The family also acquired agricultural properties in later years in the inland Tarshiha and Safuri villages of Galilee.





Acre, Palestine. Late 18th Century drawing of Khan Al Umdan built by Ahmad Al Jazzar and completed in 1784. The building was Acre's main marketplace and situated next to the Mediterranean Sea, and remains today as an historical site in occupied Palestine.



1888 Acre, Palestine. Othman Agha Al Husseini (Col. Ibrahim Al Husseini's grandfather) with sons Kamal (left) and Abdul Rahman (Col. Al Husseini's father).

Ancestor	Lived	Comment
Sharif Hussain Agha 1st generation in Acre	Born circa 1725	Moved from Sulaimaniyah to Acre around 1770s and established a wholesale trading and brokerage business
Mohammad Agha Aal Hussein 2nd generation in Acre	18th and 19th Centuries	Prominent businessman in Acre, fathered Ibrahim and Muhsin
Ibrahim Agha Aal Hussein 3rd generation in Acre	18th and 19th Centuries	Maintained business and represented the Anbar in the regional government
Othman ibn Ibrahim 4th generation in Acre	1824–1894	Prominent citizen appointed to the regional courts and government councils in Acre
Abdul Rahman ibn Othman 5th and last generation in Acre	1884–1959	Studied accounting in Beirut and rose in office in the Ottoman Ministry of Finance in Acre, Ba'albeck and Homs



1910 Acre, Palestine. Three sons of Othman.
L to R: Abdul Hamid, Kamal and Abdul Rahman
(Col. Al Husseini's father).



1915 Acre, Palestine. Four sons of Othman.
L to R: Kamal, Abdul Rahman, Abdul Hamid and Nasrat.

The Al Husseini Family in Syria

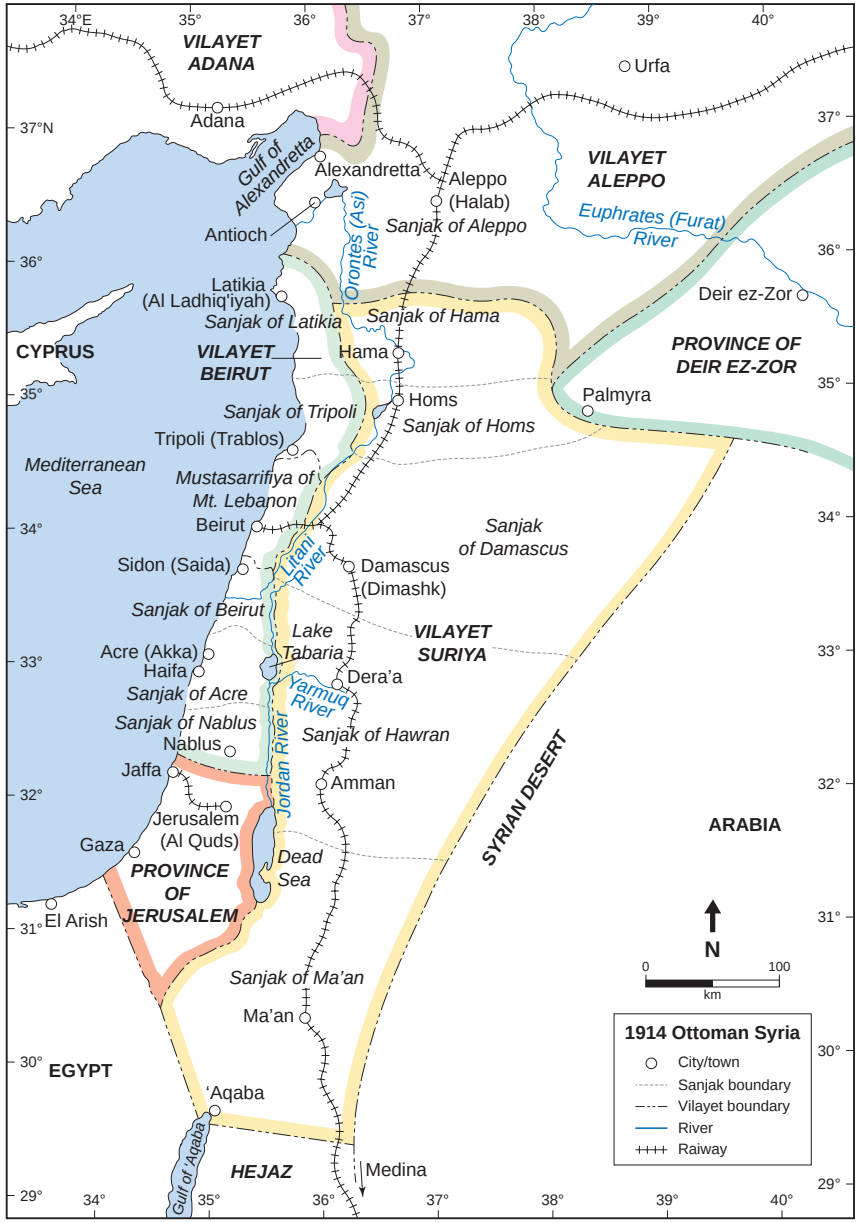
Abdul Rahman Al Husseini, the father of Col. Ibrahim Al Husseini, was born in 1884 in Acre in Ottoman Palestine, and in 1906 he married Lama'an Arnaout. Abdul Rahman was sent by his brothers to study accounting in Beirut in Ottoman Lebanon and after graduating he worked in the Ottoman Ministry of Finance in Acre. He was transferred to Ba'albeck (Lebanon) by the Ministry and rose in the administration of the Ottoman treasury in charge of local taxes and finance.

Ibrahim's older brothers Sobhi and Hilmi were born in 1907 and 1909 in Acre. In 1911 Lama'an travelled to Monastir in Ottoman Albania to visit her family and she delivered their third son Ibrahim. Monastir came under siege by the Serbian army in 1912 forcing Lama'an and her family to evacuate before the city fell to Serbia in November 1912. They travelled by road to Istanbul, and then by train to Acre.

When France occupied Lebanon in 1918, Abdul Rahman and his family moved to Homs where they became citizens of the newly created State of Syria. He worked for the Syrian Ministry of Finance until the French defeated the Syrian Army and occupied Syria in 1920. During the French mandate he continued working in Syria's Ministry of Finance until his retirement in the late 1930s.

Abdul Rahman was a member of the council of Acre for 15 years. Between 1938 and 1948 he traveled frequently to Acre to manage the family's properties. At the start of the Palestine war on May 15 Zionist forces occupied Acre and laid siege to its old fort where Abdul Rahman, the other members of the council and several hundred Arabs were holding out. However, on May 17 Acre fell to the Zionists and Abdul Rahman and Acre's Arab residents were expelled. Abdul Rahman was unable to safeguard the family's properties in Palestine.

Abdul Rahman passed away in Damascus in 1959. Lam'an remained in Damascus with her children and visited her son, Ibrahim, in Rome and Saudi Arabia. She passed away in 1971.





1915 Zahle, Lebanon. Abdul Rahman Othman Al Husseini (1884–1959), Col. Ibrahim Al Husseini's father. During the Ottoman Empire he served in the Turkish Ministry of Finance and during the French mandate he joined the Syrian Ministry of Finance.



1930 Homs, Syria.
L to R Back Row: Sobhi (1907), Ibrahim (1911), Amin (1915) and Hilmi (1909); Middle Row: Wedad (1919), Lam'an Arnaout (c. 1890) and Suad (1921); Front Row: Hisham (1923), Asma (1930) and Essam (1925).

CHAPTER 4

1911–1934: Ibrahim Al Husseini's Early Years



1930, Homs, Syria. Ibrahim Abdul Rahman Othman Al Husseini. Although Al Husseini's earliest years were in Acre and Ba'albeck, he settled with his family in Homs in 1918 and grew up as a Syrian citizen. He attended the Frerés School in Homs from which he graduated in 1934.

The Ancient City of Homs, Syria.



Khalid ibn Al Walid Mosque.



Courtyard of the Khalid ibn Al Walid Mosque.



Interior of the “Al Nuri” (Nuri Al Zangi) Mosque.



1931 Homs, Syria. L to R, standing: Ramzi Akhrass, Ibrahim Al Husseini, Haidar Droubi and friend; seated: Rashad Zein Al Abidine, unknown friend and Haidar Zein Al Abidine.







1932 Homs, Syria. Ibrahim Al Husseini and brother Hisham.



15 February 1932, Homs, Syria. L to R, standing: Abdul Baqi Safi, Shawkat Al Atassi, Suhail Droubi and Khalid Zaza; seated: Ibrahim Al Husseini and Wasfi Al Bana.



22 May 1932 Homs, Syria. Faculty and students, Frerés Secondary School. Al Husseini standing, second row far right.



9 February 1932, Syria. Members of the Droubi and Akhrass families, friends, and Ibrahim Al Husseini (far right).



6 April 1933, Izzedine Café, Tripoli Harbor, Lebanon. L to R: Essam Al Husseini, Ibrahim Al Husseini and Amin Al Husseini, 5th from left.



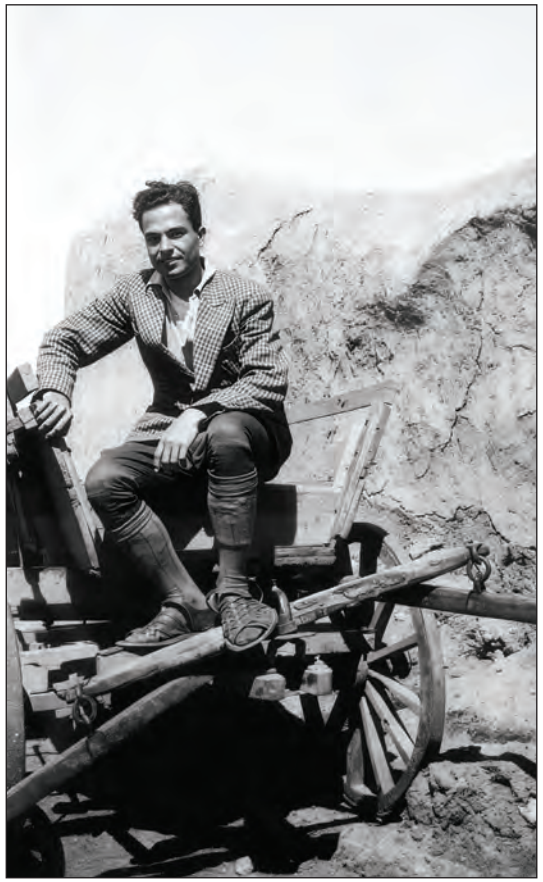
30 September 1933, Base of French Air Mail Services, Homs, Syria. Ibrahim Al Husseini, second from left.



1933 Homs, Syria. Football match against the Homs Military Academy. Ibrahim Al Husseini standing, seventh from left.



1933 Homs, Syria. Autumn in Homs countryside. Ibrahim Al Husseini, far right.



1933 Homs, Syria. Ibrahim Al Husseini.



1933 Homs, Syria. Summer in Homs countryside. Al Husseini seated in the second row, second from the right.



1933 Homs, Syria. Winter outing Homs countryside. Al Husseini kneeling second from left.



1934 Aleppo, Syria. Khalid ibn Al Walid Club (Homs) versus The Catholic Club (Aleppo). Ibrahim Al Husseini (center kneeling).



1934 Homs, Syria. Al Husseini kneeling, second from right.

CHAPTER 5

1934–1948: Al Husseini's Early Career, and End of the French Mandate



1934, Homs Military Academy, Syria. Graduation of first year cadets.

In 1934 Al Husseini enrolled in the French Homs Military Academy and graduated in 1937 as Second-Lieutenant in the Light Cavalry and Platoon Commander. He was posted in Syria's Al Jazira Province and promoted to First-Lieutenant in 1939. Upon the defeat of the Army of the Levant in 1941, Al Husseini and his Syrian troops were placed under the command of the Free French Forces in the Levant.



October 1934, Homs Military Academy.



7 April 1935, Tal Al Nabi, Syria. L to R, standing: Rashad Zain Al Abidine, Abdullah Droubi, Ibrahim Al Husseini, Zuheir Al Husseini, Wael Al Atassi and Khaled Al Najjar; front: Fakhri Al Husseini.



1935, Hamidiya Village, Syria. L to R: Zuheir Al Husseini, Ibrahim Al Husseini, Khalid Al Najar, Fakhri Al Husseini, Wael Attasi and Rashad Zein Al Abidine.



1935, Syria. Na’urat Hama on the Orontos River.







12 August 1935, Homs, Syria. Ibrahim Al Husseini and his sisters trying out his uniform; Suad (left) and Wedad (center).



1935, Al Nebek, Syria. Lam'an Ibrahim Arnaout Al Husseini with son Ibrahim Al Husseini.



