



*His late Majesty
King Faisal I*

The Royal Family of Iraq

WITH the establishment of the Kingdom of Iraq under King Faisal I in 1921, not only did Iraq regain her status as a political entity—a status lost in 1258 as a result of the Mongol invasions—but, by choosing a Hashimite as the Head of the State, she also restored to the throne the very family from which the Abbasid Caliphs had sprung.

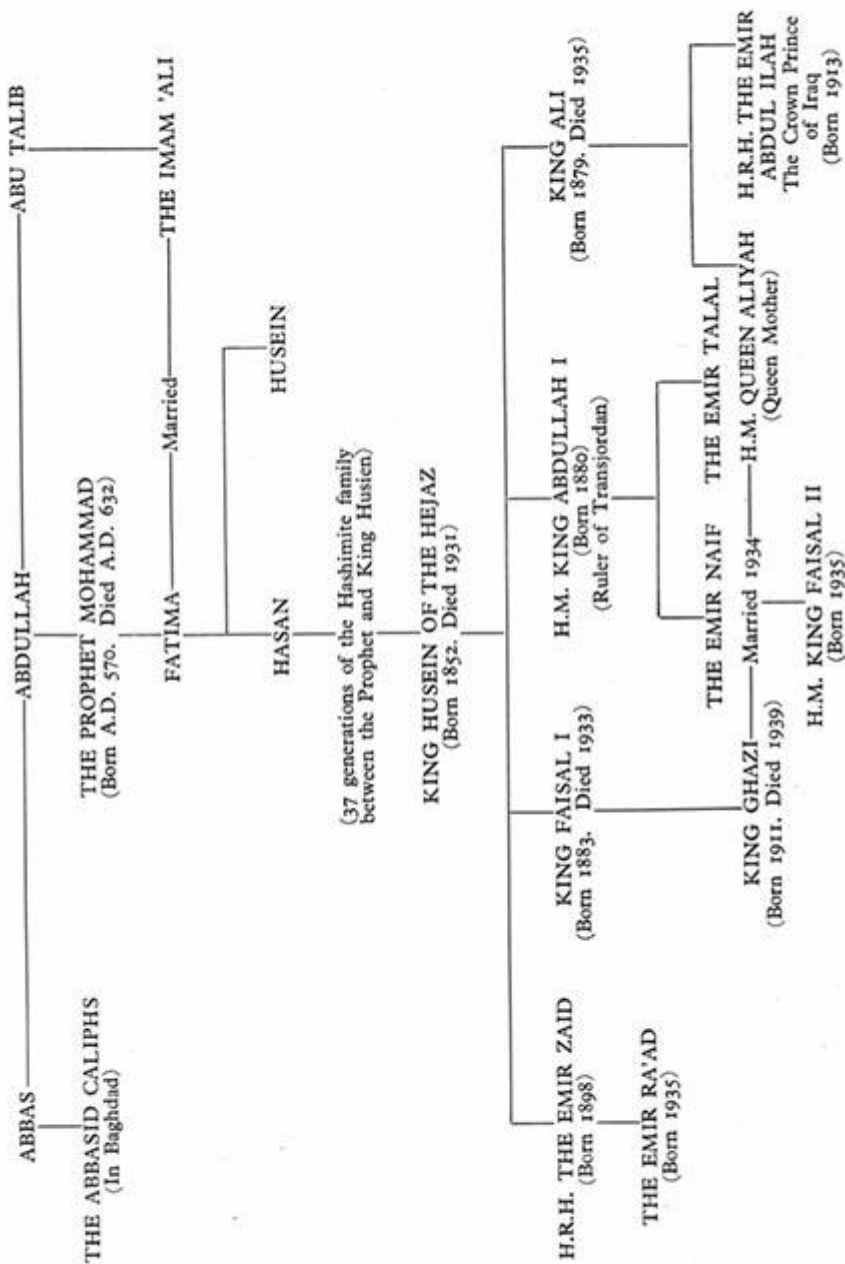
The Hashimite family belonged to the Koreish, the most distinguished of the Hejaz tribes, who were the custodians of the Holy Ka'aba at Mecca long before the advent of Islam and who continued in that capacity almost without interruption until 1926, their Elders dispensing justice and regulating the communal life of the tribes. The Prophet Mohammad, who inspired the Arabs in the Seventh Century to spread his teaching from the Indus to the Pyrenees, was also of the Hashimite family. Generations of modest living in the communal simplicity of a patriarchal society, combined with the requisite human understanding and philosophy to control the destinies of the ever-increasing Arab Empire, all contributed to the development of this family's distinguished tradition.

