



PROJECT MUSE®

The Local and the Global: The Iraqi Revolution of 1958
Between Western and Soviet Modernities

Elizabeth Bishop

Ab Imperio, 4/2011, pp. 172-202 (Article)

Published by Ab Imperio

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/imp.2011.0012>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/467006>

Elizabeth BISHOP

**THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL:
THE IRAQI REVOLUTION OF 1958 BETWEEN
WESTERN AND SOVIET MODERNITIES***

At 3 o'clock on the morning of July 14, 1958, army officers commanding two separate units met up at Baqubah, a famous prison north of Baghdad.¹ With their tanks, they forced open the prison gates, released the political prisoners,² and handed out placards, flags, and instructions.³ At daybreak, in the capital city, a foreigner identified the group outside the palace gates as "a hard core of thugs who had been released from the jail out in Baqubah and brought into Baghdad by trucks. In turn they had collected a crowd off the streets."⁴

The crowds of people who gathered nationwide transformed the military coup into what has been widely recognized as a revolution, ensuring Iraq's political existence,⁵ unifying the separate legal systems in force among ur-

* The author acknowledges the anonymous reviewers of *AI* for their suggestions and recommendations.

¹ Abd al'-Aziz an-Nur. *Revoliutsii v Irake // Sovremennyi Vostok*. 1958. October. P. 34.

² Gerald de Gaury. *Three Kings in Baghdad*. London, 1961. P. 190.

³ George M. Haddad. *Revolutions and Military Rule in the Middle East*. Part 1. Vol. 2. New York, 1971. P. 89.

⁴ Lord Birdwood. *Nuri as-Said: A Study in Arab Leadership*. London, 1959. P. 266.

⁵ Mahboob Alam. *Iraqi Foreign Policy Since Revolution*. New Delhi, 1995. P. 111.

ban residents and tribes,⁶ and ultimately restoring diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.⁷ A British diplomat reported “a noisy crowd of up to 50 boys, none of them over 15 years of age;” he also saw a second smaller but more adult crowd, clearly an organized demonstration, by the Baghdad radio station, which was “being addressed by a speaker on some kind of raised platform.”⁸ On the streets of the capital “were thousands in cars, buses and afoot in all main thoroughfares,” gathering in front of the palaces, the prime minister’s home, and the Ministry of Defense.⁹

Contemporaries offered varying descriptions of the crowds and their relationship with the army. By some accounts the crowds were proper-tied and passive to the armed forces, as when a British resident observed: “householders came down to find the railway, the streets, lined with silent troops.”¹⁰ According to others the Baghdad streets teemed with underclasses: “urchins, the juvenile delinquents in striped *dishdashas*, the porters, the beggars, the loafers, the women in black *abayas*, the hungry, homeless and dispossessed.”¹¹ Still others saw the mob milling the streets was an active, creative force: a “huge under swell of Baghdad’s dispossessed,” which “rose and threatened to engulf everything.”¹² There is, nevertheless, wide agree-ment that the morning’s events of 14 Tammouz were “probably the swiftest, surest, and most complete and successful revolution in our time,”¹³ “they destroyed the monarchy immediately.” An *al-Hurriya* (Freedom) editorial observed: “Overnight we moved from the era of oppression, slavery, corrup-tion, and imperialism into the era of freedom, justice, and independence.”¹⁴

The Iraqi revolution coincided with the USSR’s emergence as a super-power competing in the Cold War, when the Soviet Union’s engagement

⁶ Marion Farouk-Sluglett, Peter Sluglett. *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*. London, 1987. P. 12.

⁷ Rony Gabbay. *Communism and Agrarian Reform in Iraq*. London, 1978. P. 72.

⁸ British Embassy Staff Report. Baghdad. 27 July 1958 // *Records of Iraq 1914–1966*. 15 vols. / Alan De Lacy Rush, research consultant; Jane Priestland, research ed. Vol. 12: 1956–1958: *The Fall of the Monarchy*. Cambridge, UK, 1998. P. 261.

⁹ Foster Hailey. *How Revolution Occurred in Iraq* // *New York Times*. 1958. 27 July.

¹⁰ Caractacus (pseudonym). *Revolution in Iraq: An Essay in Comparative Public Opinion*. London, 1959. P. 120.

¹¹ Keith Wheeler. *World Crisis* // *Life*. 1958. 18 August. P. 67.

¹² Uriel Dann. *Iraq under Qassem. A Political History: 1958–1963*. New York and Lon-don, 1969. P. 33.

¹³ Russey K. Karanjia. *Arab Dawn*. London, 1959. P. 179.

¹⁴ “Papers Explain Fight Against Imperialism”. Baghdad, Iraqi home service // *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*. 1958. 16 July.

with the Middle East increased significantly. The 1950s would witness the USSR's first weapons sales to a member nation-state in the Arab League,¹⁵ and the Soviet Union's support of Egypt in the United Nations during the Suez war.¹⁶ Individual Arabs participated in the Moscow Youth Festival,¹⁷ and their language became something of a fad in Moscow. A. A. Tarkovsky, celebrated as one of the Soviet Union's greatest film directors, studied Arabic for two years at the Institute of Oriental Studies, before moving into film.¹⁸ Of all the members of the Arab League, Iraq emerged as the darling of the Soviet Union. Texts written by Iraqi citizens were disproportionately present on the pages of Soviet publications (as compared with other countries, which were more frequently the subject of descriptions by USSR journalists).¹⁹

Why was Iraq so compelling to the Soviet authorities? Perhaps its special position in the eyes of the Soviets was due to the timing of the country's revolutions, which occurred within a year of the October Revolution. Shortly before the end of Mesopotamia's Hashemite monarchy in 1958, L. N. Kotlov had contributed a chapter on Mesopotamia's first national revolt (that of 1918–1920) to an edited volume commemorating the anniversary.²⁰ The 14 Tammouz revolution was described as further confirmation of October 1917's global significance. A gala reception in Moscow in the House of Friendship celebrated the first year of Iraqi's revolution on July 14, 1959.²¹ In later edited volumes, A. M. Goldobin surveyed the Kurdish national movement,²² M. Kamal analyzed progressive newspapers in that language,²³

¹⁵ Laura M. James. *Nasser at War; Arab Images of the Enemy*. London, 2006. Pp. 158–161.

¹⁶ Galia Golan. *The Soviet Union and the Suez Crisis // The Suez-Sinai Crisis 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal*. London, 1990.

¹⁷ Kassem al Samawi. *My ne dopustim voiny! // Druzhba narodov*. 1957. Vol. 9. P. 132.

¹⁸ M. A. Tarkovskaia. *About Andrei Tarkovsky*. Moscow, 1990. P. 272.

¹⁹ S. L. Miliavskaia. *Bibliografiia stran Afriki i Arabskogo Vostoka*. 2 vols. Moscow, 1979–1980.

²⁰ L. N. Kotlov. *Pod'em osvoboditel'nogo dvizheniia v Irake v 1918–1924 gg. // Velikii Oktiabr' i narody Vostoka*. Moscow, 1957.