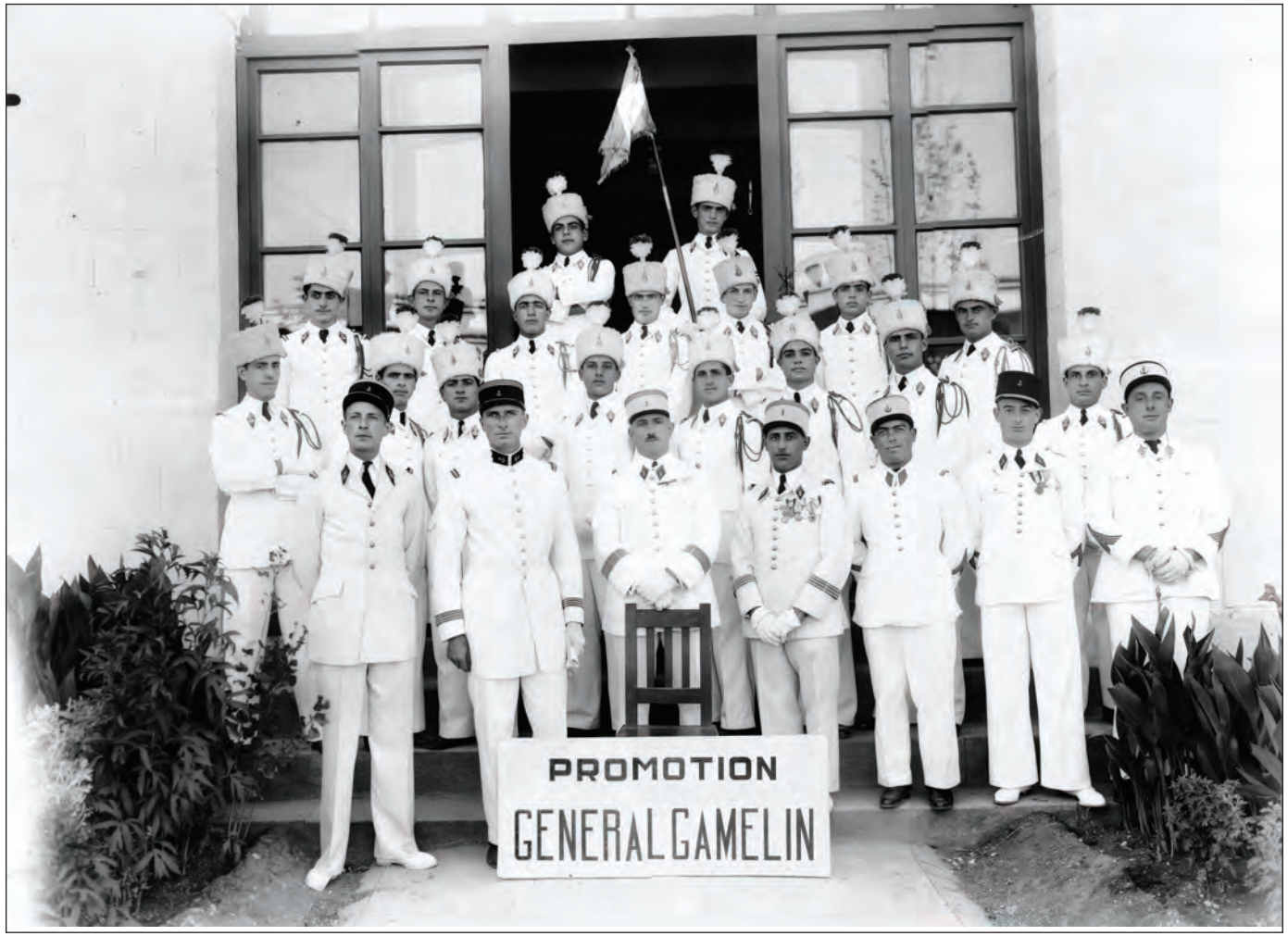
1935, Nebek, Syria. Ibrahim Al Husseini with L to R: Wedad, Essam, Hisham, Asma and Suad.



August 1937, Homs, Syria. Ibrahim Al Husseini in Homs Military Academy graduate uniform.



2 August 1937, Lebanon. Graduating class of 1937 from Homs Military Academy. Al Husseini in second row, seventh from the right.



2 August 1937, Lebanon. Graduates of Homs Military Academy in officer uniforms. Al Husseini in second row, third from right.

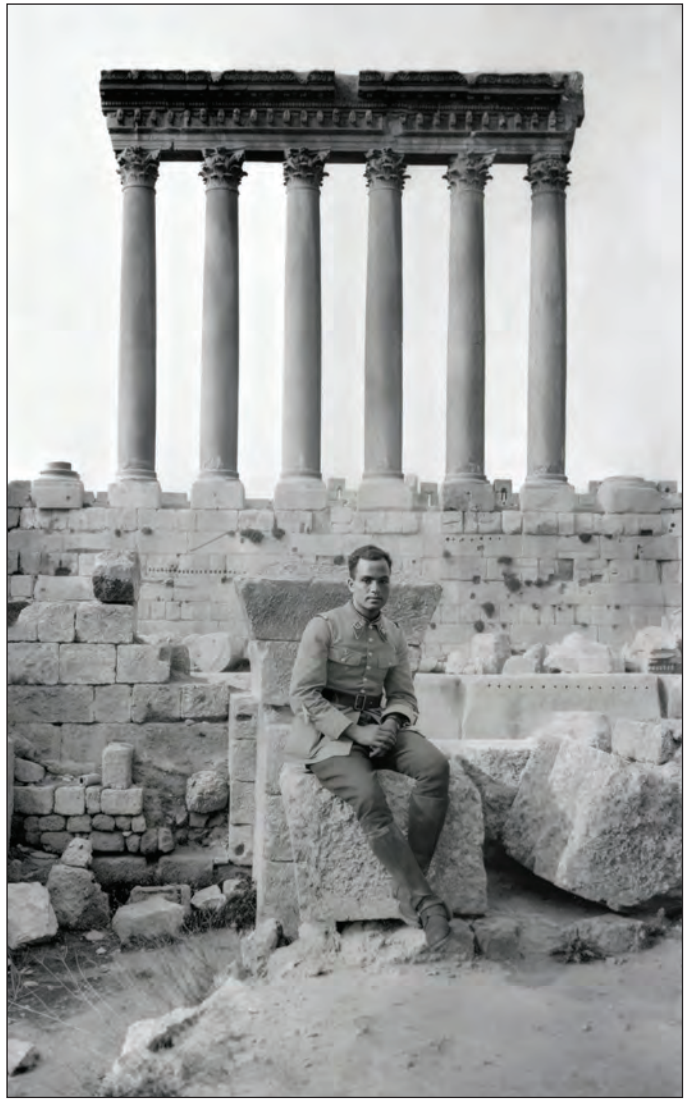


Al Husseini second from left.



30 September 1937, Lebanon. Graduates of Homs Military Academy in Light Cavalry uniforms of the Army of the Levant. L to R: Nasrallah Said (Shuhaim), Ibrahim Al Husseini (Homs), Burhan Hasan (Sulaymiya), Munir Hamdan (Shuhaim), Mumtaz Beydoun (Beirut), Gabriel Bishara (Antakia), Nizarat Kultrashian (Beirut) and Mudrek Ibrahim (Saida).

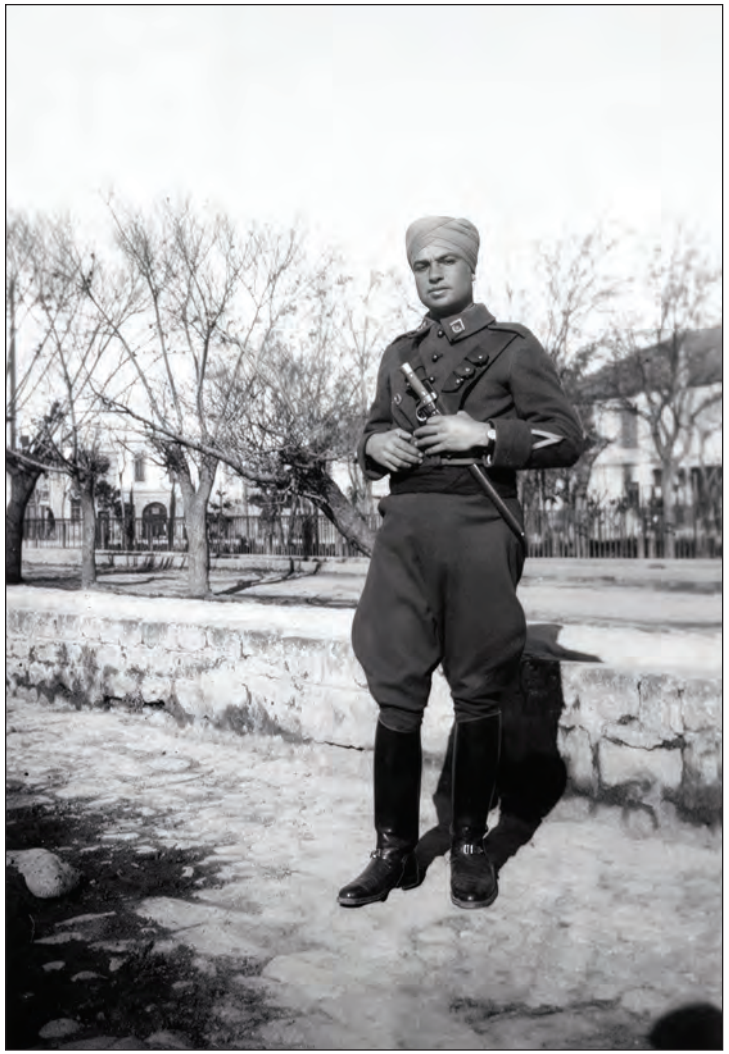




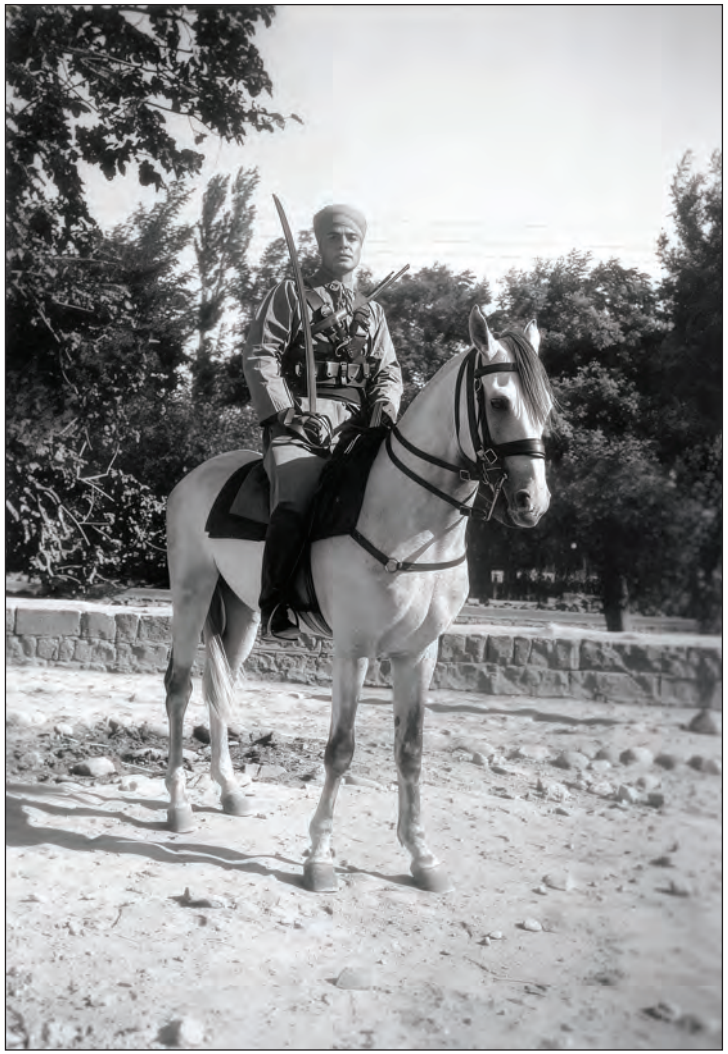
24 January 1938, Ba’albek, Lebanon. Ibrahim Al Husseini on field patrol duty.



5 May 1938. Patrol by the Army of the Levant.
L to R: Ibrahim Al Husseini (Homs), Burhan Hasan (Sulaymiya), Shafiq Selami Ali (Ras Ba'albek)
and Nadim Turanjan Ali (Antakya).



14 July 1938, Homs, Syria. Celebration parade and equestrian events on France's national Bastille Day.

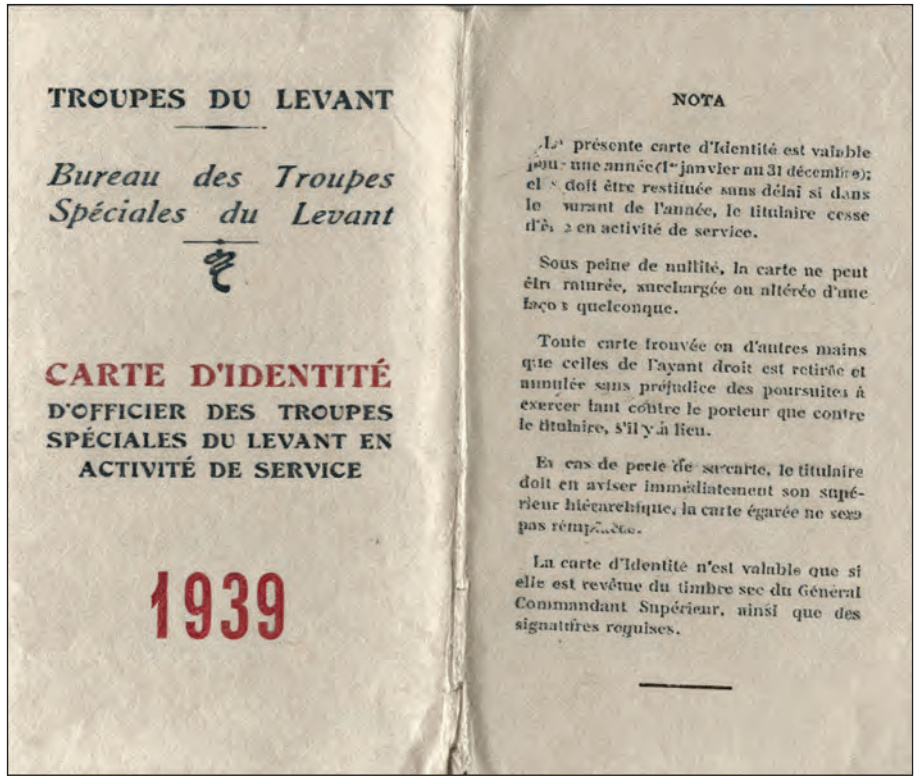


Light Cavalry parade uniform,
Army of the Levant.



14 July 1938, Homs, Syria. Celebration parade and equestrian events on France's national Bastille Day.





TROUPES DU LEVANT

Bureau des Troupes Spéciales du Levant

CARTE D'IDENTITÉ
D'OFFICIER DES TROUPES SPÉCIALES DU LEVANT EN ACTIVITÉ DE SERVICE

1939

NOTA

La présente carte d'Identité est valable pour une année (1er janvier au 31 décembre); elle doit être restituée sans délai si dans le courant de l'année, le titulaire cesse d'être en activité de service.

Sous peine de nullité, la carte ne peut être remaniée, surchargée ou altérée d'une façon quelconque.