It was therefore natural that, with the revival of their national aspirations, the Palestinians, the Syrians and other Arabs turned for leadership, in 1915, to the Sherif of Mecca, Hussain ibn'Ali. For Hussain was not only the custodian of Mecca but also a Hashimite and the thirty-seventh descendant in a direct line from the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, who married the Prophet's cousin, the Iman Ali. The Emir Faisal, the third son of the Sherif of Mecca (later King Hussain of the Hejaz), led the Arab forces against the Ottomans in 1916. With the assistance of many Arab officers who deserted the Ottoman Army to join their compatriots, he succeeded in matching his inexperienced and ill-armed tribesmen against the German-organised Ottoman forces, and in holding his own until a regular Arab army had been trained in the field—a remarkable tribute to the Emir's natural ability and commanding personality. Later these qualities proved invaluable to Iraqi and other Arab officers who had joined the Arab Revolt, in organising and co-ordinating the Arab forces that were to play a decisive part in the liberation of Palestine and Syria.

In 1919 the Emir Faisal went to Paris where he represented his father at the Peace Conference. Later he visited London to press Arab claims under the Anglo-Arab Agreement of 1915 and on his return to Damascus he was crowned King of Syria; but the young kingdom, surrounded by enemies and intrigues, was not fated to live long. On his accession to the throne of Iraq, King Faisal had to deal with the difficulties attendant upon the change from a British colonial administration to a national constitutional government, but by wise statesmanship he adjusted the relations between Iraq and Britain, and through a series of treaties negotiated the admission of Iraq into the League of Nations as an independent Sovereign State in 1932.

Through his frequent visits to Europe King Faisal became an international figure, and he won the goodwill of many great statesmen all over the world by his wisdom and

**TREE OF THE HASHIMITE FAMILY
INCLUDING THE PRESENT ROYAL FAMILY OF IRAQ**





The Sherif Hussain of Mecca, King of the Hejaz, great-grandfather of the present King.

His late Majesty King Ali.



His late Majesty King Ghazi of Iraq.



His late Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan.

His Royal Highness Prince Zaid.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Iraq.

courage, coupled with his great charm of manner and an impressive appearance. He also cultivated the friendship of the rulers of neighbouring countries and concluded friendly agreements with them which helped considerably to consolidate Iraq's position.

King Faisal's tastes and way of living were simple and democratic. By keeping in close contact both with the administration and with his people, and by frequent tours of inspection, he was able to control and guide the development of his country. He kept a model farm which was open to the public and to which he frequently invited prospective farmers for week-end visits. He inspired the teaching profession by registering himself as a teacher and by presiding over a teachers' conference.

A keen sense of humour and the ability to communicate his optimism and enthusiasm to others enabled him to unite his country's various communities in a bond of mutual confidence and common endeavour.

Born in 1883, Faisal had left the Hejaz as a young man for Turkey and a few years later he represented Jedda in the Ottoman Parliament at Istanbul. Socially inclined, he mixed freely with politicians and statesmen and made close contact with western life. Thus, in establishing a modern order in Iraq, he was particularly well prepared to integrate all that had a survival value in the cultural heritage of the country with the best elements of western civilisation.

Of his brothers, the Emir Abdullah became the ruler of Trans-Jordan, while the youngest, the Emir Zaid, who served with great gallantry during the Arab Revolt, leading raiding parties in the rear of the Turkish lines, subsequently went to Oxford and, on his return to Iraq, temporarily entered the Iraqi Diplomatic Service.