²¹ State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF). F. R-9576. Op. 12. D. 18 (1). L. 110.

²² A. M. Goldobin. *Kurds кое demokraticheskoe dvizhenie v Irake na sovremennom etape // Filologiya i istoriya stran zarubezhnoi Azii i Afriki. Tezisy dokladov iubileinoi nauchnoi konferentsii Vost. Fak-ta LGU, posviashchennoi 50-letiiu Velikogo Oktiabria*. Leningrad, 1967. Pp. 62–63.

²³ M. Kamal'. *Kurdskaia progressivnaia pechat' o Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii // Velikii oktiabr' i osvoboditel'naia bor'ba narodov blizhnego i srednego vostoka*. Baku, 1967. Pp. 148–160.

and M. A. Mairakov reviewed agriculture in Kurdistan, all within the context of October 1917's global influence.²⁴

Similarly, citizens' response to the 14 Tammouz revolution in 1958 was exemplary in that it also illustrated the special place held by Iraq in the Soviet consciousness. Soviet Kurds²⁵ and Armenians²⁶ reached out to compatriots in the new republic; Iraqis addressed envelopes seeking pen pals²⁷ and collectable stamps from the USSR.²⁸ Stalinabad cotton workers welcomed Iraqi schoolteachers to their workplaces and their homes.²⁹ A Radio Moscow composer replied to an Iraqi colleague's scribbled request wrapped around scrawled notes, with an orchestral recording of a new national anthem, in three arrangements.³⁰ While such public performances of solidarity with "friendly countries" became routine during the mid-1960s, Iraq was the first state in the Arab League to receive this kind of public support, orchestrated or not, and there was a particular enthusiasm that was absent in later celebrations of, for example, the Aswan High Dam.

Certainly, the growth of Soviet attention to Iraq had something to do with the importance of the transformation taking place there. As William Roger Louis has acknowledged, the events of July 14, 1958, were "not just another Middle East coup but a major social and economic revolution,"³¹ for Mahboob Alam, "the revolution of 1958 was the biggest turning point."³² Nadje Sadiq al-Ali expressed her surprise at the degree to which her father's generation of Baghdadis was politicized:

My father would tell us stories of his days at *Thaniwiya al-Karkh*, a well-known boys' high school on the east banks of the Tigris. Like many other school and university students, but also workers and peasants, he would regularly demonstrate against the repressive government attached to the monarchy. The female students from the nearby girls'

²⁴ M. A. Mairakov. *Agrarnye preobrazovaniia v Irakskom Kurdistane // Doklady nauchnoi konferentsii aspirantov i molodykh uchenykh posviashch. 50-letiiu Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii*. Minsk, 1967.

²⁵ GARF. F. R-9576. Op. 12. D. 10. L. 38.

²⁶ GARF. F. R-9576. Op. 12. D. 10. L. 40.

²⁷ GARF. F. R-9576. Op. 12. D. 10. Ll. 43-44.

²⁸ GARF. F. R-9576. Op. 12. D. 10. L. 45.

²⁹ GARF. F. A-2306. Op. 72. D. 6936.

³⁰ GARF. F. R-9576. Op. 12. D. 51 (1). L. 109.

³¹ William Roger Louis. Harold Macmillan, the Middle East Crisis of 1958 // *Proceedings of the British Academy*. 1997. Vol. 94. P. 217.

³² Mahboob Alam. *Iraqi Foreign Policy Since Revolution*. P. 111.

high school would join them as they marched through the streets shouting anti-government, anti-British and anti-Israeli slogans.³³

But what was the relationship of this politicization of Iraqis to the Soviet view of the USSR as the harbinger of anticolonialist modernity?

In this essay, I will challenge the idea that Red October was the initial impetus for the developments that led to the 1958 revolution ending the Hashemite monarchy. True, the Communist Party of Iraq (Hizb al-Shuyu'i al-'Iraqi, or CPI) joined the Communist International at the Seventh Congress of 1935, and struggled in the name of workers' internationalism. As we shall see, individual Iraqi communists continued to follow customs originating in the Comintern, such as assuming conspiratorial "party names." However, the CPI's growth in both numbers and institutional capacity was due to factors entirely outside Moscow's control.

How much of the following, for example, evokes any reference to the example of Soviet modernity? Hana Askren points to the repetitiveness of political demonstrations through the decade in Aliya Mamduh's novel, *Habbat al-naftalin* (Mothballs). In the novel, "Mamduh rejects nonlinear chronology in which a character moves from the past to the future along a single line. Instead, this story is made up of isolated points in time, some earlier, some later, others unmarked."³⁴ Standing at the "Old Bridge" across the Tigris, Mamduh's protagonist recalls: "the voice of the corpses colliding: the English, Nuri al-Said, the demonstrations, the firing of bullets, bodies lying on the bridge while others fled into the river."³⁵ Askren surmised that Mamduh was referring to the 1948 demonstration in response to the terms of the Portsmouth Treaty, *al-Wathba* (the leap);³⁶ her description would hold equally valid for the 1952 *al-Intifada* (the uprising), student protests of the administration's arbitrary dismissal of a fellow during March 1953, or those following the October 1956 attack on Egypt at Suez.

Building from such observations, this text will address the Iraqi revolution as a phenomenon with its own logic and development, independent of the international communist movement and the USSR. Apparently, it was only after the fact, following the logic of the Cold War and in the enthusiasm of the moment, that the Iraqi revolution came to be inscribed into the kind

³³ Nadjé Sadig Al-Ali. *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories From 1948 to the Present*. London, 2007. P. 58.

³⁴ Hana Askren. *You Are What You Speak: The Secret Language of an Iraqi Girl* / Ph.D. dissert.; McGill University, 2007. P. 44.

³⁵ Alia Mamduh. *Napthalene: A Novel of Baghdad*. New York, 2006. P. 61.

³⁶ Askren. *You Are What You Speak*. P. 86.

of grand narratives (regarding how socialism spread throughout the world) that were cited earlier. Contrary to these narratives, some local developments in Iraq were the result of unintended consequences, such as when Baghdad police seized Moscow-oriented Communist cadres, or released those Communists who were not graduates of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) in Moscow.³⁷ Other developments resulted from different funding, new policies, and wider constituencies. While the Soviet Union (through the international communist movement) had served as a significant source of funding for the Arab left before World War II, entrepreneurial Iraqi leftists developed alternate sources of financial support and political direction after the war. This independence from the international communist movement aside, developments internal to Iraq under the Hashemite monarchy pushed the local left toward exploring the USSR as an alternate model of modernity. Soviet experience enabled local activists to explore multiple valences to terms such as “doctor,” “elections,” “partisan,” “security,” or “teacher.” The Soviet Union offered the only tangible – that is, realized in practice – scenario of transforming a “backward” country into a world power. References to Soviet examples inescapably entered the lexicon of the Iraqi left simply because the Soviet Union was the largest and most powerful country on the collision course with the forces of “world capitalism and imperialism.”

