

THE ROLE OF SAKBAN AL-ALI IN THE 1936 AL-KARADI UPRISING

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Abstract :

Sheikh Sukban Al-Ali is considered one of the most prominent tribal figures in the history of Al-Muntaq district, and Iraq in general, not only for his stance on tribal issues but also for his national and political positions during the late Ottoman period, the British occupation of Iraq (1920-1914), and the royal era (1958-1921). This research explores the role of Sukban Al-Ali in the Al-Karadi Uprising of 1936. Due to this uprising, a policy of inequality among tribal leaders was implemented by the government of Yasin Al-Hashimi towards most of the Al-Muntaq tribes. This policy led to uprisings among several tribes of Al-Muntaq. Tribal alliances were the core of the uprising, with its first alliance being formed with Sukban Al-Ali, the chief of the Khafaja tribe, who pledged to control the road between the cities of Nasiriyah and Shatra. The research also covers the attempts of the Al-Muntaq district administrator to win over Sukban Al-Ali to the government's side, but it was only successful after military force was directed towards Al-Karadi, leading all tribes to declare their surrender to the government's orders.

Keywords: Sukban Al-Ali, Tribal Alliance, Agricultural Lands.

Introduction:

This research focuses on the role of Sheikh Sukban Al-Ali in the 1936 Al-Karadi Uprising, a year of significant importance in the contemporary history of Iraq, marked by critical events that greatly influenced the direction of political future. Sheikh Sukban Al-Ali is recognized as one of the prominent figures known for his genuine patriotism and steadfastness in defending his people against the injustices they faced throughout different stages of their lives.

The research relies on diverse sources, including personal interviews, a collection of preserved documents at the National Library in Baghdad, particularly the files of the Ministry of Interior. Additionally, a selection of university theses, dissertations, and Arabic books played a crucial role in enriching the research with historical information.

The Al-Karadi Uprising:

Only a few months had passed since the quelling of the uprising in the Sheikh Souk area, which was suppressed in mid-June 1935 by the declaration of martial law. However, after eight months, a new uprising ignited. This time, it was declared by the Bani Rikab tribes in Nasiriyah. It was an extension of the first uprising in terms of similarities in the underlying causes.⁽ⁱ⁾

Therefore, on the 20th of February 1936, the tribes of Al-Gharraf and Al-Karadi⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ announced the uprising and refused to obey the government. This refusal had both direct and indirect reasons. Among the indirect causes was the announcement by the Hashemite government

to implement the National Defense Law. This meant the conscription of a large number of eligible individuals for military service, many of whom constituted a significant portion of the workforce in agriculture. The implementation of this law would result in a shortage of farmers in agricultural lands, ultimately leading to neglect of agriculture, which was the livelihood source for most of the district's inhabitants ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.

Furthermore, there was the poor treatment by administrative officials in the district, and the lack of equality among tribal leaders, heads, and sarakils compared to their counterparts in other areas within the district. ^(iv).

Tribal alliances, which served as the primary nucleus for the uprising, began to form due to the government's favoritism towards Sheikh Zamal Al-Mana ^(v). Following a tribal dispute over the ownership of the returned lands in Al-Musbah and Abu Mahifa areas ^(vi) ... This dispute involved the tribes of Bani Rikab and resulted in the expulsion of the Hatim family from Bani Rikab's territory. This event served as the direct cause for this uprising ^(vii). This led the leaders of the Bani Rikab ^(viii), namely Ibrahim Al-Yousef ^(ix) Al-Rikabi ^(x), Mazhal Al-Humaida, and Al-Hajj Mani Al-Shati, to form alliances with some tribal leaders who opposed the arbitrary policies of the government. These alliances included Sheikh Khafaja Sukban Al-Ali ^(xi) in Al-Gharraf, as well as the Akil tribe, a faction within the Al-Abouda tribe in Shatra. They also had connections with the Qarghul tribes, who were in contact with the Hajim ^(xii) tribes in Samawah, as well as the Badeer tribe in Afak. ^(xiii).

The Bani Rikab tribes followed the approach of the uprising tribes in Sheikh Souk by holding gatherings, firing celebratory shots, and launching volleys of bullets into the air. These gatherings were positioned near the main road between Al-Musayyib and Al-Karadi, in close proximity to the military outpost. The objective was to inform the government of their uprising. At the same time, the leaders of the uprising issued orders to the insurgents to cut the telegraph wires, ensuring the disruption of communications between the government institutions in the center of Nasiriyah district and the rest of the districts and regions. This also impeded military movements. ^(xiv).