Toute carte trouvée en d'autres mains que celles de l'ayant droit est retirée et annulée sans préjudice des poursuites à exercer tant contre le porteur que contre le titulaire, s'il y a lieu.

En cas de perte de carte, le titulaire doit en aviser immédiatement son supérieur hiérarchique, la carte égarée ne sera pas remplacée.

La carte d'Identité n'est valable que si elle est revêtue du timbre sec du Général Commandant Supérieur, ainsi que des signatures requises.



Visa du Général Commandant Supérieur des Troupes du Levant

P. O. Le Colonel Chef d'Etat Major

Atelier Typo 27-8571-38-37

1939 | **N° 225**

CARTE D'IDENTITÉ

(Nom et Prénoms)

Mr Ibrahim El Husseini

Grade S/Lieutenant

Affectation 3e Escadron de ligne du Levant

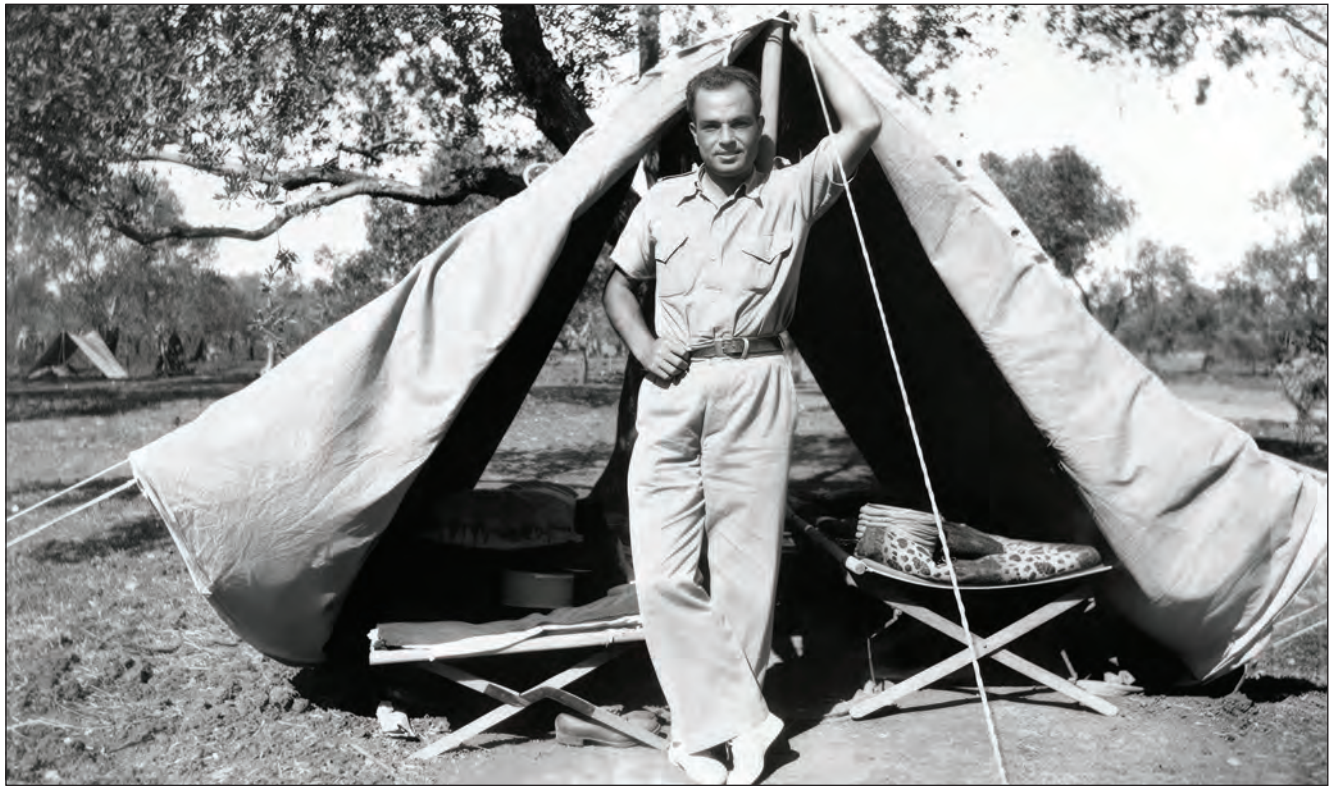
Signature du Titulaire

Identification card of Ibrahim Al Husseini issued in early1939 indicating his rank as Second-Lieutenant and Platoon Commander in the Special Troops of the Army of the Levant.



1940, Tartous, Syria. Army of the Levant during Vichy France mandate.
L to R, front row: Zuheir El Dine, Chatra, Lt. Sobhi Abara, Capt. Jamil Ramadan, Commander Rifat Khaikan, Capt. Hamad Al Atrash, Lt. Mahmaoud Bunaian, Rihan Keilani and Salim Safadi; Center row: Lt. Choufi, Lt. Salman Sharani, Lt. Amin Abu Assaf, Lt. Najjar, Lt. Al Husseini, Lt. Abdul Rahman Shawish, Adjutant Michel Saba, Bachour Badie and Faisal Attasi; Back row: MDL Chapon, MDL Chef Segurin and MDL Chef Baudier.





1940, Al Jazira, Syria. Lieutenant Al Husseini on patrol duty and security assignment with the Army of the Levant during Vichy France mandate.



July 1940, Syrian border with Turkey and Iraq. Lieutenant Al Husseini during military service with the Army of the Levant during Vichy France mandate.



29 January 1942, Syrian border with Turkey. Lieutenant Al Husseini with Second-Lieutenant Ismail, Free French Force of the Allies during World War II.



14 July 1942, northern Syria. Lieutenant Al Husseini leading cavalry parade on France’s national Bastille Day.

14 July 1942, Tel Abyad, Syria





14 July 1942, Tel Abyad, Syria. Lieutenant Al Husseini concluding the cavalry parade on France’s national Bastille Day.

May 1945: Ibrahim Al Husseini and Myassar Bach Imam Marry

In April 1944, while posted in Al Jazira Province, Al Husseini visited the family of the retired Colonel Mohammad Naguib Bach Imam in Damascus, and met his daughter, Myassar. She was 19 years old and had recently graduated from secondary school. Ibrahim and Myassar were engaged in April 1944 and were married in May that year in Damascus. Myassar had an older sister Munawar, and three younger sisters Najat, Nawal and Suad.

The Al Husseini and Bach Imam families had met in previous years in both Palestine and Lebanon. Myassar's paternal grandfather, Lutfi, was a Turkish officer and had lived in Syria through the late Ottoman Era. He had five sons: Jamil, Sobhi, Mahmoud, Sabri and Mohammad, and one daughter, Hamida.

Myassar's father, Colonel Mohammad Naguib, started his military career as a civil engineer in the Ottoman Army. He entered the French military service during the French mandate in Lebanon and Syria, rising to the rank of Colonel in the French occupation forces. During his service he participated in the construction of the French military headquarters in Beirut and the French military airport in Al Riyak (Ba'albek).

Myassar's four uncles worked in Syria during the Ottoman Era.

Jamil was a Director of Al Hejaz Railroad that connected Damascus and Al Madina. Sobhi was an engineer working for the Istanbul-Baghdad Railroad Company.

Mahmoud was an officer in the Ottoman Army and had been wounded in World War I in Acre, and Sabri was a communications officer in the Ottoman Army.

In June 1944, Ibrahim and Myassar settled in Al Jazira where he returned to his posting in the Free French Forces.

In late May 1945, Captain Al Husseini started planning an insurrection against the French occupation in Al Jazira Province, and alerted his troops to send their families to safety. He asked his older brother Sobhi to come to Al Jazira and accompany his wife Myassar who was pregnant with their son Hassan, and his young daughter from an earlier marriage, Najat, to their family home in Homs.



April 1944, Damascus, Syria. Engagement of Ibrahim Al Husseini and Myassar Neguib Bach Imam.



May 1944, Damascus, Syria. Wedding portrait of Ibrahim Al Husseini and Myassar Neguib Bach Imam.

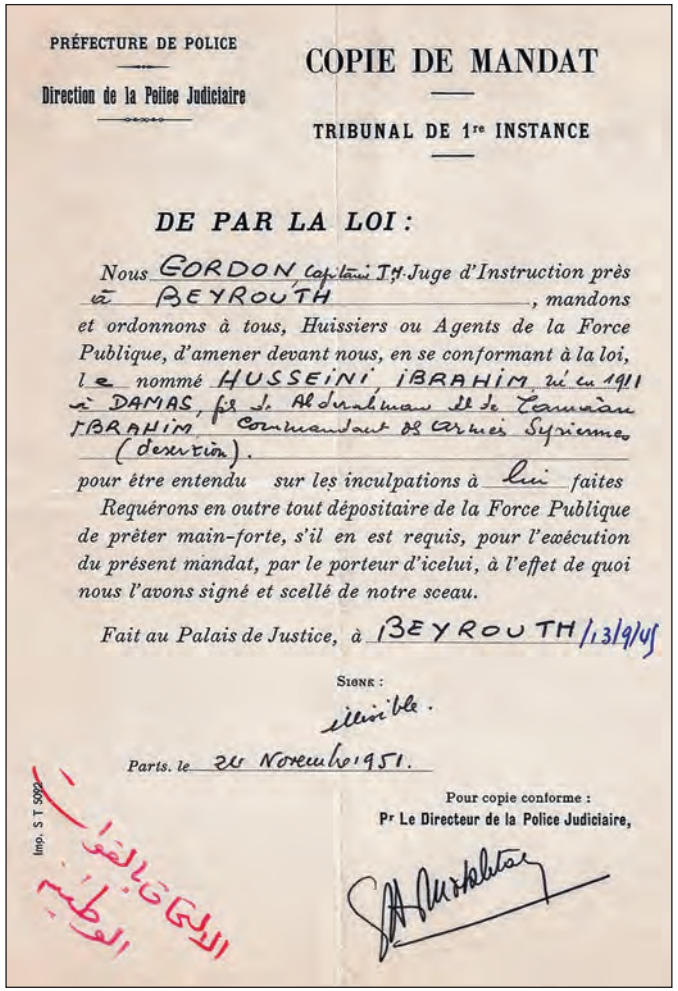
Begining Years in the Syrian National Army

In June 1945, at the end of World War II, Syria's political leaders launched an uprising against the French occupation. Al Husseini led his troops in joining the uprising and secretly organized their desertion from the French Army in order to form an independent national troop in northeastern Syria.

During the uprising they fought the French forces in Al Hasakah and Al Derbasiyah and took control of the army barracks and outposts in the Al Jazira Province. In recognition of his leadership during the insurrection, Al Husseini was promoted to Captain in the Syrian Army and given command of the Syrian forces in the Al Hasakah Governate.



August 1945, Syria. Captain Ibrahim Al Husseini with the newly formed Syrian national forces.



PRÉFECTURE DE POLICE

Direction de la Police Judiciaire

COPIE DE MANDAT

TRIBUNAL DE 1re INSTANCE

DE PAR LA LOI :

Nous GORDON Capitaine I.M. Juge d'Instruction près le BEYROUTH, mandons et ordonnons à tous, Huissiers ou Agents de la Force Publique, d'amener devant nous, en se conformant à la loi, le nommé HUSSEINI IBRAHIM né en 1911 à DAMAS, fils de Abdulrahman et de Tamima IBRAHIM Commandant des Armées Syrienne (desertion).

pour être entendu sur les inculpations à lui faites

Requérons en outre tout dépositaire de la Force Publique de prêter main-forte, s'il en est requis, pour l'exécution du présent mandat, par le porteur d'icelui, à l'effet de quoi nous l'avons signé et scellé de notre sceau.

Fait au Palais de Justice, à BEYROUTH 13/9/45

Signé : illisible.

Paris, le 20 Novembre 1951.

Pour copie conforme :

Pr Le Directeur de la Police Judiciaire,

Imp. S T 5092

French arrest warrant for Ibrahim Al Husseini based on the original dated 13 September 1945 for desertion of the French Force and joining the Syrian insurrection.



17 April 1946, Al Hasakeh, Syria. Syria's first National Day, celebrated by all ethnic groups and denominations in Syria. Al Husseini, the commanding officer in the Al Hasakeh Governate standing in the middle.

CHAPTER 6

1948–1949: The Arab-Israel War

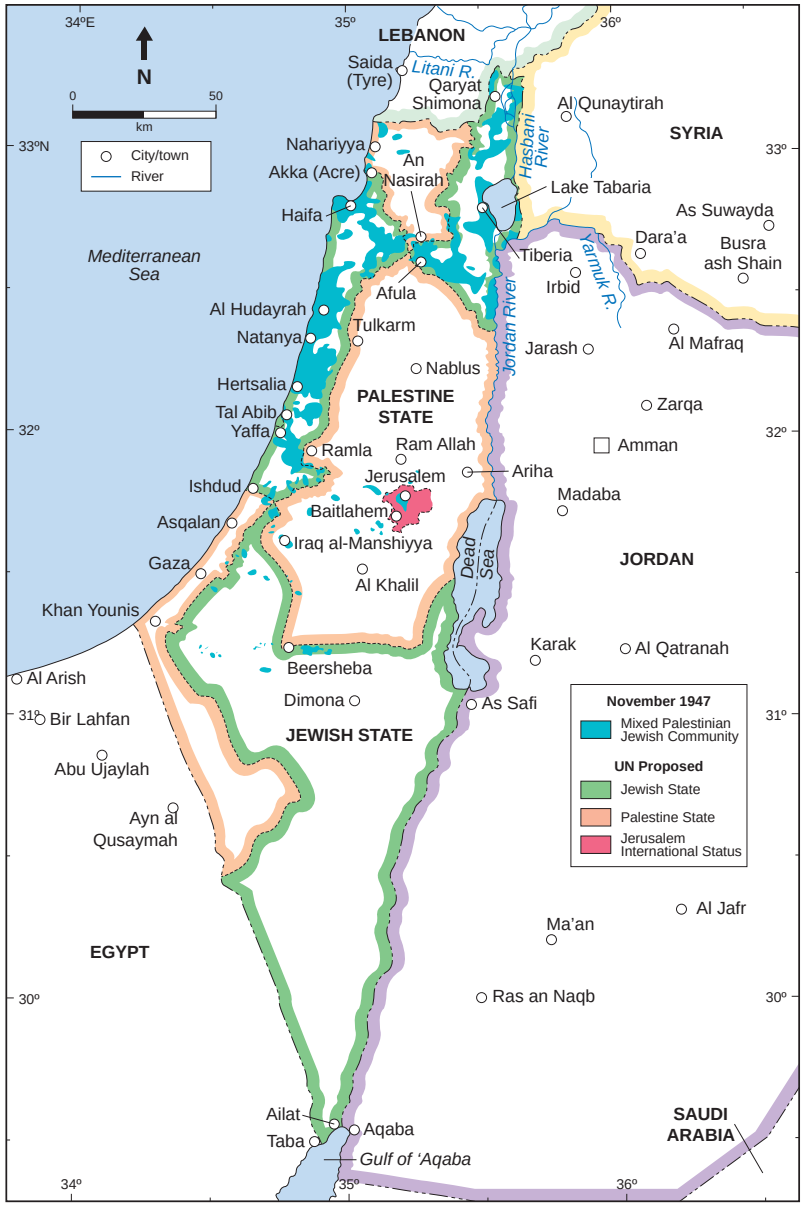
In order to avert the UN partitioning plan of Palestine of 1948 and to protect the Palestinian people, the Arab League formed a volunteer Arab Liberation Army (ALA) and appointed Fawzi Al Qawuqji, a well known Arab nationalist, as its Commander.