It was, however, King Ali to whom Faisal was most attached. During the siege of Medina the two brothers rode together among bursting shells from the Ottoman guns to inspire their men, who were unaccustomed to artillery. When King Ali lost the throne of the Hejaz, he came to live near his brother in Baghdad, where his gentle nature and dignified personality soon made him popular. The two brothers were inseparable and their characters in many ways complementary. On the death of King Hussain in 1931, Ali became head of the Hashimite Family and, as such, Faisal felt a sincere respect for him, whereas Ali deeply appreciated the hospitality of the King and the people of Iraq. This mutual respect is a typical trait of those brought up in the Hashimite tradition.

King Faisal died in 1933 and his only son, Ghazi, succeeded him as King. The death of Faisal shook the Arab World. His personality was familiar to every Arab village and community. His name had become legendary even while he still lived. For in Iraq he had demonstrated to the world what could be accomplished in an atmosphere of freedom and security. It was also an indication of what could have been achieved in Syria and other Arab countries had the Allies respected the Anglo-Arab Agreement in its entirety. The September day on which Faisal passed away marked the birth of a new spirit of unity among the Arab States. But Iraq had lost its master-builder, the Arabs their leader and champion. Two years later King Ali, who had been deeply affected by the loss of his brother, died of a heart attack.



Ghazi was born in 1912. Educated in England at Harrow and at the Military College in Baghdad, he ascended the throne at the early age of twenty-two. Energetic and full of zeal, he had a passion for modern mechanical inventions, to which he devoted much of his spare time. He was a natural sportsman and soldier, piloting his own plane and taking an active part in military manoeuvres. King Ghazi gave away a large part of his property to those who had served the nation or the Arab cause; he seldom refused a plea for assistance and he showed clemency and human understanding in the exercise of all his duties.

In 1934 he married his cousin, the Emira Aliyah, the daughter of King Ali. A son, Faisal, was born in 1935 and became heir to the throne. Both these events added to the popularity the King already enjoyed, for in his short reign he had captured the imagination of the masses and the enthusiasm of the country's youth. His tragic death in April 1939, in a motor accident, brought to a premature end the life of a promising and popular ruler who, with maturity, would undoubtedly have contributed much to the country's future development. After his death the Queen Mother began to show a very real sense of responsibility towards the young King and the State. She took a particular interest in the welfare of the women of Iraq; she was accessible to the humblest women of the country and spent many hours of her time in active work among the various welfare societies.

Queen Aliyah had received her early education from the Hejazi scholar who had also tutored King Ghazi. She was then coached by Syrian tutors during her family's stay in Amman, after leaving the Hejaz, and she had had further schooling in Turkey. After her royal husband's death she devoted herself to the upbringing of His Majesty King Faisal II with a true spirit of motherhood.

During her long and painful illness, one of the most harassing scourges of mankind, Her Majesty bore herself as befitted a Queen, with great courage and dignity, and her death in December 1950 brought to an end the life of a great woman and a beloved Queen.

Ghazi was succeeded by his four-year-old son, King Faisal II, the Emir Abdul Ilah, son of King Ali, being appointed Regent and Heir to the Throne by Act of Parliament. Born in 1913, Abdul Ilah was educated at Victoria College, Alexandria, and in him again Iraq was fortunate in having a ruler who combines both the Arab and the Western outlook. Hardly had he been installed as Regent when the Second World War began, and the young nation, headed by its young ruler, had to face, with the rest of the world, this gravest of all crises. The strategic position of Iraq and the unsettled state of opinion in the Arab countries combined to create a situation fraught with difficulties and dangers, yet the Regent never faltered. By the inherent courage and wisdom he then manifested, he showed himself worthy of his great forebears and overcame the forces of disruption, ranging the country on the side of the great democracies.

His strong personality and keen interest in the advancement of his country and the Arab cause have already won for him the respect of the Arab World, while his devotion to the alert and promising young King whom he is preparing to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, Faisal the Great, is in the best traditions of the Hashimite Family and has earned the nation's gratitude.