Sheikh Sukban Al-Ali entrusted him and the members of his tribe with the task of monitoring the movements of the military forces in the center of the district, informing them of any steps they take, obstructing the progress of forces heading towards Al-Karadi, as well as flooding the road that connects Nasiriyah, Al-Gharraf, and Shatra. At the same time, Sheikh Sukban Al-Ali suggested to the leaders of the uprising to ensure the safety of their women, children, belongings, and livestock, in order to avoid a repeat of the mistakes that occurred during the Sheikh Souk Al-Shuyukh Uprising, which resulted in loss of lives, property, and assets ^(xv). They promptly set about carrying out the requests made by the leaders of the uprising. They swiftly opened the river dams and cut the telegraph wires connecting Nasiriyah, Al-Gharraf, and Shatra. They started encouraging some tribes to join the uprising and worked on procuring weapons for the insurgents. ^(xvi).

In the midst of this, the insurgent tribes presented their demands to the authorities, which were as follows:

1. The retention of the Hatim family in the region.

.2Postponing the implementation of the military service law.

.3Maintaining the allocation for the Malaqeen (%5.7) as practiced in the districts of Nasiriyah and Sheikh Souk.

.4Allocating the Amir lands in the district for the resettlement of those affected by deportation decisions.^(xvi)

The government attempted to quell the uprising by blocking access routes for other tribes, in order to prevent aid from reaching the Bani Rikab. They did so by reaching out to several prominent tribal leaders in Al-Hay district, including Sheikh Abdul Hadi Al-Sadoun, Shelbi Bek Al-Sadoun, and Sheikh Bilasim Al-Muhammad Al-Yaseen. The government secured commitments from them not to provide assistance to the Bani Rikab.

On the other hand, Majid Al-Mustafa, the administrator of Al-Muntaq district, requested that Mr. Abdul Mehdi Al-Muntaqi and Mohannad Al-Khairallah, who were familiar with the tribes of the area, help with the situation. Upon their arrival, they found the leaders of the uprising tribes gathered at the residence of Hajj Mani Al-Shati. They advised them to obey the government, but they expressed their reluctance to do so unless the implementation of the National Defense Law was delayed. As for the issue of deporting the Hatim family, they considered it a settled matter.^(xvii)

Reports from the Ministry of Interior indicated that on the 21st of February 1936, the district administrator of Al-Muntaq, Majid Al-Mustafa, played a significant role in persuading the tribes residing along the road between Al-Gharraf and Al-Karadi through various methods of persuasion and intimidation^(xviii). The district administrator made repeated visits to the Khafaja tribe and had a personal meeting with Sheikh Sukban, attempting to win him and his tribe over to the government's side. He reminded him of the fate that befell the tribes that supported the insurgents in Sheikh Souk Al-Shuyukh, emphasizing that the government would use the harshest measures to punish those who threaten the country's security and stability. Additionally, he reminded him not to let his efforts during the 1935 uprising go to waste and to stand alongside the government. As a result, Sheikh Sukban Al-Ali was compelled to submit to the government.^(xix)

It is undeniable that the district administrator of Al-Muntaq had concerns about whether the obedience shown by Sheikh Sukban Al-Ali was genuine or merely symbolic, and not genuine. Because of this, the government took swift measures to deter the uprising. They reinforced the military presence in Nasiriyah by forming a military force named "The Muntaq Force." This force consisted of five battalions, in addition to a cavalry squadron and a mechanized infantry squadron. It was placed under the command of Amin Zaki, the leader of the Euphrates Region Force. This force was further bolstered by the addition of the sixth battalion along with an artillery section, which arrived in Nasiriyah.^(xx)

The Bani Rikab tribes escalated their activities. They flooded the road between Al-Musayyib and Al-Karadi with water, aided by the rising water levels of the Al-Gharraf River. They also cut the wires passing through their lands. As a result, orders were issued to the Muntaq military force to subdue the rebels. This force was strategically distributed in several areas: Al-Gharraf,

Shatra, Al-Karadi, and Qal'at Sukr. The aim was to encircle the tribes and prevent them from providing assistance to the insurgents.