The beginnings of Iraq’s existence as a sovereign state seemed to place it within the logic of the normative “Western” modernity, an important consideration, as it points out that the Soviet model was by no means without an alternative. Iraq was formed from three provinces of the Ottoman Empire. It joined the League of Nations in 1936 as a constitutional monarchy constructed on the British model. Its government consisted of a prime minister, a deputy prime minister, a minister of state, and twelve portfolios including agriculture, communications and works, defense, development, economics, education, finance, foreign affairs, health, interior, justice, and social affairs. The Hashemite monarchy bore some indebtedness to Britain’s political forms. Article 36 of the country’s 1925 constitution provided for a “Chamber of Deputies [that] shall be constituted by election on the basis of one deputy for every twenty thousand males.” Members of the Senate, a local adaptation of Britain’s House of Lords, were appointed by royal decree.

³⁷ G. G. Kosach. *Kommunisty Blizhnego Vostoka v SSSR; 1920–1930-e gody*. Moscow, 2009. P. 212.

Importantly, English language was compulsory in Iraqi public schools.³⁸ So, too, were official documents (the monarchy's *Official Gazette*, a monthly digest of its new laws) in both Arabic and English. As a consequence, locals read the London *Times* and *Time* magazine. The English-language press, "more influential than their limited circulation would indicate,"³⁹ informed politically active Iraqis about developments in and out of the region, more so than was the case with other Arabs of the *maghreb* and *mashreq*. And even Iraqi leftists tuned their sets to Radio Moscow's English-language broadcasts.⁴⁰ Later, al-Diwaniyah primary school director Adnan Khurshid recounted to a Soviet audience, "we learned about the life of your country from a few books and from the radio." While the shortwave service began broadcasting in Arabic during 1939, archival records indicate that Iraqi listeners tuned into the English-language broadcasts.⁴¹

The Iraqi monarchy's constitution, Article 37 (as amended October 27, 1943), provided for election of deputies under a special law. Law no. 11 of 1946 designated a two-stage electoral system, whereby citizens voted for "secondary electors," who would, in turn, elect deputies. The 1946 law limited the franchise to "every male Iraqi who has completed his twentieth year and whose name is entered in the electoral registers." The monarchy's heritage was also Ottoman, in that it excluded more citizens than it included. Eliminated from the franchise (as they had been by the 1876 Ottoman constitution) were women, ex-prisoners, the bankrupt, the psychologically ill, and the "mentally defective." The police served as the base of this structure of power, and, according to the constitution's Article 60, a member of the legislature enjoyed immunity from prosecution, "unless the Assembly to which he belongs resolves, by majority, that sufficient grounds exist for his being charged, or unless he is arrested, *flagrante delicto*, for a crime."

As Rashid Khalidi pointed out, irregularities that marked the 1912 election in the Ottoman Arab provinces continued in post-Ottoman jurisdictions,⁴² largely protected by such provisions. Soviet critics of Iraq's electoral college system alleged that it was open to external influence.⁴³ At the time, a clerk

³⁸ United States. Central Intelligence Agency. National Intelligence Survey (NIS) 30. Iraq. January 1951. P. 14.

³⁹ George L. Harris. *Iraq: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture*. New Haven, 1958. P. 140.

⁴⁰ GARF. F. R-9576. Op. 12. D. 10. L. 34.

⁴¹ GARF. F. A-2306. Op. 72. D. 6936. L. 36.

⁴² Rashid Khalidi. The 1912 Election Campaign in the Cities of Bilad al-Sham // *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 1984. Vol. 16. No. 4. P. 462.

⁴³ I. D. Levina. *Konstitutsii gosudarstv Blizhnego i Srednego Vostoka*. Moscow, 1956. P. 139.

at the British Council pointed out that: "Politically, the regime was based upon a parliament chosen by a complicated voting system which made it easy to pack."⁴⁴ More recently, Adeed Dawisha concluded that "for over a decade, the political parties had demanded that the two-step elections be abandoned on the grounds that the small number of secondary electors facilitated greater governmental interference."⁴⁵ So the theory that the hand of Moscow was at work in Baghdad's revolution must be carefully qualified, in order to acknowledge local developments.

On election, representatives in the Chamber of Deputies were awarded jeweled medals, which they wore on their suit lapels. Their service also secured special exemptions for their constituents. While eighteen months of military training were compulsory for all males between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five,⁴⁶ Kurdish Agha Bayazid of the Pizhdar tribe served as a deputy, and as a result, all the men of the Pizhdar tribe enjoyed freedom from military service. Similarly, Da'ud Agha and Hamid Agha al-Jaf of the Jaf tribe, Fatah Agha of the Harki tribe, and Sidiq Miran Agha of the Khoshnaw tribe obtained exemptions for those who had voted them into office.⁴⁷ By the end of World War II, chambers (modeled on those on the Victoria Embankment, Westminster) in which the legislature met had become worn.⁴⁸ Florescent tubes lit their creaking wooden galleries; cracked and whitewashed walls were relieved only by the dark curtain of speakers' platform.⁴⁹ Recently, Queen Victoria's six-horse postillion landau had been refurbished⁵⁰ for the regent (representing the adolescent king) to use when opening Parliament. The new king's coronation was widely anticipated as an opportunity to turn over a new leaf, which would strengthen attempts to reform the system from within.

At the same time, by the mid-1950s, the foreign-language press was bringing ruling classes' political discussions in line with U.S. Cold War policies. George Steinmetz, writing on the "new U.S. Imperialism," notes the importance of language's multivocality: "Because social science categories draw on everyday language, they are inevitably permeated with 'political'

⁴⁴ Caractacus. *Revolution in Iraq: An Essay in Comparative Public Opinion*. P. 36.

⁴⁵ Adeed Dawisha. *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation*. Princeton, 2009. P. 111.

⁴⁶ Iraq // *The Middle East and North Africa*. 1958. Vol. 6. P. 190.

⁴⁷ Avshalom H. Rubin. Abdul Karim Qasim and the Kurds of Iraq: Centralization, Resistance and Revolt, 1958–1963 // *Middle East Studies*. 2007. Vol. 43. No. 3. Pp. 353–382.

⁴⁸ Mohammed Fadhil Jamali. *Iraq: Past and Present*. Baghdad, 1954. P. 8.

⁴⁹ Harris. *Iraq: Its People*. P. 120.