On 8 January 1948, Colonel Adib Al Shishakli of the Syrian Army joined the ALA and took on the leadership of the ALA Yarmuk Battalion. His battalion initially totalled 330 troops but grew to 800 when it was joined by Palestinian resistance fighters in Galilee.

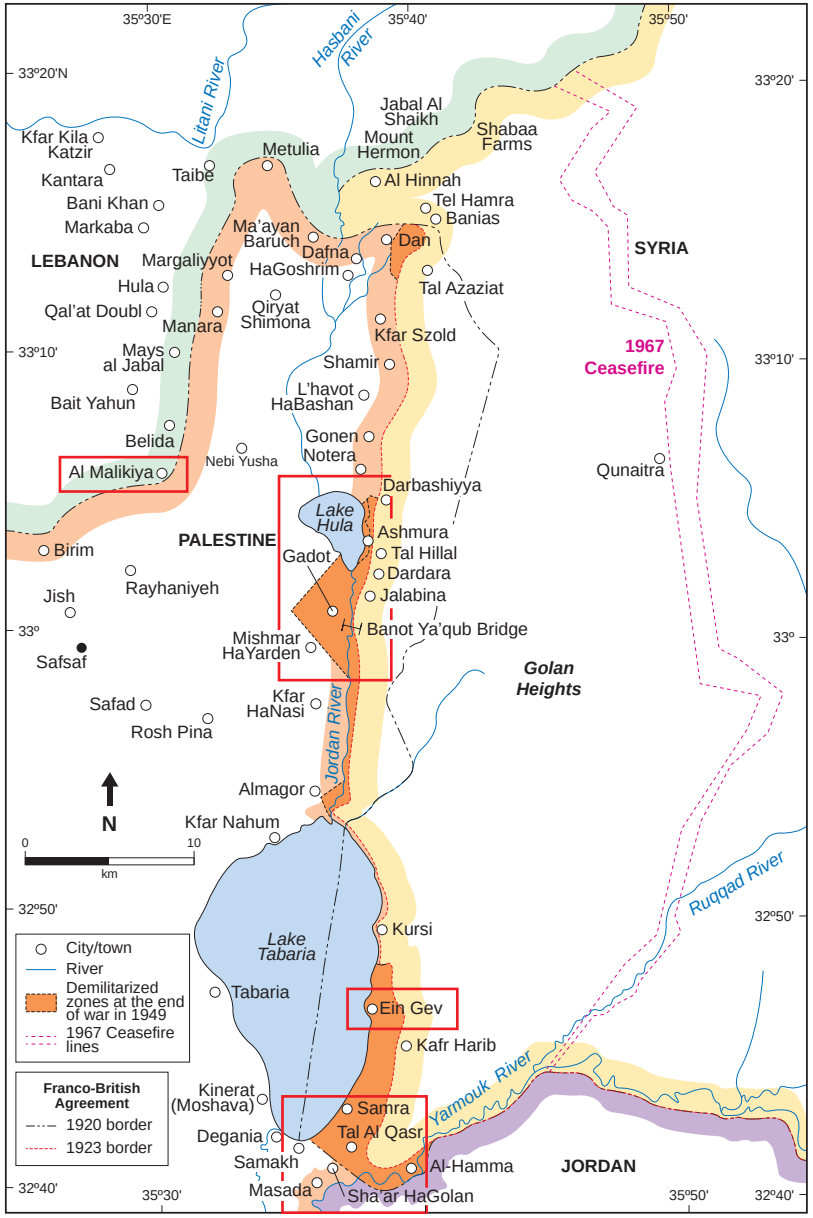
Fighting broke out with Zionist troops in Tabaria and Safad in mid-April 1948 but the ALA could not resist their advances. On 18 April 1948 the Zionist forces captured Tabaria and forced its 6,000 Palestinian residents to flee. On 9 May, they captured Safad and expelled its 12,000 residents.

On 17 May 1948, the Zionist captured Acre and 13,500 residents out of a population of 17,400 were forced to leave. A suspicious outbreak of a water-borne typhoid fever in Acre at this time was ascribed by British medical services to water poisoning by the Zionists.

Throughout its operations in northern Palestine, the ALA complained of a constant lack of vital supplies and critical ammunition and Al Shishakli's desperate requests to President Al Quwatli and the ALA command for additional support went largely unanswered.



1947, UN Proposed Partitioning Plan of Palestine.



1948 Palestinian Syrian Front.

The Syrian, Lebanese and North Palestinian Fronts

Besides evicting the Palestinian inhabitants from Galilee, a major objective of the Zionist leadership in northern Palestine was to take control of the water resources and farmlands of southern Lebanon and Syria's Golan Mountains.

In 1920, at the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Britain and France had initially drawn the boundary between the Syrian and Palestinian mandates across the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tabaria). Zionist pressures however had led the negotiators to assign the whole lake, as well as both sides of the Jordan River, Lake Hula, the Dan Spring, and part of the Yarmouk River to the Palestinian territory, thus setting the stage for Israeli claims to all the water resources in the future.

To reinforce this claim, in 1937 a Jewish kibbutzim called the Ein Gev "tower and stockade" was created on a 10-meter wide strip of Lake Tabaria's shore assigned to Palestine next to the Syrian border. It was quickly settled by immigrants and by 1947 had a population of 450 European Jews.

Husni Al Zaim and Syria's National Army

At the start of the Arab-Israeli War on 15 May 1948 the Syrian Army had a total strength of 12,000 troops organized into three brigades. The Syrian Air Force had 50 planes; the newest 10 were built during World War II. Brigadier-General Husni Al Zaim, who in 1949 would become Syria's first military strongman, commanded Syria's First Brigade, with an estimated strength of 4,000 troops. It was apparently the only brigade that was ready for combat in May 1948, and consisted of two infantry battalions, an armored force of approximately battalion size, an artillery battalion, a company of French R 35 and R 37 tanks, and other units.

On 15 May 1948, Al Zaim crossed with the First Brigade from Syria into Palestine along the southeastern shore of Lake Tabaria. The Brigade captured the Ein Gev kibbutzem, and by 18 May Tal Al Qasr, Samakh (Tzemah), Masada and Sha'ar HaGolan. The Brigade then fought several battles in an attempt to capture the two Degania kibutzems but ran short of ammunition and the replenishment promised by Damascus did not arrive. Al Zaim was forced to withdraw his forces to Tal Al Qasr and the Syrian Army suffered heavy casualties. On 21 May 1948, Israeli troops returned to Samakh and re-occupied Masada and Sha'ar HaGolan.

The setback suffered by the Syrian forces had major repercussions in Damascus. On 24 May 1948 Syria's Army Chief-of-Staff, Abd Allah Atfeh, was forced to resign and on the same day President Al Quwatli dismissed Defense Minister Ahmad Al Sharabati, and appointed Al Zaim as Chief-of-Staff of the Syrian Army.

During the rest of the war Syria reinforced the army by mobilizing the Second Brigade consisting of two infantry battalions and one armored battalion. The Syrian Army succeeded in securing the Lebanese and Syrian borders from Israeli occupation, but ascribed its failure to liberate Palestine to the lack of support and adequate preparation for the war by the Syrian government.

Ibrahim Al Husseini during the Palestine War

Captain Ibrahim Al Husseini was in command the Badiyat Al Jazira Company of the Syrian National Army during the Palestine War. The company's strength was approximately 100 troops, many of whom were Bedouin soldiers from Al Jazira Province. Three days after Syria and Lebanon declared war on Israel on 15 May 1948, the Company left Damascus and crossed into Lebanon to support the Lebanese Army.



Captain Ibrahim Al Husseini during the Palestine War in 1948.

Throughout the war, the Israeli forces attempted to occupy southern Lebanon as far north as the Litani River. By early June 1948 they had captured the Village of Al Malikiya, situated immediately south of the Lebanese border, and forced its Palestinian inhabitants to flee. On 5 and 6 of June, the Badiyat Al Jazira Company engaged the Israeli forces alongside the Lebanese Army at the Battle of Al Malikiya. After an intense and bloody encounter, Al Husseini's company was able to inflict heavy casualties on the Israelis and forced them to retreat from Al Malikiya on 6 June.

During the Battle of Al Malikiya Captain Al Husseini personally led repeated attacks that destroyed heavily fortified Israeli bunkers under withering enemy fire. The company took heavy losses in house-to-house engagements and Al Husseini was commended for personal bravery and valor by the Lebanese Army's Chief-of-Staff and the Syrian Army command.

The Badiyat Al Jazira Company also fought intense battles along with Lebanese forces in other parts of the Lebanese frontline including the Hirawi area near the town of Al Hula, and also alongside other Syrian troops in Samra and Al Tawafiq, on the eastern and southern banks of Lake Tabaria. Throughout these encounters it inflicted heavy casualtie on the Isrealis as well as suffering many of its own.

Ceasefire Agreements

During the war Israel had attempted unsuccessfully to capture the eastern and southern shores of Lake Tabaria and Syria's Golan Mountains. However the Syrian and Lebanese armies had held them back throughout the conflict until a ceasefire was accepted by both the Syrian and Israeli governments in 1949.

In 1949, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan signed armistice agreements with Israel with demarcation lines based primarily on military control. The Egypt-Israel demarcation line was drawn along the border between Egypt and the British mandate in Palestine, except near the Mediterranean Sea, where Egypt remained in control of the Gaza Strip.

The Lebanon-Israel demarcation line was drawn along the boundary between Lebanon and Palestine. The Jordan-Israel demarcation line followed the Jordan River, with Jordan taking control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

At the end of the hostilities on the Syrian front, however, President Al Quwatli refused to negotiate an armistice agreement with Israel. It was not until Husni Al Zaim came to power in Syria that a Syrian-Israeli armistice was signed on 20 July 1949.

The Syrian forces then withdrew from most of the territories they controlled within Palestine, west of the Syrian border and these areas were to remain demilitarized zones. Israel however disregarded these terms and sought to progressively occupy these territories resulting in frequent conflicts along its demarcation line with Syria.



1948, Lake Tabaria, Syria. Captain Ibrahim Al Husseini (third from left) commanded the Badiyat Al Jazira Company during the Palestine War. His troops were mostly Bedouin soldiers from Al Jazira Province seen here conferring with Syrian Commander next to a bunker and antitank obstacle at the battlefront.



1948, Lake Tabaria, Syria. Captain Al Husseini (right, top) with Syrian officers and soldiers of the Badiyat Al Jazira Company during the Palestine War.



1948, Syria. Captain Ibrahim Al Husseini (first on the left) with Syrian officers and soldiers of the Badiyat Al Jazira Company, during the Palestine War.



1948, Lake Tabariya, Syria. Captain Al Husseini (far right) at the Syrian battlefront during the Palestine War.

Al Husseini's personal comrades and friends who fell in the 1948 Palestine War and who's names and pictures he retained in his memoires

Lt. Kamal Almaz
Lt. Fathi Al Atassi
Maj. Mamoon Al Bitar
Lt. Kamal Al Chehabi
Lt. Sami Al Estwani
Captain Burhan bin Al Amir Hasan
Lt. Mohammad Al Jedid
Lt. Faris Al Judayfi
Lt. Kamal Al Kaikani
Lt. Saleem Al Kaldani
Lt. Marcel Al Karameh
Lt. Suleiman Al Kreidi
Lt. Nasrallah Bahjat Al Nadiri
Lt. Adel Al Naqshabandi
Lt. Faisal Al Nasif
Lt. Sulaiman Al Niazi
Lt. Saudi Al Omair
Lt. Mirza Mohammad Al Othman
Captain Omar Al Safar
Lt. Nazir Al Saman
Lt. Camil Todrug
Lt. Abdul Qader Al Yacud
Lt. Shafiq Al Ubaisi



د لقد رافقت فقيدكم الغالي بالجهاد في مرحلتين ، ولم ارَه الا قدوة ، ولم آنس منه الا ايمانا وشهامة وعزة واندفاعا ، وقد حصل لي شرف امرته في الميدان ، ولهذا فاني اعتبرت نفسي قريبا منه لدرجة الاقارب اكثر من رئيس ومرؤوس ، وفقدت بفقده زميلا عزيزا واخا حبيبا فلا حول ولا قوة الا بالله .

ملاحظة : كان استشهاده رحمه الله في ١٠ / ٦ / ١٩٤٨ الساعة ١٥ في خطوط الاعداء بالهراوي قرب الحولة

د من كتاب بعث به الرئيس ابراهيم الحسيني آمر سرية بادية الجزيرة الى والد الشهيد محمد آغا ،

كنا وعدنا القراء حين نقلنا اليهم نبأ استشهاد الضابط الادبي البطل محمد بكري آغا في ساحات الشرف بفلسطين كنا وعدناهم بكتابة كلمة عنه رحمه الله واسكنه فسيح جنانه وعزى آله والوطن العربي بفقده اجمل العزاء .

