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### Photo tells : The last princess of the Kingdom of Iraq



On May 9, 2020, Princess Badiya Bint Ali, a member of Hashimite royal family, which was the descendant of Prophet Muhammad, died in London. She was born in 1920 and was 100 years old. She witnessed the last minutes of the Kingdom of Iraqi. The old-fashioned photograph above shows the princess of young age. Her life was full of ups and downs.

The story goes back to shortly before she was born. The Ottoman Empire, which dominated the entire Middle East at that time, lost its strength, while the British Empire looked for the chance to show its power in the Middle East. UK aimed to monopolize oil in Iraq and the Gulf region. It was the World War I that both powers confronted in the Middle East. At that time, the Sharif of Holy Makkah in the Hijaz region of the Arabian Peninsula was Hussein bin Ali, the descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

When World War I was imminent, the British Empire allured Hussein bin Ali to rebel against the Ottoman Empire. Hussein accepted UK's proposal. The secret document exchanged between them. It was called "McMahon-Hussein Correspondence". Harry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in the Sultanate of Egypt, promised Hussein the independence of Arabs from Turks. Hussein had three sons. They were Ali, Abdullah and Faisal. Hussein dreamed of the Greater Arab Kingdom by appointing Ali to the King of Makkah and Hijaz, Faisal to the King of Syria and Iraq, and Abdallah to the King of Trans Jordan respectively. Together with the Correspondence, Britain dispatched an Army officer as advisor to Faisal. His name was T. E. Lawrence, so-called "Lawrence of Arabia".

(See "[Genealogy of the Prophet Muhammad and the Hashemite Kingdoms](#)")

After World War I, princess Badiya Bint Ali was born in Makkah in 1920. She was a granddaughter of Hussein bin Ali and daughter of Ali, King of Makkah and Hijaz. Although the Arabs defeated the Ottoman

Empire, the Greater Arab Kingdom by the Hashemites did not materialize as Arabs expected. Crafty UK made two other promises simultaneously which conflicted each other with the McMahon–Hussein Correspondence during the World War I. One was Balfour Declaration between UK and Jews. UK Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour sent a letter to Jewish businessman Sir Rothschild so-called “Balfour Declaration” that allowed the establishment of Jewish state in Palestine. And the third promise was “Sykes–Pico Agreement”. UK government signed the agreement with French government. They decided to divide and occupy the Middle East. These three deals were contradicted each other. They were called British Triple–Tongue Diplomacy. After all, the Kingdom of Trans–Jordan changed to small Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan by the independence of Israel, and the Kingdom of Syria and Iraq became the kingdom of Iraq only because France occupied Syria.

In 1925, Hashemite Kingdom of Hijaz with its capital Makkah on the Red Sea coast was overthrown by Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud, so-called Ibn Saud, who established Kingdom of Nejd in Riyadh. The Princess Badiya and her family evacuated from Makkah to Baghdad where her uncle Faisal of King of Iraq reigned. In highly civilized Baghdad, the princess spent her spring time and was married to her relative. She got several children. Her court life in Baghdad had been glorious.

However, elegant life in Baghdad did not last long. Kingdom of Iraq finally collapsed in 1938 by a coup of General Qasim and his subordinate Saddam Hussein. King Faisal II, crown prince and several royal family members were executed in the palace. Princess Badiya who was in the imperial villa escaped from the tragedy by chance. She fled into the Saudi embassy in Baghdad. The princess finally settled in London where her final residence was.

After Iraqi revolution in 1958, political turmoil and assassinations took place frequently in Iraq until Saddam Hussein became president in 1979. Hussein reigned Iraq with a strong dictatorship. He survived the Iran–Iraq war (1980–88) and the Gulf war (1991). But he was defeated by multinational allied force led by the United States in the 2003 Iraq war. He was arrested in 2007 and sentenced to death.

The political struggle about reconstruction of Iraq took place after the 2003 Iraq war. Princess Badiya who lived quietly in London was involved in a row because royalists called for the restoration of the Kingdom. Her son Sharif Ali Bin Hussein claimed himself for the legitimate successor to the Kingdom of Iraq.

Many cases could be found in the history that republic or democracy that emerged after overthrowing monarchy changed to a dictatorship, then resulted in the long civil war. When citizens were bored in a long civil war, they opted to dream nostalgia for the past saying that the old monarchy had been a peaceful era. A chance came to Princess Badiya of the Hashemite royal family. But the reconstruction of the Iraq kingdom did not fulfill after all.

In modern history, there was only one case where the monarchy was actually restored. It was Spain.

In 1931, the monarchy was overthrown and Second Republic was established in Spain. Then the left wing and the right wing clashed. General Francisco Franco rebelled and the Spanish civil war was broken out. Franco's rebels triumphed finally. He left his last wish that Juan Carlos should succeed to the position of the King of Spain of a constitutional monarchy.

Anyway, Princess Badiya Bint Ali, who had witnessed the last minutes of the Kingdom of Iraq and had a dream of restoration of Hashemite monarchy, ended her varied life of 100 years in London.

End

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