⁵⁰ British Pathé Newsreel. 1949. 18 April.

assumptions.”⁵¹ Drawing on the very permeated language, editors of the *Iraq Times* quoted John Foster Dulles’s comment that the Atlantic Pact allies were planning a “fresh approach” to Europe’s defense.⁵² A simultaneous discussion erupted between Fadhil Jumali (Iraq’s foreign minister), and Charles Malik (his Lebanese counterpart), regarding the need for a “fresh approach” to policies in the Middle Eastern region,⁵³ as those in authority in the region suddenly stood to benefit from an imagined hand guiding local events from Moscow. To Dulles’s statement, the editors of *al-Shaab* (The People) replied, “for more than three years now Britain and the United States have been trying to set up a defense organization for the Middle East.”⁵⁴ The editors at *al-Zaman* (Time) predicted that the Turkish premier and foreign minister would likely attend King Faisal’s coronation ceremonies in Baghdad during May 1953, where they would put forward proposals for collective defense with “funds and arms from the western powers for the Arab armies.”⁵⁵ The language of bipolarity and defense against communism began to permeate Iraqi public discourse. For instance, Jumali and Malik proposed a program of “moral rearmament” to counter the homogenizing effects of communism. In the words of the Iraqi minister’s biographer, a nation’s dignity (like that of a Victorian gentleman riding in a carriage) was its asset in the Cold War: “our problems and differences as nations cannot be solved as long as we are selfish, so long as our political honesty and integrity is questioned.” In the era of U.S. Cold War neo-imperialism, the Hashemite monarchy would refer to British liberalism as an alternative to “Godless communism.”⁵⁶ To this discussion, the editors of *al-Nahda* (Awakening) added, “the government must understand that the nation thinks along lines completely different from those the politicians use.”⁵⁷

Editors at *al-Shaab* emphasized common ground between the Iraqi prime minister and the U.S. secretary of state. Perhaps they just disagreed about tactics. Prime Minister Jamal al-Madfai insisted that communism “should not be fought against [by means of] laws and legislations, but should be curbed through the elevation of the individual’s” standard of

⁵¹ George Steinmetz. *Return to Empire: The New U.S. Imperialism in Comparative Historical Perspective* // *Sociological Theory*. 2005. Vol. 23. No. 4. P. 340.

⁵² *A New Approach to Defense* // *Iraq Times*. 1953. 20 April.

⁵³ Harry J. Almond. *Iraqi Statesman: A Portrait of Mohammad Fadhel Jamali*. Salem, OR, 1993. P. 101.

⁵⁴ *Iraqi Press Roundup* // *Iraq Times*. 1953. 13 February.

⁵⁵ *Iraqi Press Roundup* // *Iraq Times*. 1953. 14 April.

⁵⁶ Almond. *Iraqi Statesman*. P. 101.

⁵⁷ *Iraqi Press Roundup* // *Iraq Times*. 1953. 13 February.

living.⁵⁸ Walter Z. Laqueur agreed: “great development schemes have been planned in Iraq and the means are available to implement the program, but the living standard of the majority of the population has not risen nor is it likely to rise.”⁵⁹

For Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the gross mistake committed in the Far East, resulting in the loss of China and her 450 million inhabitants, might be repeated in the Middle East.⁶⁰ The Iraqi government would eventually receive U.S. military assistance, based on such perceptions of Communism’s threat. Ali Mahmud al-Sheikh Ali predicted on the pages of *al-Zaman*: “it is not improbable that the Middle East would end up like China, [which] has taken communism for a creed, if present policies are to continue.”⁶¹ Egyptian editor Mohamed Hassanein Heikal warned on the pages of *Akhbar al-Yaum* (News of the Day) that the Iraqi army will never take a single step beyond the frontiers of its country, and its mission will not exceed the defense of these frontiers.⁶² The “fresh approach” for which Dulles called, was beginning to look a great deal like sublimation of Iraq’s independence within a reconstituted, nuclear-enabled Ottoman Empire.

Statesman Yusuf al-Gailani confessed to a foreign diplomat that he suffered from anxiety about communists. Perhaps Iraqi leftists would turn to arson and destroy private property: “bands of four or five of them carrying incendiary bombs could move to various parts of the [capital] city without attracting attention and then set buildings on fire. Simultaneous outbreaks in various parts of the city could paralyze the fire brigade and the security forces.” He was confident that support for these leftists was arriving from outside the country, “owing to the length of Iraq’s frontier, it was impossible to prevent [Iranian] communists [from] infiltrating.”⁶³ To his regret, the intelligence division in the local police “had the wrong kind of informants for the work they had to undertake.”⁶⁴

At the time, a foreign newspaper estimated the number of communists in Iraq to be “one or two thousand” out of an autochthonous population of

⁵⁸ Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 6 June.

⁵⁹ Walter Z. Laqueur. The Appeal of Communism in the Middle East // Middle East Journal. 1955. Vol. 9. No. 1. P. 25.

⁶⁰ Iraqi Press Roundup// Iraq Times. 1953. 6 June.

⁶¹ Iraqi Press Roundup// Iraq Times. 1953. 8 June.

⁶² Mission of Army Is Defense of Nation. Baghdad. 7 July 1953 // FBIS- Foreign Radio Broadcasts (FRB)-53-132 on 1953-7-8.

⁶³ British Embassy, Baghdad – to Foreign Office, London, 27 June 1953 // Rush and Priestland. Records of Iraq. Vol. 11. P. 295.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

five million.⁶⁵ This was a conservative and static estimate, representing dynamic processes in Iraqi society. The sum total of these processes indicates the emergence of a radical alternative to “modernity” of the institutions of the Hashemite monarchy. Several vectors brought Iraqis to formal workers’ internationalism. Zaki Khairi (party name, “Jalil” [Grand]) growing up in the nation’s capital, later recounted that the October myth drew him to politics:

I was fourteen years old and at the elementary school at the time... I still remember how the instructor – a humble man from the quarters of Abu Shibl – interrupted the reading exercise. The class had just run over passages of an essay in which the author... painted Bolshevism in a very dark color. “The Bolshevik government,” the instructor explained, “is the government of the poor. This is why it is regarded with hatred.” ... I was at a malleable and receptive age and the memory imprinted itself on me.⁶⁶

For all its youthful adherents, Jon Kimche reported “an air of unreality about Iraqi activism” at the time.⁶⁷

For their part, the police were quite effective at tracking down dissidents. The British-trained Criminal Investigation Department (CID) concentrated on subversives, to the neglect of criminals.⁶⁸ Bahjat al-‘Atiyya, CID head, was devoted to counterespionage, penetration of subversive organizations, and political intelligence.⁶⁹ To a bystander, it seemed informants were everywhere. A visitor, accompanying a Karbala police chief through the bazaar, noted:

It was revealing to see how widely flung was his intelligence service. Time and again some inconspicuous figure would reveal himself, by a signal or a mere flicker of his face, as a plain-clothes policeman; and many indeed were the merchants and craftsmen who seem to have some permanent understanding with the police.⁷⁰

As a result, communists were tied to an “embattled party;” “its organization and morale were low.”⁷¹

⁶⁵ New York Times. 1953. 1 February.

⁶⁶ Ilario Salucci. *A People’s History of Iraq: The Iraqi Communist Party, Workers’ Movements and the Left, 1924–2004*. Chicago, 2005. P. 9.

⁶⁷ Jon Kimche and David Kimche. *Both Sides of the Hill: Britain and the Palestine War*. London, 1960. P. 58.

⁶⁸ Uriel Dann. *Iraq under Qassem*. P. 9.

⁶⁹ George Sellers Harris. *Law, Personalities, and Politics of the Middle East: Essays in Honor of Majid Khadduri*. Boulder, CO, 1987. P. 128.

