

Abdullah ibn Husein

Abdullah ibn Husein (1882-1951), king of Jordan (1946-1951). The son of King Husein ibn Ali of Hejaz (Al Ḥijāz), he was born in Mecca but educated in İstanbul where he was active in Arab circles; later he represented Mecca in the Ottoman legislature. During World War I, however, he and his father sided with the Allies, seeking Arab independence from Ottoman rule, and in 1916 led an Arab revolt against the Ottomans. In 1920 he was proclaimed king by the Iraqi Congress, but refused the throne. Under British auspices Abdullah became the nominal ruler (emir) of the British mandate of Transjordan in 1921, and when the mandate ended in 1926, he proclaimed himself king. His long-term aim was the creation of a kingdom embracing Syria, Iraq, and Transjordan.

King Abdullah was the only Arab ruler willing to accept the 1947 UN partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs. In May 1948, immediately after the creation of Israel, he yielded to pressure from other Arab countries and led his British-trained army against the new state, capturing a large area of its territory. After the armistice in 1949, Jordan—as the kingdom was renamed—retained control of this area, now called the West Bank; it was officially part of Jordan from 1950 to 1967. Violently opposed by Palestinian Arabs, who suspected him of collusion with Israel, King Abdullah was assassinated by one of them on July 20, 1951.

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