وها نحن نبر بوعدنا على قلة مالدينا من المعلومات عن شاب هو في مثل طلعة البدر وفي عمر الزهر ، وباخلاص واعان شباب الاسلام في وقعة بدر .

موجز تاريخ حياته

فقد ولد رحمه الله من ابوين كريمين

معسكرات التدريب ، غير انه ظل يواصل الالحاح حتى فاز بشرف الالتحاق بالقوات المجاهدة كما يتضح من بعض كتاباته الى والده بهذا الشأن .

شوق الانتظار

واسمعوه هو يقول بتاريخ ٤٨/٥/١٨ من دمشق : « سيدي الوالد ، لقد سار الجيش برعاية الله الى فلسطين ولم يبق سواي ، وانا مسافر ايضا بعون الله والاتكال عليه وذلك تلبية لنداء الوطن والواجب القدس يفرضان علينا طرد الصهيونيين المجرمين الخطرين على كيان



Lieutenant Mohammad Bakri Ani
Badiyat Al Jazira Company.

Lieutenant Mohammad Bakri Ani was killed in action on 10 June, shortly after joining the Badiyat Al Jazira Company, in the front-line engagement in Al Hirawi, near Hula Village. The news was reported in a Syrian newspaper and the article quotes from the condolence letter written by Captain Al Husseini to Mohammad's father describing his courage. The article also quotes from Mohammad's letter to his father telling him that he was joining the Syrian forces in Palestine to evict the criminal Zionists, who were a danger to civilization.



الجمهورية اللبنانية

عدد (٧) ١/١٩٤٠

امر عام رقم ١٣

ان الزعيم العام قائد الجيش

ينوه

على الجيش

المقدم من الجيش السوري ابراهيم الحسيني مع منحه وسام الحرب مع السعف

قائد سرية في قوى البادية ، اشترك مع سريته بتاريخ ٥ حزيران سنة ١٩٤٨ في الهجوم والاستيلاء على تحصينات العدو المتمركز في المالكية – قدس – فتميز بشجاعته ورباطة جأشه طيلة فترة القتال فساريا لجنوده مثلا اعلى في السبالة والاقدام ، فاحتل الهدف المعين له تحت وابل من نيران العدو وقد تمكن من تحطيم مقاومته الضارية وارغامه على التراجع بعد ان كبده خسائر فادحة .

بيروت في ١١ تموز سنة ١٩٤٩

Lebanese Republic
No. 7/1/1940

General Command 13

The Commander in Chief of the Army
Commends
to the Army

The Captain from the Syrian Army Ibrahim Al Husseini and awards him the war medal with fronds

As commander of a company of desert troops he participated with his company on 5 June 1948 in attacking and securing the fortifications of the enemy which had entrenched itself in Al Malikiya – Palestine – and distinguished himself with bravery and outstanding determination during the entire encounter setting a superior example for his troops of valor and initiative and secured the objective that had been set for him under a hail of enemy fire and was able to overwhelm the enemy's fierce resistance and force them to retreat after inflicting on it terrible losses

Beirut 11 July, 1949
Fouad Chehab

Beirut 11 July, 1949. Commendation Letter for Valor by the Lebanese Army Chief-of-Staff.

CHAPTER 7

1949–1954: Al Zaim to Al Shishakli Leadership Years

By the end of November 1948 much of the Palestinian territories had become occupied by Zionist forces and Syrian officers and soldiers returned from the conflict disillusioned with their political leadership and military affairs.

In early December 1948, mass demonstrations against the government broke out in Syria leading Prime Minister Jamil Mardam Bey to resign on 16 December. President Al Quwatli ordered General Husni Al Zaim to mobilize the army to restore order, and appointed Khalid Al ‘Azm as Prime Minister and Minister of Defense.

Al ‘Azm was confronted with serious economic challenges in addition to the hostile public sentiments associated with the Palestine War. He tried to control the chaotic situation by taking a series of economic and political measures.

In January 1949, Al ‘Azm’s cabinet ratified the long-delayed Trans-Arabian Pipeline (Tapline) agreement, which would deliver Saudi Arabia’s oil to the eastern Mediterranean and raise transit tariffs to the Syrian government. Tapline had started construction in 1947 and was due to terminate in Palestine at the port city of Haifa. Its progress had been delayed however by the Palestine War and it needed to be re-routed across Syria and Lebanon in order to terminate at the port city of Saida. However Syria’s parliament blocked the approval for this project due to Iraqi and British lobbying because it would compete with Iraqi oil exports to the Mediterranean, which also crossed Syria through Iraq’s pre-existing pipeline system.

On 20 March 1949, Al ‘Azm’s cabinet next announced that it would take part in the delayed armistice talks with Israel, a decision that was highly unpopular among Syrians and led to widespread demonstrations across the country.

In early 1949, the relationship between Al Zaim and Al ‘Azm became confrontational when Al ‘Azm accused Al Zaim of military incompetence and profiteering during the war by purchasing faulty weapons and inadequate supplies for the army. Al ‘Azm also informed Al Zaim at this time that he was planning widespread cuts to the army’s salaries and benefits, and delays to all the army’s promotions. Al Zaim objected to these measures and requested in turn several reforms relating to the military, all of which were turned down by Al Quwatli and Al ‘Azm.

As a consequence to these conflicts, Al Zaim gathered his key officers in a secret meeting and began planning a coup to overthrow the Al Quwatli government. Al Husseini had become close with Al Zaim during the war and he attended the meeting. By early 1949 he had been promoted to the rank of Major and appointed Chief of the Syria’s Military Police and Army Intelligence.

30 March 1949: Husni Al Zaim's Coup

In the early hours of 30 March 1949, Major Al Husseini was tasked with the responsibility by Al Zaim to arrest President Al Quwatli and escort him to the Mezzeh Prison along with Prime Minister Al 'Azm, all the cabinet and other political and parliamentary leaders. This assignment was completed that same night in an orderly manner without any bloodshed or violence.

Upon taking power, Al Zaim appointed Muhsin Al Barazi as Prime Minister, promoted Colonel Sami Al Hinnawi to General and Chief-of-Staff and promoted Al Shishakli to General and Deputy Chief-of-Staff. Al Husseini continued as Chief of Syria's Military Police and Army Intelligence.

Shortly after the coup, Al Zaim's government was recognized by the U.S., U.K. and France. His government developed close ties with Saudi Arabia and was formally recognized by King Farouk of Egypt in April 1949 after an official visit by Al Zaim and a senior delegation of Syrian officers. He improved relations with Turkey by withdrawing Syria's claim over the Sanjak of Alexandretta and on 16 May 1949 his government approved the long-delayed Tapline accord with Saudi Arabia.

In order to resolve the border issues with Israel, Al Zaim appointed General Fawzi Selu to the Syrian-Israeli armistice talks, and a ceasefire agreement with Israel was signed on 20 July 1949. Syrian proposals by Al Zaim's administration for a comprehensive peace settlement however were not taken up by Israel.

Within Syria, Al Zaim attempted to modernize the society by reducing the influence of religious leaders and feudal landlords, and by granting women the right to vote and run in elections for public office.

Relations between Syria and Lebanon deteriorated however when Al Zaim granted political asylum to Antoun Sa'adeh, the head of the Syrian Socialist National Party (SSNP). The SSNP called for the overthrow of the Lebanese government by force, if necessary, and called for a federal union of Lebanon with Syria, Jordan and Palestine. On 7 July, Al Zaim reversed his attitude towards the SSNP and ordered Sa'adeh's secret extradition to Lebanon. The Lebanese authorities proceeded to try him in a military court for treason and he was executed by the Lebanese government on 8 July 1949.

Al Shishakli, a staunch supporter of the SSNP, along with many of Al Zaim's military subordinates, including Al Husseini, had repeatedly advised against extraditing Sa'adeh to Lebanon and were shocked by this development.

14 August to 19 December 1949: Sami Al Hinnawi's Junta

The Sa'adeh affair led to the 14 August 1949 coup by Al Hinnawi and Al Shishakli against Al Zaim. Al Zaim was summarily executed with Prime Minister Al Barazi that same morning in collusion with Al Zaim's personal security officer, Captain Abdul Hamid Al Sarraj.

An attempt to arrest Major Al Husseini that night failed when he put up a vigorous single-handed armed resistance with no assistance except from his wife Myassar Bach Imam. Al Husseini surrendered in the morning after receiving personal assurances for his safety by Al Shishakli.

He was then held in detention for one month and after he was found innocent of any charges, he was appointed Commander of the army division based in Dara'a on the Syrian border with Israel.

Upon taking power, General Al Hinnawi established a military junta and restored Syria's parliament with Hashem Al Atassi as Prime Minister. A new electoral law was adopted and in the subsequent elections, Al Atassi was elected President of the Syrian Republic. Al Hinnawi and Al Atassi both continued to favor a union with Iraq and Al Atassi appointed the pro-Iraqi leader of the People's Party, Nazim Al Qudsi, as Prime Minister.

General Al Shishakli however was strongly opposed to a union with the pro-British monarchy of Iraq and on 19 December 1949 he ordered the arrest of Al Hinnawi and other pro-Iraqi officers. Al Hinnawi was exiled to Beirut, but was assassinated on 31 October 1950 by Hersho Al Barazi, a cousin of Muhsin Al Barazi, the former Prime Minister under Husni Al Zaim.

19 December 1949 to February 1954: Adib Al Shishakli's Presidency

General Al Shishakli recalled Al Husseini from Dara'a and re-appointed him Chief of Military Police and Army Intelligence with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

In late 1950, as a result of continued subversion by Israeli infiltrators, Al Husseini was given a special assignment to re-organize and modernize the Syrian Army's School of Commandos and its Special Forces. After completing this task with exceptional success, he attended in November 1951 the Ecole d'Application de l'Arme Blindée et de la Cavalerie in Saumur, France. Upon completing the program on 2 July 1952 he returned to Syria and was assigned the command of Syria's army division in Aleppo.

During Al Shishakli's initial tenure, Al Atassi continued in office as Syria's President. However when he initiated unification discussions with the Iraqi government, including receiving in Syria Iraq's Crown Prince Abd Al Illah and Iraq's King Faisal II, Al Shishakli took action to thwart Al Atassi's initiatives.

Al Shishakli demanded that his close ally General Fawzi Selu be appointed Minister of Defense, which Al Atassi accepted reluctantly only to appoint in December 1951 Ma'arouf Al Dawalibi, a pro-Iraqi member of the People's Party, as Prime Minister. Al Dawalibi accepted the appointment but refused to give the Ministry of Defense portfolio to General Selu.

As a result of this conflict, Al Shishakli arrested Al Dawalibi as well as other pro-Hashemite statesmen and many members of the People's Party. In protest, President Al Atassi disbanded the parliament and resigned on 24 December 1951, and spearheaded the opposition to military rule.

Al Shishakli then appointed Selu as Syria's President, Prime Minister and Chief-of-Staff and retained for himself the office of Deputy Chief-of-Staff. Al Husseini was promoted to full Colonel and assigned the office of Chief of Police and National Security.

On 23 July 1952, the Egyptian Free Officers Movement led by Mohammad Naguib and Gamal Abdul Nasser toppled the Egyptian monarchy and established a revolutionary government with a strong nationalistic agenda with particular hostility towards the U.K. and France. They established cordial relations with Syria but were viewed with concern by the Hashemite monarchies of Jordan and Iraq.

Although Syrian relations with the Hashemites of Iraq were poor during this time, Al Shishakli befriended King Talal of Jordan as he had no ambitions in Syria, and sought good relations with Lebanon, Egypt and the West. He nevertheless maintained Syria's uncompromising hostility towards Israel which had exerted constant efforts to undermine the Syrian government. The proliferation of political parties also gave him a growing concern with a particular sense of distrust of the Communists, Ba'athist, Muslim Brotherhood and Nasserites.

In August 1952, Al Shishakli established the Arab Liberation Movement Party and on 11 July 1953 staged a national election in Syria and was elected President of the Syrian Republic. Fawzi Selu was dismissed as Prime Minister and left for Saudi Arabia where he became an advisor to HM King Saud and then his brother HRH Prince Faisal.

As the new President, Al Shishakli dissolved all political parties, outlawed hostile newspapers, and banished the Ba'ath leaders Akram Al Hawrani, Michel Aflaq, and Salah Al Bitar to Lebanon.

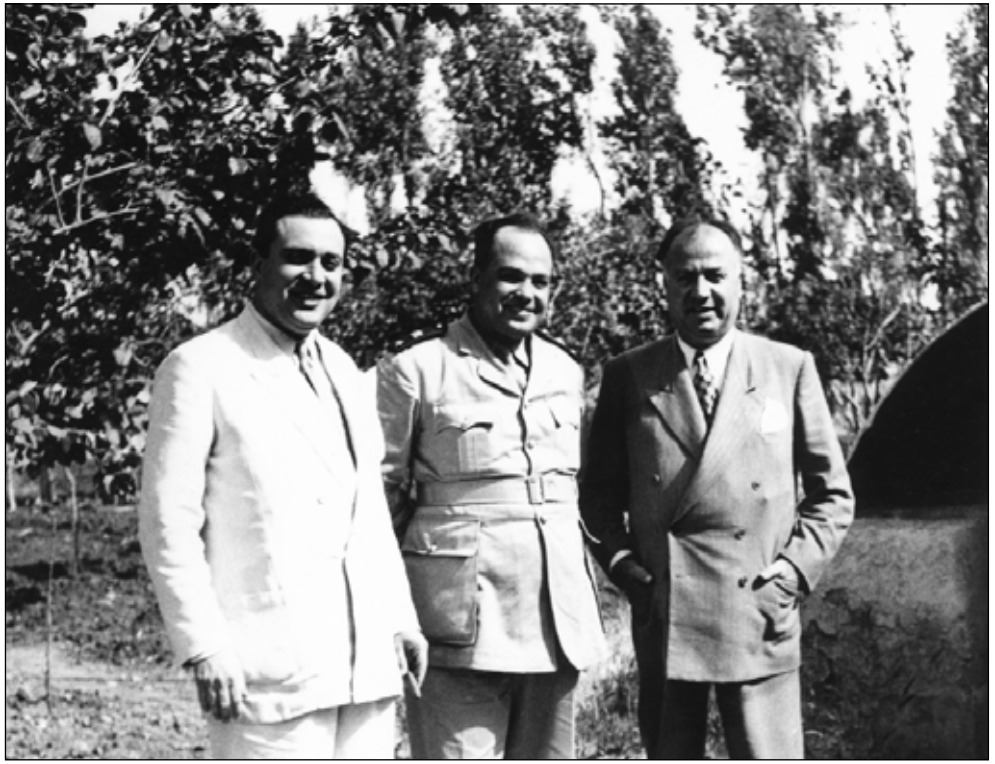
Throughout the rise of Al Shishakli to power, Al Husseini remained his primary ally in charge of state security. However during 1953, as Al Shishakli continued to concentrate all political power and suppress all independent political movements, a growing resistance against his regime began to build up within Syria.