⁷⁰ James Morris. *Islam Inflamed*. New York, 1957. P. 307.

⁷¹ Tareq Y. Ismael. *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Iraq*. Cambridge, 2008. P. 47.

Outside the party, what did “Soviet Russia” mean to mid-century Muslims? It was of distant theoretical concern for Cairo Muslims, particularly those around the Sunni seminary al-Azhar (which was in the midst of negotiations with the Egyptian government regarding its nationalization). During 1953, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi published Abd al-Mun'im al-Nimur's *al-Islam wa al-Shuyuiyah* (Islam and Communism). Also in Cairo, the Grand Mufti and rector of Al-Azhar proclaimed that “Russia, old and new – has always been hostile to Moslems and Islam.”⁷² Shi'i's holy cities, Karbala and Najaf, attracted thousands of pilgrims to Iraq from outside the country. These pilgrims rejected the Sunni leaders, legal systems, and institutions that British political authority placed to rule over former Ottoman citizens.⁷³ As Hamid Dabashi commented, the political Shi'ism that emerged on the USSR's southern borders during the Musaddiq era was a postcolonial ideology that could not be contained within the borders of any one nation-state.

Dabashi pointed out that “it was to nationalism that Shi'i political thought responded in the 1950s.”⁷⁴ This kind of nationalism was evidenced in Iraq as an aesthetic populism. Scientist Jafar Hayat reflected this in his lyrical comment on his compatriots:

I was sure that ordinary people who inhabit the towns and villages of our country have a keen intellect, nobility, courage, and ability to endure hardship. I was convinced that they condemn injustice and are always ready to help a neighbor in distress.⁷⁵

A passage in Aliya Mamduh's novel praises the beauty of local girls, who “wore wide pleated skirts and short-sleeved blouses, with colored ribbons around their neck and in their hair. Their hair was always combed, and their faces freshly scrubbed. Their skin was clear and radiant; their blood sang with health.”⁷⁶

Mamduh credited their blooming health and flawless skin to diet: “Their food was fresh meat from Mr. Hubi the butcher. Hubi was about forty, fat and red-faced, with a big belly and a broad, slow voice. He butchered lambs, singing, as if he were watering his garden.” The source of the girl's beauty, Hubi (My Love) the butcher was also a local source of authority. “This was the only man whose orders were obeyed... Anyone who stopped in front of

⁷² Communism Opposed to Teachings of Islam Says Divine // Iraq Times. 1953. 14 August.

⁷³ Rosemary Stanfield-Johnson. The Tabarra'iyān and the Early Safavids // Iranian Studies. 2004. Vol. 37. No. 1. Pp. 47-71.

⁷⁴ Hamid Dabashi. Shi'ism, A Religion of Protest. Cambridge, MA, 2011. P. 267.

⁷⁵ F. M. Seiful-Mulyukov. Rozhdenie Irakskoi respubliki. Moscow, 1958.

⁷⁶ Mamdouh. Naphthalene. Pp. 13-14.

his shop would be greeted with every compliment and blessing that came into his head.” Not just a lexicon of good wishes, the Baghdad butcher possessed encyclopedic knowledge:

Hubi knew everyone; the family trees of the people who lived in the palaces far away, overlooking the Tigris and the old wooden bridge, the pedigrees of the houses that ate their meat in silence, the histories of those who ate bones and broth, and those who threw meat to their dogs or into the garbage.

The novelist wound up this elegiac passage, “Everything emanated from his shop: problems, quarrels, and even secret leaflets.”⁷⁷ Any influence that the Soviet Union exercised over politics in Iraq was indirect, and should be carefully qualified. Just as leaflets reached Baghdad butchers deep in Iranian pilgrims’ suitcases, ideas crossed faith-communities in unexpected ways. The eminent Sunni cleric’s statement (“Russia, old and new – has always been hostile”) was interpreted differently among Iraq’s Shi’i. Among them, the Sunni mufti’s decision invited derision, and Shi’i were one of the CPI’s strongest constituencies. During the summer of 1953, the police released part-time food vendor and bus inspector Hussein al-Radi (party name “Salam Adil” [A Just Peace]) from prison. Originally from Najaf, convicted four years previously on charges of being a communist, he skipped probation and decided to go underground. At the time, the party’s dues-paying members were concentrated in the capital and the south of the country. Of 415 total, 139 were in Baghdad, 48 in Salam Adil’s home province of Karbala, and another 48 in Basra; and only 46 in the predominantly Kurdish Northern cities of Erbil and Sulaymaniyya.⁷⁸ The presence of Communist cells in Kurdish areas suggests the influence of the Soviet Union’s nationality policy, which extended cultural rights to Kurdish-minority populations in its own union republics. While party members Zaki Khairi and Hussein al-Radi may have been variously drawn to the mythology of October or the concept of a workers’ democracy, “neutralism” – understood as a sentiment opposing the alliance with Great Britain – would also emerge as a means for many more Iraqis (Shi’i students, women and men among them) to erase their subordinate place in globalism’s history.

This new orientation depended on developments among the students, especially on their disillusionment with the government control. During the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Anne Alexander. Political Opportunities and Collective Action in the Iraqi Revolution. 1958–1959 // International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies. 2008. Vol. 2. No. 2. P. 262.

academic year 1952–1953, most Iraqi students abroad were in the United States (a total 73 students).⁷⁹ Twenty went to the UK, and others went to Turkey, Egypt, France, and Lebanon. King Faisal visited Los Angeles and met with twenty Iraqi students at UCLA and USC.⁸⁰ UCLA commencement programs suggest that these students may have included Abdul Jabbar Alwan (statistics major), from an-Numaniyah on the Tigris southeast of the capital, Abdul-Karim Mohamed Tai (English major), Ali Musah Abu Tabikh (master's in horticulture), Abdul Karim M. Knudari (PhD in botany), all from Baghdad.⁸¹ In addition, Abdul Malik Darwish Nashif, from the capital, received a Stanford scholarship.⁸² When students received government stipends, they signed contracts that “permitted the prime minister to suspend financial aid if any student neglected his or her studies,” or “engaged in politics.” Iraqi student activists preferred universities in California, far from the embassy in Washington, DC. Khaled al-Salam later alleged that “the students felt that the cultural attaché’s job was to spy on them.”⁸³ While the students’ conversation with a monarch their own age was warm (“King Faisal was besieged with questions concerning news from home”), relationships were not so cordial with the embassy staff. Abdul Khalid al-Bayadi, studying in Britain, alleged that the cultural attaché in London “persecuted students on account of their participation in youth conferences.”⁸⁴

Charles Tripp remarked, “neutralism in Iraq did not primarily imply taking a stance in the Cold War – a remote subject for most Iraqis. Rather, it meant calling for an immediate end to the alliance with Great Britain, thereby tapping into a much richer vein of political sentiment in the country.”⁸⁵ What did “neutralism” mean for these students and for Iraqis of different political positions?