In Al-Gharraf, Majid Mustafa issued orders to Ali Bek, the commander of the Al-Gharraf Police Force, to reinforce his forces. They consisted of a battalion of infantry with 360 personnel, a machine gun company with 12 machine guns, and a cavalry detachment of 35 officers. This was due to intelligence received about the movement of some Khafaja tribesmen, providing information about the military force, as well as sending supplies to them. Therefore, this force was tasked with protecting the roads connecting Nasiriyah to Al-Gharraf, Shatra, and Al-Karadi .^(xxi) .

At the same time, orders were issued to the commander of the river force, Hussein Fahmi, who was present in Qal'at Sukr. His force consisted of 94 personnel. They were tasked with repelling any attack by the insurgents. Indeed, they succeeded in fortifying the defense of Qal'at Sukr. They worked on protecting the roads, bridges, and the telegraph line between Al-Karadi and Qal'at Sukr from sabotage.^(xxii) .

On the 22nd of February 1936, as soon as the day began, the forces stationed in Nasiriyah and its affiliated areas administratively started executing the plan laid out by the government, which had been approved by the royal court and the council of ministers. It unfolded as follows:

.1 Warning the Bani Rikab tribes on the 23rd of February, 1936, in the afternoon, with a designated deadline for them to submit their obedience and send their representatives to Al-Karadi.

.2 The warning period will be 24 hours.

.3 If the tribal leaders do not submit their obedience, their homes will be subjected to shelling for three consecutive days.

.4 After this period, they will be warned for a second time for another 24 hours, after which the military forces will intervene to quell the rebellion.^(xxiii) .

The threats and warnings issued by the military commander had a significant impact on the tribes, especially after they fully understood the consequences of siding with the insurgents in the Suq al-Shuyukh uprising. They chose to withdraw from their alliance with the Bani Rikab tribes, rather than becoming fuel for the government's artillery fire, which would result in destruction of their homes and devastation of their farms. This would have a direct impact on their livelihoods. Among the tribes that submitted their obedience to the government were the Qarghul, Abuda, and Shawailat tribes .^(xxiv) .

Before the expiration of the warning period given by the government to the tribes, the Khafaja tribe and the rest of the tribes in Al-Gharaaf decided to submit their obedience and end the rebellion against the government. They became convinced of the government's sincerity in its warning and its determination to quell the rebellion with full force. This was similar to what the government had done the previous year in Suq al-Shuyukh, where widespread destruction and harm befell the tribes who insisted on persisting in their rebellion and disobedience.^(xxv) .

The government continued to face resistance from the leaders of the Bani Rikab tribe who persisted in their rebellion until their demands were met. The government had no choice but to issue another final warning to them. On February 29, 1936, airplanes dropped 2000 copies of the warnings at the homes of the rebels from the Bani Rikab tribe. These warnings combined both persuasive and intimidating language, stating :

"Warning to the Leaders of the Bani Rikab Tribe:

In the government's pursuit to prevent further bloodshed, we hereby warn you to attend the center of Al-Karadi, submit to authority, disperse the crowds, and accomplish this within a period of 48 hours. Failure to comply will compel the government to take disciplinary measures against you and members of your tribe. At that point, the responsibility will squarely rest on your shoulders, and no excuse will be accepted from those who were forewarned".

" Administrator of Al-Muntafaq.^(xxvi)" "

"These tribes realized in this warning the seriousness of the government and its uncompromising stance, as well as the strength of the military forces at that stage, which was entirely different from before. The tragedy that befell the uprising tribes in Souq al-Shuyukh came to mind, when they insisted on defying the government. They were subjected to airstrikes by the Iraqi Air Force and strikes by the naval force on their homes. This led to the displacement of thousands and the death of many women and children, along with the destruction of agricultural crops and the loss of numerous livestock. This had a negative impact on the livelihoods of these tribes".

^(xxvii) On May 1st, 1936, many tribes of Bani Rikab, especially Muzahim Al-Humaida, Mani' Al-Chatii, Ibrahim Al-Yousif Al-Rikabi, and others, headed towards Shatrah to pledge allegiance to the government and announce the cessation of their movement. They provided assurances to the government to maintain peace and stability in Nasiriyah, Al-Karradi, and the rest of the districts under the jurisdiction .^(xxviii) .