Al Shishakli decided to take strong measures to suppress all such resistance and outlawed all political parties other than his own Arab Liberation Movement. Al Husseini repeatedly advised Al Shishakli against such unilateral decisions and on several occasions refused Al Shishakli orders to use deadly force to suppress civilian demonstrations.

In late 1953 Al Shishakli became concerned with Al Husseini's reluctance to deploy military force to suppress Druze opposition to his government and to launch a deadly military campaign against their communities. He relieved him from his security posting and transferred him on 1 January 1954 to Washington D.C. as Syria's Military Attaché.

Al Shishakli continued to clash with various Syrian political factions, and resorted to shelling Druze strongholds to put down their resistance in the Jabal Al Druze region. In February 1954 a large anti-Shishakli gathering took place in the house of former President Al Atassi in Homs, and was attended by Druze leader Sultan Al Atrash, Syrian officers, pro-Hashemite politicians, and members of the Communist and Ba'ath parties.

By 24 February 1954 growing discontent and violence, which continued to spread across the Syrian cities, left Al Shishakli with no choice but to either escalate the violence or resign his office and depart from Syria. Not wanting to cause any further bloodshed or pit Syrians against each other, Al Shishakli opted to resign and departed into exile in Lebanon, and from there travelled to Saudi Arabia.



April 1949, Damascus, Syria. Nazir Fansah (left), brother-in-law and friend of General Husni Al Zaim, Major Al Husseini and Said Kuraiha.



April 1949, Damascus, Syria. General Husni Al Zaim, right.



April 1949, Damascus, Syria. L to R: Two Syrian officers, General Sami Al Hinnawi and Major Al Husseini.



April 1949, Damascus, Syria. President Husni Al Zaim and Major Al Husseini, Commander of Syria's Military Police.



1949, Damascus, Syria. Al Zaim at an official function.



1949, Syrian-Jordanian Border. Major Al Husseini (left) and Al Zaim at a border inspection.



1949, Damascus, Syria. U.S. Military Attaché congratulating General Husni Al Zaim on establishing Syria's new government.



1949, Damascus, Syria. Hashim Al Atassi addressing the parliament after Husni Al Zaim's coup. Syria's Prime Minister Muhsin Al Barazi (far right) and Major Al Husseini (behind Al Zaim).



7 July 1949, Alexandria, Egypt. Visit to Egypt to receive the Order of the Nile medal from HM King Farouk.
L To R: General Anwar Banoud, Deputy Chief-of-Staff, Syrian Army; Major Ibrahim Al Husseini, Head of Military Police, Syrian Army; and Kaem Maqam Omar Hasan, Egypt's Deputy Head of Security.



1949, Beirut, Lebanon. Lebanese Prime Minister Riad Al Solh awarding Lebanon’s Order of Military Merit medal to Major Al Husseini.



1949, Beirut, Lebanon. Lebanese President Bechara Al Khouri awarding Lebanon’s Order of the Cedars medal to Major Al Husseini.



14 August 1949, Damascus, Syria. Seated: General Sami Al Hinnawi (center), General Adib Al Shishakli (to his left) and Major Khaled Jada (to his right). Standing behind Al Hinnawi: Major Mohammad Ma'arouf (to his right) and Major Essam Al Mariul (to his left).



19 December 1949, Damascus, Syria. General Adib Al Shishakli, head of the military from 19 December 1949 to 10 July 1953, and President from 11 July 1953 to 24 February 1954.



September 1949, Dera'a, Syria. Major Al Husseini during his command of the infantry division along the Israeli border where he was assigned by Al Hinnawi's regime.



1949, Aleppo, Syria. Major Al Husseini in Aleppo where he participated in armored and mechanized army exercises.



1951, Jabal Al Shaikh (Mt. Hermon), Syria. General Adib Al Shishakli (third from right) inspects the commando forces and the commandos training school which had been re-organized by Lieutenant-Colonel Al Husseini (third from left).



1952, Saumur, France. Lieutenant-Colonel Al Husseini.





1952, Saumur, France. Military training assignment in ground to air armor coordination and tactics. Lieutenant-Colonel Al Husseini at far right.



Mr and Mrs Al Husseini with sons Hassan and Sadad visiting Saumur France.



1952, Damascus, Syria. President Adib Al Shishakli and Al Husseini, Chief of Police and National Security.



17 April 1952, Damascus, Syria. National Day parade.



1952 Damascus, Syria. Emir of Kuwait, Abdullah Al Salim Al Sabah meeting Lieutenant-Colonel Al Husseini.



L to R: Lieutenant-Colonel Al Husseini, the Emir of Kuwait and Head of Presidential Palace Protocol Walid Rifai.





1952, Damascus, Syria. Syria’s President Fawzi Selu and Lieutenant-Colonel Al Husseini, Chief of Police and National Security.





1952, Damascus, Syria. Aleppo lawyer Asa'ad Kourani with Lieutenant-Colonel Al Husseini. Kourani was appointed Syria's Minister of Justice and Religious Endowments by Husni Al Zaim and initiated substantial reforms in the civil, commercial and criminal codes, including implementation of voting rights for women.





1952, Damascus, Syria. Lieutenant-Colonel Al Husseini accompanying Major General Ali Al Naguib, brother of Mohammad Al Naguib of Egypt, during state visit to Syria.
On 23 July 1952, the Free Officers led by General Mohammad Al Naguib and Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser deposed Egypt's King Farouk and established the Egyptian Republic.



1953, Damascus, Syria. General Adib Al Shishakli congratulates Chief of Police and National Security Al Husseini on his promotion to full Colonel.



1953, Damascus, Syria. Major Husein Al Kadi, Commander of the Military Police, and Colonel Al Husseini, Head of Police and National Security, at a football match in honor of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Saud ibn Abdul Aziz.



1953, Lebanese-Syrian Border. Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Syria, Abdul Aziz Al Zaid, Lebanon's Prime Minister Riyad Al Solh and Colonel Al Husseini, ahead of visit to Damascus by Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia HRH Saud ibn Abdul Aziz.



1953, Damascus, Syria. Officials waiting the arrival of the Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, HRH Saud ibn Abdul Aziz.



1953, Damascus, Syria. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, HRH Saud, arriving at the Al Midan football stadium flanked by General Al Shishakli to his right, and to his left General Fawzi Selu and Colonel Al Husseini.



1953, Damascus, Syria. Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, HRH Saud ibn Abdul Aziz, introduced to Colonel Al Husseini, Syria's Head of Police and National Security.



1953, Damascus, Syria. HRH Prince Sultan ibn Abdul Aziz (center), Abdul Aziz Al Zaid (to his left), at the "Nadi Al Sharq" dinner reception in honor of HRH Crown Prince Saud ibn Abdul Aziz.



1953, Damascus, Syria. Colonel Al Husseini and Mrs. Myassar Bach Imam Al Husseini.



1953, Damascus, Syria. Mrs. Myassar Al Husseini (first on the left) and Mrs. Al Shishakli (first on the right).



1953, Damascus, Syria. L to R: Major Riyad Kablani, Colonel Al Husseini, Chief of Police and National Security, and General Shawkat Shafiq, Chief of Staff of the Syrian Army, at the Midan Football Stadium.



1953, Damascus, Syria. Mrs. Myassar Bach Imam Al Husseini and Colonel Al Husseini.



1953, Damascus, Syria. L to R: seated, unnamed lady, Mrs. Al Husseini, Mrs. Al Shishakli; standing second from left: Mrs. Wedad and Mrs. Suad Zehdi, sisters of Ibrahim Al Husseini at presidential elections.



L to R: unknown lady, Mrs. Husseini, Mrs. Shishakli, and unknown lady.



10 July 1953, Damascus, Syria. Mrs. Al Husseini voting at the Syrian presidential elections and her sister Najat Bach Imam in the foreground, right, registering to vote.



Syrian ladies at voting booth.



1953, Damascus, Syria. L to R: Colonel Al Husseini, Minister of Interior General Rifat Khankan and Hamid Mardini, Mayor of Damascus.



L to R: Hamid Mardini, Rifat Khankan and Ibrahim Al Husseini.



1953, Damascus, Syria. Colonel Al Husseini (center), General Khankan to his right, and Syrian parliamentarians.



1953, Damascus, Syria. General Al Shishakli sharing the results of the presidential election with Colonel Al Husseini.



1953, Damascus, Syria. Luncheon in honor of Lebanese President Camille Chamoun. L to R: Camille Chamoun, Lebanese Army Chief-of-Staff, General Yousef Salem, Colonel Al Husseini and General Adib Al Shishakli.





1953, Damascus, Syria. Colonel Al Husseini at graduation ceremony of police and security officers.



1953, Maloula Village, Syria. Colonel Al Husseini visiting Mar Bachus Sarkis Monastery.



1953, Damascus, Syria. L to R: General Adib Shishakli, Colonel Husseini and Colonel Amin Nefuri.

CHAPTER 8

1954–1957: Syria's Military Attaché

Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini arrived in Washington D.C. in early January 1954 when only two months later Syria's President Adib Al Shishakli resigned the presidency and departed from Syria.

The country split among three opposing military factions, one in Damascus, another in Aleppo and a third in Ar Raqqa. Meanwhile Israel mobilized 100,000 troops on Syria's border and appeared intent on capturing Syria's Golan Heights.

On Sunday 28 February, as the risk of a civil war in Syria became very real, Al Husseini who was close to all three factions travelled from the U.S. to Damascus, via Paris and Beirut, intending to reconcile the three camps.

Upon arriving in Damascus, he learned that Hashim Al Atassi's faction had succeeded in containing the conflict and it had been agreed to elect Al Atassi as interim President.

Al Husseini then met with General Shawkat Al Shukair, the Commander of the Army's Second Division and other friends, and requested a diplomatic posting closer to Syria. He returned to Washington D.C. soon thereafter and was subsequently transferred to Rome in August 1954, as Military Attaché at the Syrian Embassy.

Meanwhile President Hashim Al Atassi appointed Sabri Al Assali as the new Prime Minister and restored into session the Syrian parliament, which had been dismissed by General Al Shishakli.



May 1954, United States. Military Attaché Colonel Al Husseini at the Syrian Embassy in Washington D.C.



1954, Rome, Italy. Colonel Al Husseini and Syria's Ambassador Zaki Al Jabi, to his left, present their accreditation papers to the Italian government.



1955, Italy. Al Husseini touring the Fiat Military Aircraft Industry.



1955, Italy. Ibrahim Al Husseini, center of photo.



1955, Rome, Italy. Ambassador Zaki Al Jabi and Mrs. Myassar Al Husseini co-hosting a reception at the Syrian Embassy on the occasion of Syria's National Day. Norwegian Military Attaché and his wife being welcomed by Mrs. Al Husseini.



Rome, Italy. Reception at the U.S. Embassy. Colonel Al Husseini and Colonel Gervaise Chillick, U.S. Assistant Army Attaché.



1956, Rome, Italy. Colonel Al Husseini and Egypt's Military Attaché Colonel Omar Al Shakib.



1956, Rome, Italy. Colonel Al Husseini with guests at a reception.
At right Princess Fatima Begum, Head of the Afghani Delegation in Rome.



1956, Rome, Italy. Colonel Al Husseini (third from left) at Italian National Day parade.



1956, Italy. Syria's President Shukri Al Quwatli (center) arriving in Rome where Colonel Al Husseini briefed him of Israeli, British and French plans to attack Egypt and the Suez Canal months before the event.



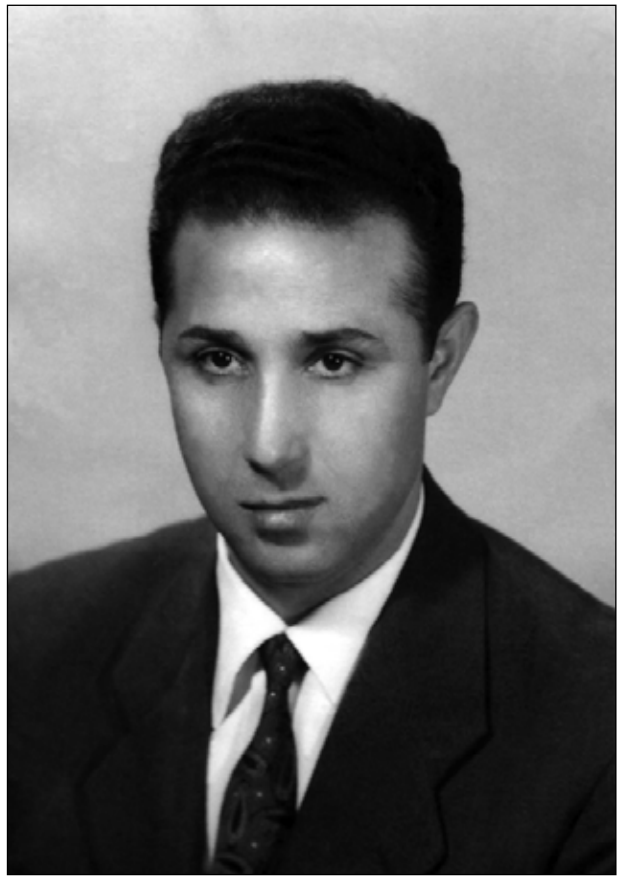
1956, Rome, Italy. L to R: Ambassador Zaki Al Jabi, President Shukri Al Quwatli, his daughter Hana Al Quwatli, and Colonel Al Husseini.