In Iraq at midcentury, “neutralism” also implied a gender-inclusive politics. Not only did the constitution exclude Iraqi women from suffrage, but, as Noga Efrati pointed out, the monarchy failed to place marriage, divorce, child custody, and adoption under civil law or to include them in

⁷⁹ Table 128. Students of the Educational Missions and the Countries in which they Study // Government of Iraq. Ministry of Economics. Statistical Abstract. 1955. P. 114.

⁸⁰ Charles Hillinger. Memory of a King // Los Angeles Times. 1958. 18 July.

⁸¹ Personal email from Albert Lowe, archivist at UCLA University Archives. 19 October, 2011.

⁸² A Baghdad Diary // Iraq Times. 1953. 26 June.

⁸³ “Mahdawi hits U.S. imperialism at trial”. Daily Report // FBIS-FRB-59-044 on 1959-03-05.

⁸⁴ “Mahdawi scores” // Ibid. 1959-03-06.

⁸⁵ Charles Tripp. A History of Iraq. Cambridge, 2000. P. 130.

the legislative process. The lack of civil law, among other things, inhibited interfaith marriage, restricting Iraqi women's choice of life partners. Deputies debated minor reforms regarding divorce and child marriage on the floor of the parliament but they never emerged as laws.⁸⁶ Founded in 1952, the *Rabitat Difa' Huquq al-Mara'* (League for the Defense of Women's Rights) allowed student activists to continue campaigning, drafting legislation, and lobbying after graduation.⁸⁷ The league committed itself to a progressive personal status code,⁸⁸ a draft of which was published outside the country.⁸⁹ Among the league's founders was physician Dr. Naziha al-Dulaymi; in addition to biomedical practitioners (as activist Soraya K. told scholar Nadje Sadig al-Ali): "we had a group of women lawyers working in the *Rabitat*; what we ended up achieving was not complete, but it was the best we could do."⁹⁰ The emergence of this group demonstrates different options available to progressive individuals in Iraq. Not limited to the ideal of Soviet modernity, women's activists in Iraq articulated a vision of their own exclusion from the monarchy's constitutional order, something that the USSR could not offer through its Communist allies.

Among biomedical practitioners and scientists in Iraq (as well as lawyers and political activists), "neutralism" meant support for a complete ban on nuclear testing. Well-organized and numerous (10,000 Iraqis signed the "Peace Petition" demanding nuclear disarmament by the 1951 Vienna conference, topping 70,000 by the 1952 Berlin meeting),⁹¹ "the *Ansar as-Salam* (Peace Partisans) movement ... included in its ranks people of differing political inclinations, particularly from among the intelligentsia."⁹² In practical terms, this meant litterateurs, lawyers, and biomedical professionals. What brought them together was a common perspective: as the Vienna Congress recommended, they supported "unconditional banning of weapons of mass destruction [WMD], and primarily of atomic, chemical, and bacteriologi-

⁸⁶ Cynthia H. Enloe. *Nimo's War, Emma's War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War*. Berkeley, CA, 2010.

⁸⁷ Noga Efrati. *Negotiating Rights in Iraq* // *Middle East Journal*. 2005. Vol. 59. No. 4. P. 579.

⁸⁸ Jacqueline S. Ismael and Shereen T. Ismael. *Gender and State in Iraq* // Joseph Suad (Ed.). *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*. Syracuse, NY, 2000. P. 193.

⁸⁹ J.N.D. Anderson. *A Draft Code of Personal Law for Iraq* // *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. University of London. 1953. Vol. 15. Parts 1-3.

⁹⁰ Nadje Sadig al-Ali, *What Kind of Liberation? Women and the occupation of Iraq*. Berkeley, CA, 2009. P. 26.

⁹¹ Tripp. *A History of Iraq*. P. 126.

⁹² Aziz Sharif. *Nadezhnaia krepost' mira* // *Sovremennyi vostok*. 1959. March. P. 57.

cal weapons.”⁹³ While the international Peace Partisans movement enjoyed institutional support in Moscow, their triumph in Iraq was due to local and personal factors. Representing Iraq in Vienna were widely respected poets Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri⁹⁴ and Baḥr al-‘Ulūm.⁹⁵ The latter, in particular, published a bound collection of Shi’i *fatwas* condemning the use of WMD. Contrived controversy attested to the Partisans’ success in bringing Shi’is and intellectuals to the politically active left. The editors of *al-Siyasah* (Policy) “described them as ‘enemies of peace’ and called their organizations cheap instruments in the hands of the Dictatorship of the North that opposes freedom and kills thinking in the cradle.”⁹⁶ In an attempt to divide the local organization from its international coordinators, the *al-Siyasah* editors argued that “those who signed the plea forgot that it was Russia, the benign mother, that had vetoed a practical solution to the threat of atomic weapons.”⁹⁷

Without extensive recourse to personal interviews, it is difficult to know what brought individual “Partisans” to the organization, but it would seem that “neutrality’s” global politics expressed concern for the long-term deleterious effects of nuclear warfare on noncombatants. Iraqi students abroad may have accessed the research of Dr. Masao Tsuzuki through international student and youth networks, or through English-language publications circulating in Iraq. His *Medical Report on Atomic Bomb Effects*, regarding the continued effects of Hiroshima and Nagasaki detonations on survivors’ health (particularly civilian fishermen, whose skin blistered and whose hair fell out when their boats were coated with powdery radioactive ash), appeared in 1953. The book was popularized by an article on his work that appeared the same year in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*. His *Atomic Bomb Injury from the Medical Point of View* appeared the following year, popularized by an interview in the *Illustrated London News*. Other publications, for example, by Dr. Shuntaro Hida, may have been influential as well.⁹⁸

⁹³ World Peace Council, Documents and Papers on Disarmament, 1945–1955. Vienna, 1956. P. 87.

⁹⁴ World Peace Council, Second Session of the World Peace Council. Report and Documents. Vienna, 1951. 1–7 November.

⁹⁵ Meir Litvak. Money, Religion, and Politics // International Journal of Middle East Studies. 2002. Vol. 33. P. 6.

⁹⁶ Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1954. 17 March.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Shuntaro Hida. Account of a Medical Doctor Who Had to Face Innumerable Deaths of Victims from the Exposure to A-Bomb Radiation, n.d. // <http://afsc.org/sites/afsc.civicactions.net/files/documents/Shuntaro%20Hida,%20Japan.pdf> (last visit January 15, 2011).

Political tensions in Iraq were often caused by unnecessary police and governmental brutality. Conditions in the local prisons generated resentment and served as immediate causes for political discussions, even within the official establishment. Through the gates of the Baghdad penitentiary's Ottoman-era facility, 4,444 males and 29 females entered each year, while 1,593 remained from the previous year,⁹⁹ and a young man recalled that, "Prison was a horrible place to be," where the administration did not distinguish between those convicted of political and those convicted of criminal offenses, and where "We heard a lot of rumors of what goes on in the prison-fights, [including] beatings, and sexual assaults,"¹⁰⁰ and the authorities contemplated transfers *out* of the Baghdad facility.