It is worth noting the shift in Sikan Al-Ali's stance, as he stood with the government during the Souk Al-Shuyukh uprising in 1935 and against it in the Al-Karrada uprising in 1936. This change was a result of the heavy taxes imposed on farmers and the government's uncompromising positions towards the tribes, leading to a shift in the positions of many tribes against the Hashemite government.

Conclusion:

It is evident from the foregoing that the reason for Sikan Al-Ali's support for the insurgents in Al-Karrada in 1936 can be attributed to the policy of tribal alliances, a pivotal point in the division of tribes into two factions. The allied tribe is considered responsible for what transpires in its ally's territory. On the other hand, the poor local administration and the tribes' discontent with the severity of taxes and land issues created a state of fervor among all the affiliated tribes in opposition to the government, particularly the tribes of Al-Karrada.

i). (W.D., Files of the Ministry of the Interior, Criminal Investigation Directorate, Special Division, File No. SB/238, dated 1935, p. ..1

ii) (I-Karadi: It is known as the village of Al-Karadi, named after Mr. Hajj Abbas Al-Karadi, who used to buy grains from the Shuyoukh market and store them in that area, which he bought from Al-Taqa in 1893. This citizen is from the people of Al-Karada Al-Sharqiya in Baghdad, but he is a grain merchant. Then this city began to expand after that. Houses and shops spread there and its population increased. British forces entered it before 1916, and it was called Al-Karadi district. For more, see: Abdul Razzaq Al-Hasani, The History of Iraq, Ancient and Modern, Beirut, 1958, p. ..171

iii) (M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of Interior, Criminal Investigation Directorate, Special Division, File No. SB/238, dated 1935, p. ..1

iv) (M.W.D., files of the Ministry of the Interior, File No. 25/of/11, movements in the Al-Muntafiq Brigade, disciplinary movements against the rebellious Bani Rakab Khafaja clans in Al-Gharraf during the year 1936, a report without a number, on May 2, 1935, from an inspector. Administrative Major General Jaafar Bey to the Ministry of Interior, p. ..2

(5)Zamil Al-Manna: He was born in 1883. He carried the banner of resistance to the British from 1914 until the Twentieth Revolution in 1920. He was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1924, and was elected as a representative of the Muntafiq Brigade in the Parliament for several parliamentary terms. He died in the city of Nasiriyah in the year 1952. For more, see: Mir Basri, Political Media in Modern Iraq, vol. 3, London, 1987, pp. .334-333

vi) (Al-Musabah and Abu Mahifa: two adjacent agricultural districts located west of the city of Al-Ghaziyyeh (currently Al-Nasr) within the lands of the Al-Hatem clans, one of the branches of the Bani Rakab clans. For more, see: Abbas Al-Azzawi, Tribes of Iraq, vol. 4, Baghdad, Baghdad, p. .143

vii) (M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of the Interior, Disciplinary Movements Against the Bani al-Rikab Clans, File No. S/ 199from the Mutafik Mutafik to the Ministry of the Interior, February 28, .1936

viii) (Mazal Al-Hamidah: He was born in the Al-Rifai countryside in 1876. He participated in the Al-Masifi Conference for the revolution against the British in 1920. He was elected to the House of Representatives in the seventh session in 1937. He died in 1947. For more, see: Adnan Abd Gharkan, History of the City of Al-Rifai, Baghdad, 2020, pp. .61-47

x) (Mani Al-Shatti: Sheikh of the Bani Rakab clans in Al-Muntafiq, and the uncle of Sheikh Mazal Al-Hamida, and his brother, Sheikh Halaama Al-Hamida. He was born in the Rifai countryside in 1874. He had a major role in the revolution in 1920. He was one of the leaders of the 1936uprising in Al-Karadi. He died in 1874. 1950. For more, see: Thamer Abdul Hassan Al-Amiri, Encyclopedia of Iraqi Tribes, Part 1, London, 1991, p. ..198

(11)akban Al-Ali: He was born in the city of Nasiriyah in 1892. He carried the banner of resistance to the British from 1920-1914. He declared his support for the monarchy in Iraq. He became a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1924, then he became deputy to the Muntafiq Brigade in the Parliament for several parliamentary terms. He died in 1966. For more, see: Mujahid Munthir Munshid, research on the lineage of Khafajah to Adam, London, 2015; Ali Nasser Hussein, Sheikhs of the Al-Muntafiq Brigade in British Documents (a study of the history of the Al-Muntafiq clans from the late Ottoman era until the end of King Faisal I 1933), Baghdad, 2008, pp. 150-148

xi)(Ibrahim Al-Youssef Al-Rikabi: He was born in the village of Al-Shuja in the countryside of Al-Masifi District in the city of Al-Rifai in 1889. He played a major role in the Great National Revolution of 1920, and participated in the Al-Masifi Conference in 1920. He was elected in two sessions as a member of the Parliament and played a role in the 1936uprising in Al-Kradi, died in 1969. For more, see: Haid Ali Khalaf Al-Ukaili, Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Yusuf Al-Rikabi, special issue on the proceedings of the Third Scientific