1956, Rome, Italy. Khalid Al ‘Azm, Syria’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and later Minister of Defense and Mrs. Al ‘Azm received by Colonel Al Husseini.



1956, Rome, Italy. Colonel Al Husseini and daughter Najat in the background at a Syrian Embassy reception.





Algerian War of Independence
1954–1962

1956, Rome, Italy. Note expressing friendship sent by Ahmad Ben Bella, one of the key leaders of the Algerian Liberation Front (FLN), to Ibrahim Al Husseini. Between 1954 and August 1957 Al Husseini became deeply involved with the Arab nationalist movement in Algeria against the French colonization. He undertook these activities while he was Syria's Military Attaché in Rome, without political or material support from Damascus and with great hostility from France. He assisted the FLN with arms logistics and became known as "Al Husseini Al Jaza'iri" (Algerian Al Husseini). In 1956 Ben Bella's flight to Rome was intercepted by the French military and he was arrested and jailed until 1962. He re-entered politics thereafter and became Algeria's first elected president from 1963 to 1965.

Rise of the Nasserites and Abdul Hamid Al Sarraj

In March 1955, Abdul Hamid Al Sarraj, who had been close to Al Shishakli and had been posted as Deputy Military Attaché at the Syrian Embassy in Paris was recalled to Syria and appointed Chief of Military Police. Al Sarraj was a strong sympathizer of the Nasserite movement and hostile to the Ba'ath Party.

A month after his return to Syria, Al Sarraj planted a false report in the Syrian media that Al Shishakli and Al Husseini were preparing a coup to overthrow the government. Al Husseini was in Rome at that time and these spurious accusations were quickly denied by Syria's leadership and retracted by the Syrian press.

Meanwhile relations between Syria and Egypt had improved steadily and in August 1955 Shukri Al Quwatli was invited to return from exile in Egypt and was elected Syria's President in September 1955. In February 1956 he formed a government of national unity which included Khalid Al 'Azm, a strong pro-Nasserite sympathizer, as Minister of Defense.

Tensions between Egypt and the British and French governments were escalating throughout this time along with a growing regional Soviet presence and U.S. concerns regarding Soviet influence and communism. The tensions between Egypt, France and the U.K. culminated on 26 July 1956 with the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal and the expelling of all U.K. forces from Egyptian territories.

In July 1956, Al Husseini sent a secret report to Syria's General Army Command that Israel had gathered a substantial force of French armored vehicles and was attempting to purchase American armored vehicles in preparation for an attack on Egypt.

In August 1956, Al Quwatli flew to Rome and met at length with Al Husseini and the Syrian Ambassador Zaki Al Jabi and was fully briefed in regards to the British, French and Israeli preparations for a coordinated military action against Egypt.

The attack did in fact take place on 29 October 1956, when Israel invaded the Sinai Peninsula, followed by the British and French occupation of the Suez Canal on 7 November 1956.

In early 1957, Al Quwatli sought to reduce the Nasserite influence in Syria by appointing the Ba'athist leader Akram Al Hawrani as Speaker of Parliament, and Salah Al Din Bitar, the co-founder of the Ba'ath Party, as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Al Husseini who had requested to be re-assigned to Syria was instead offered the position of Syria's Ambassador to Spain. He traveled to Madrid in early March 1957 to prepare for this transfer.

In March 1957, Al Quwatli and his pro-Western Chief-of-Staff General Nizam Al Din attempted to transfer Al Sarraj and other pro-Nasserite officers out of key army offices but their attempts were thwarted by the Defense Minister Khalid Al 'Azm and Akram Al Hawrani.

In the May 1957 Syrian parliamentary elections, pro-Nasserite candidates won a majority of the seats and Al Sarraj and his pro-Nasserite allies in the military took control of the Syrian parliament.

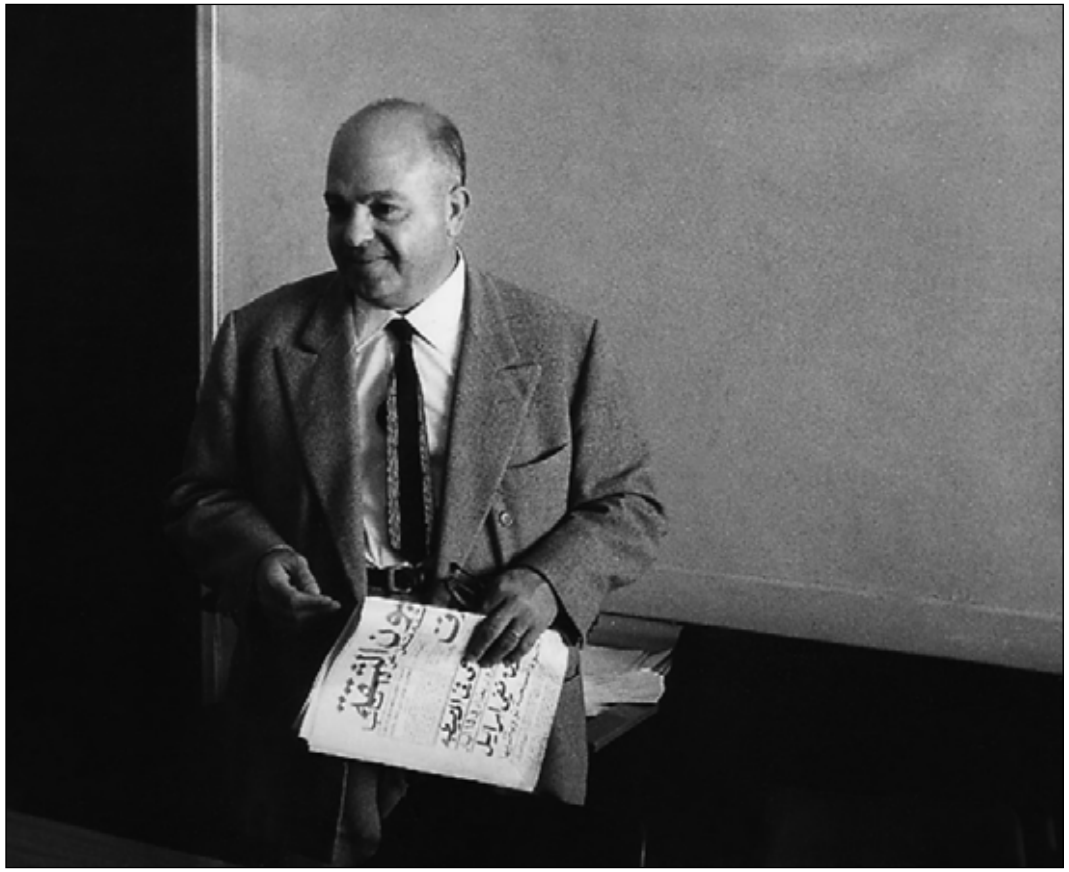
Nasserites Take Control of the Military in Syria

On the morning of 12 August 1957 Al Sarraj announced that Al Husseini had travelled secretly to Damascus on the night of 11 August in order to coordinate an American plot with Al Shishakli to overthrow the Syrian government.

Radio Damascus then announced on the morning of 12 August that Al Husseini had already been arrested in Damascus that morning. In fact Al Husseini had been in Rome all along as was confirmed by a personal early morning call on 12 August from Syria's Minister of Foreign Affairs to Al Husseini's home in Rome.

Al Husseini was nevertheless tried in absentia but none of the conspiracy claims would be shown to have merit. Rather than contesting these fabricated charges and placing his future in the hands of a hostile government, Al Husseini opted for self-imposed exile in Rome and was granted political asylum by the Italian government.

Within months, hundreds of Syrian officers who were not in favor of a pro-Nasserite government were purged from service and Al Sarraj and his close allies secured control of the Syrian armed forces for the Nasserite movement.



13 August 1957, Rome, Italy. Colonel Al Husseini learned from the Syrian radio newscast on 12 August 1957 that he had been arrested in Damascus on 12 August while he was actually in Rome and had talked by phone to Syria's Minister of Foreign Affairs.







1960, Rome, Italy. Asali (second from left), Said Mahassen (far right).

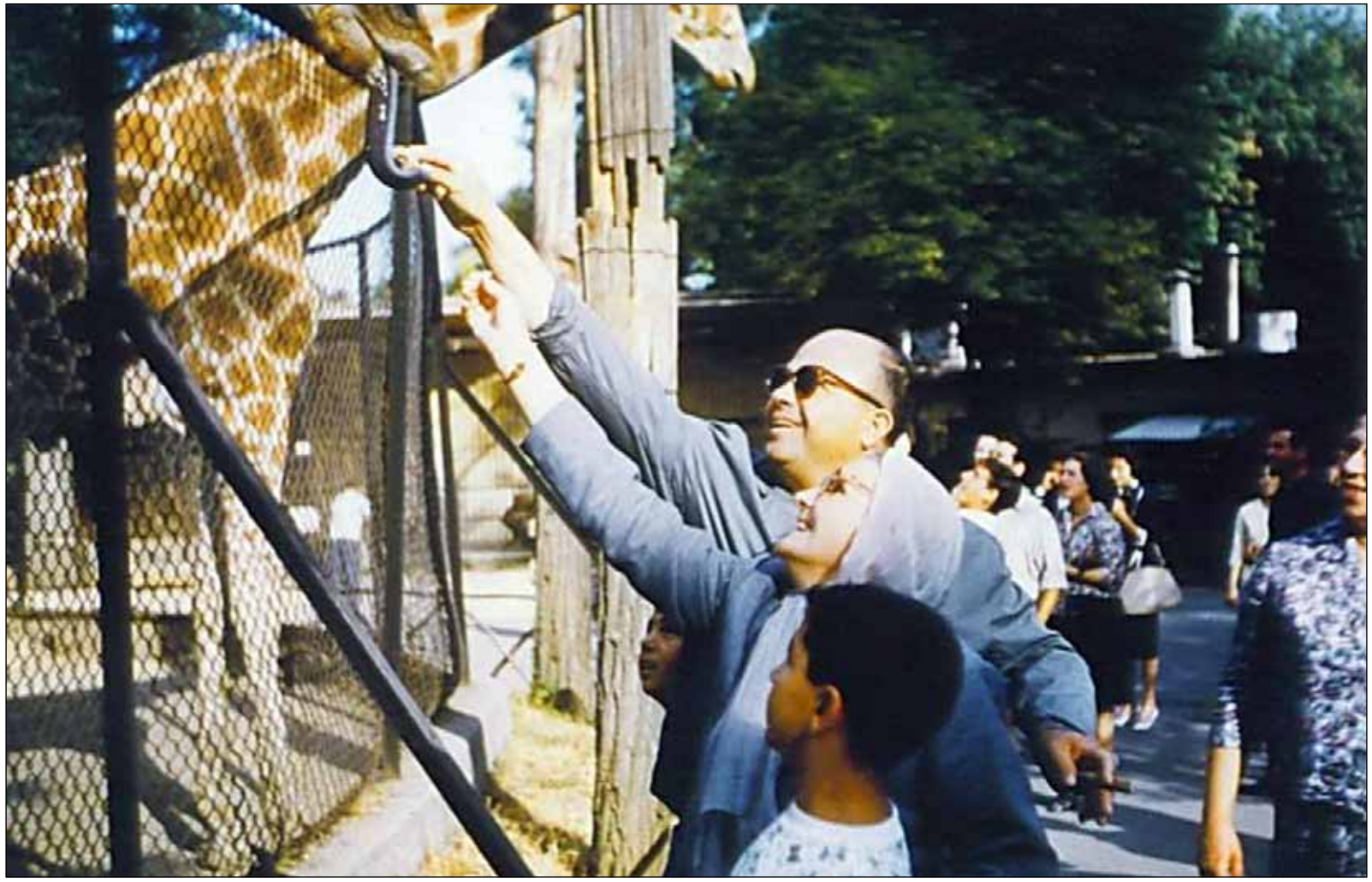
L to R: Ibrahim Al Husseini, Mohammed Ayubi, Khalid Mahasen, Syria's Ambassador to Italy Abdullah Ziadeh; Said Mahasen; Syria's Ambassador to France As'ad Mahassin visiting from Paris, and families. Mrs Al Husseini seated across from her husband.



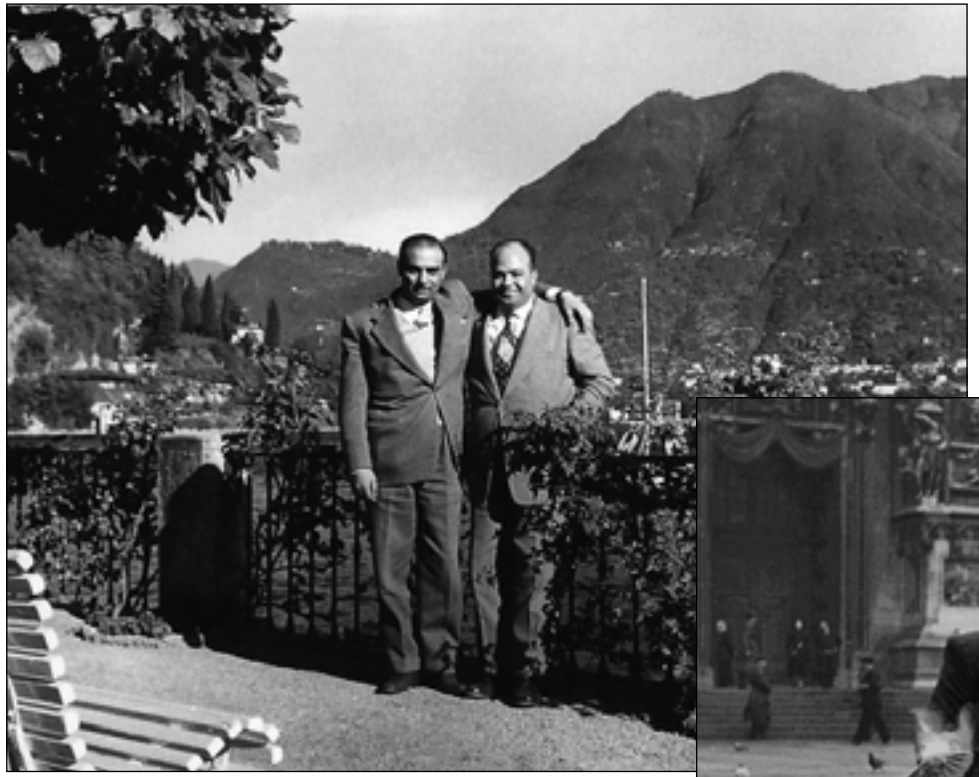
1961, Rome, Italy. Adib Al Shishakli on a visit from Saudi Arabia to meet Al Husseini.