Many of the women within the prison's walls had been transferred *from* smaller cities. Of these, a number came from the notorious Nagrat Salman facility in the southern desert. Mohammed al-Rashid, in *Min Am 'aq al-Sujun fi'l Iraq* (From the Depths of Prisons in Iraq), described the "days, terrifying, endless, filled with oppression, bullying, restrictions in everything, with regard to food and drink; letters, books, and newspapers; medicines, and doctors."¹⁰¹ In the Baghdad facility, women had the chance to seek medical counsel and biomedical preparations (as well as local news and reading material) from comrades outside. An editorial in the Arabic-language newspaper *al-Difaa* (The Defender) later blamed the administration's control and supervision as "deficient," and hinted that any communication between those incarcerated and the surrounding population was due to corruption among the wardens. "Otherwise," the editors queried, "how could the prisoners have kept up their communist activities and contacts with fellow-Reds outside the prison while they were under control of the authorities?"¹⁰²

In the capital, it was the administration that posed the greatest danger to those incarcerated. During the summer of 1953, jailers, alerted to communist prisoners' communication with local party members during weekly Friday visits, gave twenty-four hours' notice of an impending transfer to Baqubah prison. The move to a smaller facility twenty miles north of the capital would affect 150 detainees.¹⁰³ In retrospect, authorities justified their

⁹⁹ Prisoners (including persons on remand) entering and leaving prisons and the annual remainders therein. Tables 163 and 164 // Government of Iraq. Ministry of Economics. Principal Bureau of Statistics. Statistical Abstract. 1955. Baghdad, 1956. P. 170.

¹⁰⁰ Kevork Medzadourian. *My 41 Years in Iraq*. Mustang, OK, 2006. P. 34.

¹⁰¹ Seiful-Mulyukov. *Rozhdenie Irakskoi respubliki*.

¹⁰² Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 23 June.

¹⁰³ Jacques Dauphin. *Incertain Irak: Tableau d'un royaume avant la tempête, 1914–1915*. Paris, 1991. P. 255.

decision, since “prisoners communicated with their collaborators outside, continuously intrigued and carried out insubordination within the jail.” A communiqué of the director general of propaganda (released later) claimed that prisoners resisted the transfer, with both women and men defaming “high quarters.” Drawn by their chants, the director general of jails arrived to find prisoners attacking the security forces with bottles, iron bars, knives, and rocks. Seventy-three policemen and wardens were injured in the initial battle; police retaliated by firing automatic weapons into the cells. Seven prisoners died immediately, and an additional twenty-three were wounded and admitted to the hospital; the surviving prisoners were then transferred to Baqubah as originally planned. “The prisoners concerned represent the bulk of Nagrat Salman inmates, the majority of whom were brought to Baghdad some time ago, as a result of the government’s sympathetic reconsideration of their complaints about the conditions in their former prison.”¹⁰⁴

The *Al-Difaa* editors condemned the authorities’ excessive use of force. “Even if [the transfer is] justified there could be no excuse for using firearms against the prisoners after they had fortified themselves in their quarters against any attempt to transfer them by force.” The editors extrapolated the issue of prisoners’ dignity. “It would have been much wiser if they had been left alone for a while till they calmed down and then to have tried to talk them into going.”¹⁰⁵ It was clear that the newspaper editors’ primary concern was to condemn the authorities’ violence on vulnerable populations who posed no appreciable threat to public order. Coupled with this was a secondary concern for the rule of law, as the judicial authorities had not handed down capital sentences for any of the prisoners.

Protesting the jailers’ illegal violence, the Bar Association (its president, Abdul Wahab Mahmud, a prominent member of the Partisans)¹⁰⁶ staged a demonstration outside the prison.¹⁰⁷ The morning after the massacre, “a crowd carrying banners with slogans” convened outside the central Baghdad prison’s main gate. “An unarmed police contingent was called out to disperse them.” The crowd resisted, “using fire arms and cutting weapons killed one policeman, seriously injured two others and inflicted varying injuries on three more.” The police arrested a number of these activists, turning their cases

¹⁰⁴ Communist Prisoners Riot Inside Baghdad Central Jail // *Iraq Times*. 1953. 22 June.

¹⁰⁵ *Iraqi Press Roundup* // *Iraq Times*. 1953. 23 June.

¹⁰⁶ Matthew Elliot. *Independent Iraq: The Monarchy and British Influence, 1941–1958*. London, 2000. P. 183.

¹⁰⁷ Walter Z. Laqueur. *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East*. New York, 2007. P. 196.

over to the judiciary.¹⁰⁸ So the consolidation of public opinion in support of the Communist prisoners was much more due to the Hashemite monarchy's excessive use of force than to any hidden influence from the Soviet Union.

When Parliament next convened, Shaikh Ridha al-Shabibi with nineteen other members of the Chamber of Deputies pressed the government for dialogue and transparency, demanding an official statement. They called for a roll-call vote to expose the authorities' supporters. "When this was done, the demand was rejected by 65 votes to 26."¹⁰⁹ The editors of *al-Difaa* explained that they expected the authorities to "present an explanation in Parliament about the matter but there was nothing of this nature and the pro-government majority prevented other deputies from discussing the subject by voting against the questionnaire advanced by some deputies about the riots." The Chamber of Deputies was able to form a committee to investigate the riots, "now that the government has missed its chance of explanation."¹¹⁰

As the political crisis connected to the riots unraveled, the Communist Party itself was not free from factionalism and internal debate. Baha'u-Din Nuri (party name "Bassam" [Smiling]), at the time the general secretary of the CPI, displayed a leadership style that was derived directly from the "21 conditions" of the Communist International, with the preference for a single party and the condemnation of any "factionalism" or "splitting." The twenty-two-year-old's tenure as general secretary coincided with the leadership struggles in the USSR following Stalin's death. Unlike Stalin, "Bassam" had dropped out of high school; like the recently deceased CPSU general secretary, "Bassam" appointed members to the Central Committee. The Iraqi acknowledged that "it did not occur to me, or [to] anyone else in those days, that they should be elected in any way," which he attributed to the "practice of the personality cult and the bureaucratic inflexibility that was prevalent at the time."¹¹¹

During the preceding decades, the CPI maintained strong ties to the Comintern in Moscow. The Iraqi party's programs followed the Third International's congresses, both chronologically and thematically. This restricted the party's response to local political conditions. The Comintern's Otdel mezhdunarodnykh sviazei (OMS, International Liaison Department), with the "vital, though essentially underground, role [it played] in Comintern his-

¹⁰⁸ Communist Prisoners Riot // Iraq Times. 1953. 22 June.

¹⁰⁹ A Baghdad Diary // Iraq Times. 1953. 25 June.

¹¹⁰ Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 26 June.