Conference in the Humanities and Social Sciences, dated April 19-18, 2020, College of Education for Girls, Al-Qadisiyah University, 2020, pp. 318-301

^{xii}) (M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of Interior, Criminal Investigation Directorate, Special Division, File No. SB/240, dated 1935, p. .2

^{xiii}) (M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of Interior, Criminal Investigation Directorate, Special Division, File No., SB/256, dated 1936, pp. 3-1

^{xiv}) (A personal interview with Amer Al-Ghani Al-Sakaban, about the role of Sheikh Sakaban Al-Ali and the members of the Khafaja clan in the Al-Karadi Uprising of February 1936, dated March 25, .2023

^{xv}) (M.W.D., files of the Ministry of the Interior, File No. 4, a telegram from the order of the police force in Sweij Sakban (Al-Gharraf) to the governor of Al-Muntafik, and the garrison order, dated February 23, ..1936

^{xvi}) (oaa Thamer Hassan, The Land Problem in the Al-Muntafiq Brigade 1958-1915, unpublished master's thesis, College of Arts, Dhi Qar University, 2016, pp. 155-154; Abdul Razzaq Mutlaq Al-Fahd, Sukkar Castle 1958-1873 Study of the National and Social Movement in Al-Gharaf, Baghdad, 2001, pp. .112-111

^{xvii}) (M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of Interior, File No. 167, letter from the Mutafak District Governor to the Ministry of Interior, dated February 22, 1936, p. 8; Abdul Razzaq Mutlaq Al-Fahd, previous source, p. ..113

^{xviii}) (M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of the Interior, Criminal Investigation Directorate, Special Division, File No., SB/258, dated 1936, p. 44

((A personal interview with Amer Al-Ghani Al-Sakaban, about the role of Sheikh Sakaban Al-Ali and the members of the Khafaja clan in the Al-Karadi Uprising of February 1936, dated March 25, 2023; M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of Interior, Criminal Investigation Directorate, Special Division, File No. SB/258, dated 1936, p. .44

^{xix}) (mad Ahmed Al-Jawahiri, The History of the Land Problem and Agrarian Reform in Iraq 1970-1933, unpublished doctoral thesis, College of Arts, University of Baghdad, 1982, p. .72

^{xx}) (M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of the Interior, File No. 168, a secret letter from the Mutafak District Governor, Nasiriyah, to the commander of the Euphrates region in Nasiriyah, dated February 22, 1936, p. ..33

^{xxi}) (M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of the Interior, File No. 168, a secret letter from the Mutafak District Governor, Nasiriyah, to the commander of the Euphrates region in Nasiriyah, dated February 22, 1936, p. ..33

^{xxii}) (Same source, pp. 34-33

^{xxiii}) (Abdul Razzaq Al-Hasani, History of Iraqi Ministries, vol. 4, Baghdad, 1988, pp. ..164-162

Salman Rashid Muhammad Al-Hilali, the land problem between the two clans of A Both Hatem and Manna in the Al-Muntafik Brigade until 1958, Dhi Qar Magazine, Volume 35, Issue: 1, 2021, p. 355 .

^{xxv}) (A personal interview with Amer Al-Ghani Al-Sakaban, about the role of Sheikh Sakaban Al-Ali and the members of the Khafaja clan in the Al-Karadi Uprising of February 1936, dated March 25, ..2023

^{xxvi}) (M.W.D., Files of the Ministry of the Interior, File No. 168, a secret letter from the Mutafak Brigade's governor, Nasiriyah to the commander of the Euphrates region in Nasiriyah, dated February 22, 1936, pp.

-34

^{xxviii}) (M.W.D., files of the Ministry of the Interior, File No. S/209, from the Mutafak governor to the commander of the Euphrates region in Nasiriyah, dated May 2, 1936