1961, Venice, Italy. Colonel Al Husseini and Mrs. Al Husseini.



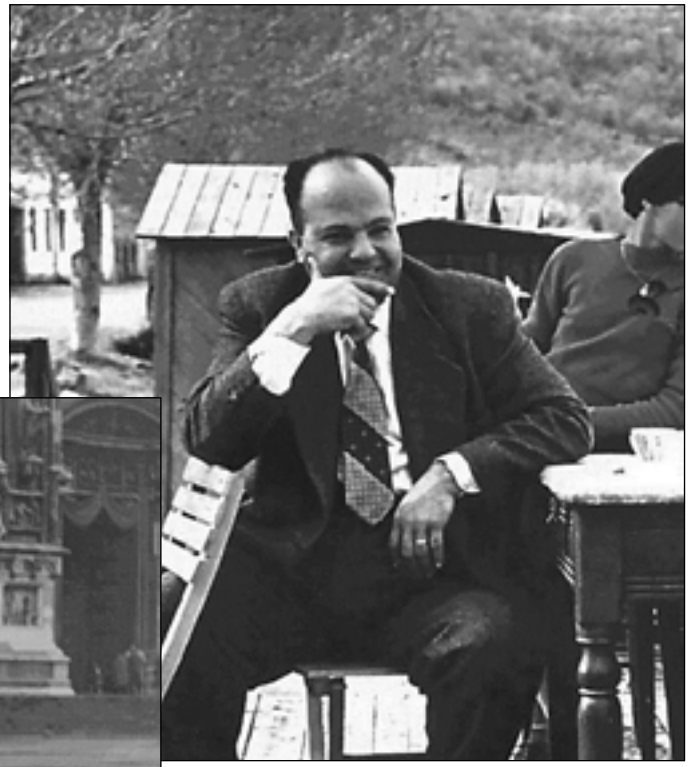
1961, Rome Zoo, Italy. Ibrahim Al Husseini with his mother Lam'an during her visit to Rome. Son Moujahed in the foreground, Mrs Myassar Al Husseini is at the right edge of the photo and son Ihsan is immediately behind his father.



1961, northern Italy. Al Husseini with brother-in-law Tawfiq Hoboubati, husband of Asma.



1961, Venice, Italy. Al Husseini with Walid Rifai.



Outside of Rome at Lake Bracciano.

CHAPTER 9

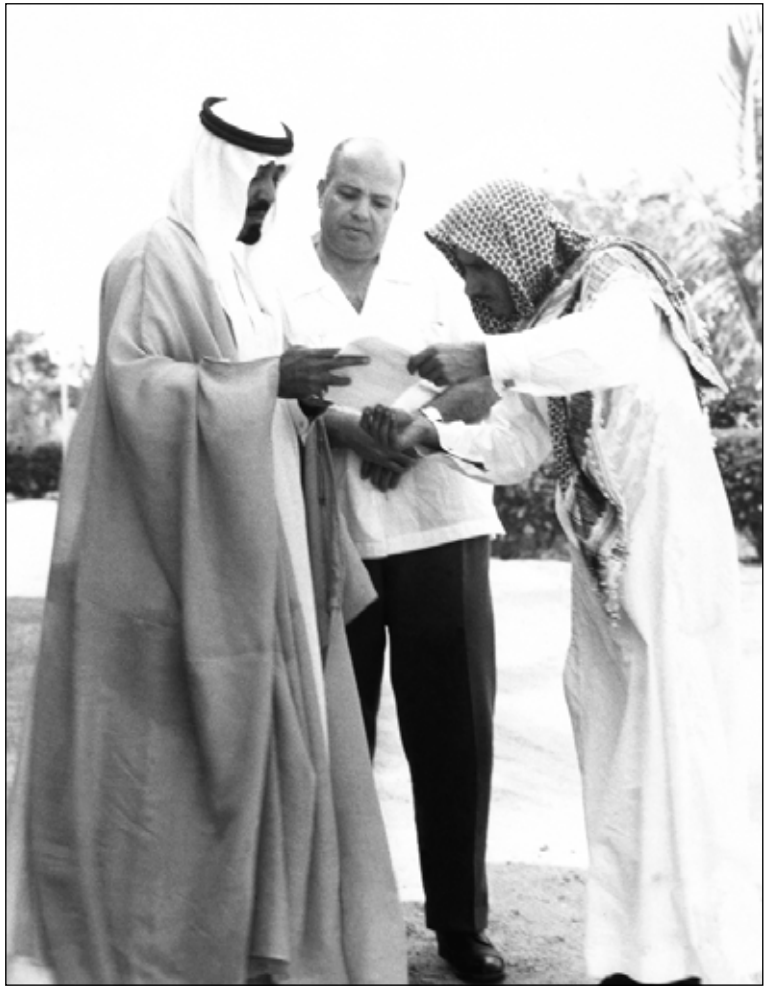
1961–1968: Creation of the Modern Saudi Arabian National Guard

In late 1961, after residing four years in Rome, Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini accepted an invitation from the Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, to assist the Saudi government in organizing the country's military defenses and domestic security.

Shortly after Al Husseini's arrival in Ar Riyadh, he re-newed a close friendship with Prince Abd Allah ibn Abdul Aziz who had been designated the new Commander of the Saudi National Guard. The Prince invited Al Husseini to be his Special Advisor and assist him in upgrading and modernizing the National Guard.

Over the course of the following six years Al Husseini proposed and oversaw detailed plans and programs for this purpose which resulted in a far-reaching modernization of the National Guard.

While in Saudi Arabia, Al Husseini also negotiated on behalf of the Kingdom delicate international matters, including the defining of the Kingdom's borders along the partitioned Neutral Zones with Kuwait and Jordan.



1963, Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Commander of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, Prince Abd Allah ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, with Special Advisor Ibrahim Al Husseini.

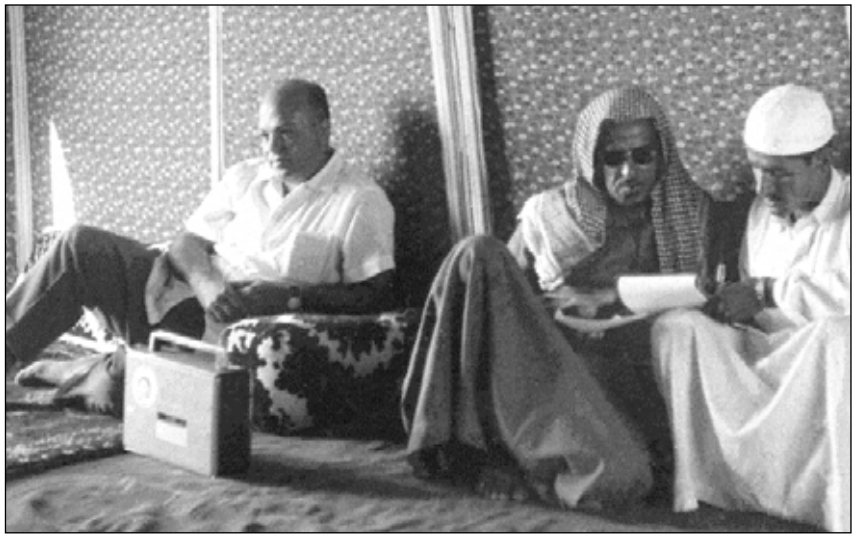


July 1964, Taif, Saudi Arabia. Al Husseini touring the Al Hejaz Mountains.



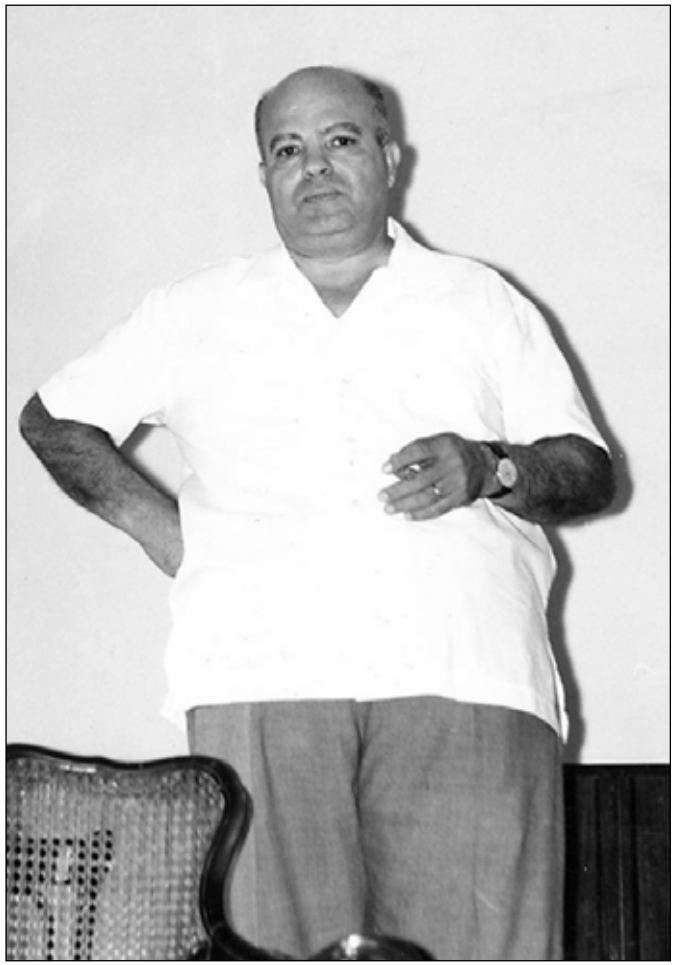
1964, Taif, Saudi Arabia. Al Husseini at the desert camp of the National Guard.







Summer 1964, Taif, Saudi Arabia. Al Husseini surveying regions in the Al Hejaz Mountains.



1964, Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
Ibrahim Al Husseini at home.



1964, Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Al Husseini touring the historical Al Masmak Fort.



1966, East of Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia's National Guard preparing for ceremonial parade and field exercise. The Guard was transformed in four years into a modern military force through the leadership of HRH Prince Abd Allah ibn Abdul Aziz and Al Husseini's guidance.



1966, East of Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Arrival of HM King Faisal at the ceremony with HRH Prince Abd Allah.



1966, East of Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Al Husseini directing the parade and field exercise demonstrating the National Guard's new exceptional mobility, communication and fire power capabilities.



1966, East of Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The National Guard's new highly versatile, mechanized and rapid deployment brigades were designed to be particularly suited for flexible deployment in Saudi Arabia.



1966, East of Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Each National Guard brigade includes units of highly mobile, rapid deployment teams armed with heavy automatic weaponry.



1966, East of Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Al Husseini reviewing the deployment capabilities of the modernized National Guard, which was particularly well suited for operations on challenging terrains.



1966, East of Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. HM King Faisal and dignitaries show appreciation for the National Guard's maneuvering capabilities, mobility, and accurate fire power.



1966, East of Ar Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. HM King Faisal compliments HRH Prince Abd Allah on the achievements of the National Guard under his leadership.

1967: Arab-Israeli War and the fall of the Golan Heights

At the height of Egypt's confrontation with Israel in 1967 President Gamal Abdul Nasser chose to close Red Sea access to Israel through the Gulf of Aqaba and intensified threats to initiate an open conflict. Israel retaliated on 5 June 1967 by launching a surprise air attack against Egypt and destroyed the bulk of the Egyptian air force within a few hours of battle. Jordan, Iraq and Syria then joined Egypt in the conflict but were unable to prevent the Israeli forces from occupying the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza, the Palestinian West Bank and Jerusalem. A ceasefire was accepted by Jordan and Israel on 7 June and by Egypt on 8 June 1967.

At the beginning of the hostilities, Syria's air force suffered severe losses in early skirmishes and withdrew from the front lines throughout the war. The Syrian Army, which had been purged of 4,000 non-Ba'athist officers between 1965 and 1967, had initially limited itself to shelling the Israeli territories from behind its front line on the Golan Heights.

On 9 and 10 June however, the Israeli ground forces attacked the Syrian front line and were faced with disorganized resistance. They quickly overran Syria's front line on the Golan Heights and the Syrian forces retreated in chaos towards Damascus. A ceasefire followed between Syria and Israel on 10 June.

Al Husseini rallies anti-Ba'athist Syrians in exile

The disastrous outcome of the June 1967 War led Colonel Al Husseini and a number of prominent Syrian political and military officials who were living in exile to conclude they could not stand by idle while Syria was being destroyed under a self-serving regime.

Al Husseini then formed an influential association of anti-Ba'athist Syrian leaders living abroad and established a Syrian opposition group which sought to overthrow the Ba'athist regime in Syria.

These plans were terminated abruptly by Al Husseini's death on 18 December 1968 in a car accident in Saudi Arabia.

At the time of his death, Colonel Al Husseini was survived by his wife Myassar Bach Imam, daughter Najat, and sons Hassan, Sadad, Haitham, Moujahed and Ihsan, all of whom remained in Saudi Arabia as Saudi Arabian citizens.



1967, Isfahan, Iran. Al Husseini travelled across many countries in the Middle East rallying and receiving strong support from the Syrian community in exile against the Syrian Ba'athist regime.



20 December 1968, Al Madina Al Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia. Ibrahim Al Husseini died in a car accident on 18 December on the road in northern Saudi Arabia. On 20 December 1968 a special flight was provided by the Saudi Arabian Royal Court for his family and friends to accompany his body to Al Madina Al Munawwarah, where he was buried with honors in the Janatu'l Baqi Cemetery.



2018, Janatu’l Baqi Cemetery, Al Madina Al Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
Final resting place of Ibrahim ibn Abdul Rahman ibn Othman Al Husseini.