¹¹¹ Ismael. Rise and Fall. P. 44; Russian State Archive of Social-Political History (RGASPI). F. 495. Op. 216. D. 29, personal file of Bahia-u-Din Nuri.

tory,” left a profound mark on the last Arab party to join the organization.¹¹² OMS Director Osip Piatnitsky (party names “Freitag” and “Piatnitsa”) was only theoretically following internationalist principles. He was much more committed to Moscow’s leadership in the organization. While Hanna Batatu has argued persuasively that the Comintern-era CPI members funded the party’s activities by means of their dues and subscription fees,¹¹³ archival documents suggest that “Bassam” and his comrades likely enjoyed the automobile, tape recorder, and radio available to them on account of funds originating in Moscow.¹¹⁴

Perhaps the initial impetus for the split in the party was given by the publication of the Party program. “Bassam” himself drafted this new call for “a government which makes a genuine stand against war plans and blocs and rearmament, abolishes the 1930 treaty [with Britain] and war bases in Iraq, works for the expulsion of the oil and other monopoly companies, and guarantees democratic liberties for the people.”¹¹⁵ Angered at the high-handed gesture of “Bassam,” a group of Iraqi leftists formed their own group. Their motives are variously explained as concern for due procedures (they resented the Central Committee’s declaration of a party program without having a party conference, which violated the “21 conditions”), if not orthodoxy (they refused to abandon Moscow’s Comintern-era United Front strategy and the “national bourgeois” stage of development).¹¹⁶ This splinter group took *Rayat al-Shaghilah* (The Workers’ Banner) as the title for their newspaper. On its pages, Jamal al-Haidari called for an alliance between workers and intelligentsia, prioritizing national over social liberation.¹¹⁷

In place of the arson and “incendiary bombs,” which inspired anxiety in the authorities, of the CPI program’s fourteen points, the fourth called for the annulment of appointments to the Senate and formation of a democratic form of government on the basis of direct elections. In addition, the new party program called for voters to be granted “the right to recall Deputies, guarantees of freedom of the people [in choosing] the chamber of deputies

¹¹² Branko Lazitch and Milorad M. Drachkovitch. *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern*. Stanford, 1973. P. xxix.

¹¹³ Hanna Batatu. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*. Princeton, 1978.

¹¹⁴ RGASPI. F. 495. Op. 216. D. 35. L. 35, Personal file of Yusuf Salman Yusuf, “Bernard Fririckh,” “Fahd.”

¹¹⁵ Laqueur. *Communism and Nationalism*. 197.

¹¹⁶ Samira Haj. *The Making of Iraq, 1900-1963: Capital, Power, Ideology*. Albany NY, 1997. P. 96.

¹¹⁷ Laqueur. *Communism and Nationalism*. P. 198.

and other elected officials of the country.”¹¹⁸ Perhaps assisted by those who, disturbed by its Stalinist tendency, had left the party, the CID succeeded in tracking down “Bassam.” As the British Embassy reported back to London, the “right kind of informant” had led the police to “a house in Baghdad where he was living under an assumed name: with him, they arrested four other men, Baqir Jaafar, Sadiq Jaafar, al-Falahi, and Kamal Salah al-Samarrai, and one woman, as well as seized an automobile, a tape recorder, and a radio.”¹¹⁹ De-Stalinization may have been a factor in the marginalization of Moscow-oriented communists in Iraq. If Moscow previously enjoyed any influence on the politics of the Iraqi left, this ended with the capture of “Bassam.”

CPI members who escaped the raid reported to Moscow the names of the four activists known to the British, as well as a fifth, and “an old woman and four children.”¹²⁰ Although *Pravda* ran the news under the headline “Police Terror in Iraq,”¹²¹ in fact Iraq’s left thrived after the arrest of “Bassam.” Control over the local party’s remaining assets – a printing press, the cells’ archives with membership lists, and funds – transferred to Karim Ahmad Daud, a young activist from the Kurdish section.¹²² Under his direction and that of his successor, the Party would develop new (and more inclusive) directions independent of Moscow.

Curiously, while Karim Ahmad Daud was taking control of the party’s assets, twenty-two-year-old Faisal II was being crowned king of the country. The coronation generated great hopes for change and raised expectations. The editors of *al-Zaman* acknowledged that, “among the celebrations of the coronation of H. M. King Faisal, there could be heard an urgent call for basic reforms.”¹²³ While his uncle, Abd al-Ilah, had exercised authority in his name until he reached the legal age of majority, the editors at *al-Difaa* acknowledged widespread “hopes” around the new king. The people “await impatiently for the purge that should cleanse the rule of past policies and do away with obstacles that hindered progress.”¹²⁴ The editors underscored that “that would not be realized without restoring matters to their constitutional bases, by abolishing martial law and other regulations restricting public

¹¹⁸ Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI). F. 5. Op. 28. D. 96. Ll. 43ff.

¹¹⁹ British Embassy, Baghdad – to Foreign Office, London, 20 July 1953 // Records of Iraq. Vol. XI. P. 297.

¹²⁰ RGANI. F. 5. Op. 28. D. 96. Ll. 55.

¹²¹ *Pravda*. 1953. 14 April.

¹²² Terry Martin. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, NY, 2001.

¹²³ Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 13 May.

¹²⁴ Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 20 April.

freedom.” Addressing the young monarch, the editors reminded him that he “had assumed his constitutional powers and sworn to do his duties according to the constitution, to safeguard the country’s independence, and achieve its aspirations,” emphasizing that “those in power should exchange obsolete methods for new ways to reinstate faith and confidence in the hearts of the people, and span the gap between the nation and its rulers.”¹²⁵

Emphasizing the importance of harmony, the *al-Zaman* editors pressed: “There are two parts to the state, the nation, and the government, it is important that these two parts should co-operate with and support one another.” The editors of *Akhbar al-Sa’a* (News of the Hour), covering a recent Eisenhower speech on the repatriation of Korean prisoners of war, provided an extended discussion of the king of ethics, which “opposed cruelty and supported justice.” Continuing on the theme of universal jurisdiction for universal values, they deduced that “the important thing is actual application of these ethics . . . whether in Korea, or Arab Palestine, North Africa, or Egypt.”¹²⁶

A hundred days after the coronation, “Bassam” and the other communists were tried before a military court, without access to the civil liberties contained in the constitution, “in view of the state of martial law in force in Baghdad” at the time they were apprehended.¹²⁷ The five defendants were charged with being members of a Communist Party, with holding membership in the central committee of an unregistered political party, and seeking to disseminate communism in the army and police, according to the 1936 annex to the Baghdad Penal Code. Although twenty-two lawyers stepped forward to represent the defense,¹²⁸ Radio Baghdad announced that four men had been found guilty and sentenced within a week.¹²⁹ Three received life sentences, Samarraï fifteen years in jail, and counsel for the defense Sherif ash-Sheikh (party name, “Haris” [Borderguard]) seven years’ imprisonment.¹³⁰ Once the king had been crowned, once the communists and their lawyer had been imprisoned, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles announced his intended tour of the Middle East.

¹²⁵ Iraqi Press Roundup // *Iraq Times*. 1953. 8 May.

¹²⁶ Iraqi Press Roundup // *Iraq Times*. 1953. 13 May.

¹²⁷ British Embassy, Baghdad – to Foreign Office, London, 20 July 1953 // Records of Iraq. Vol. 11. P. 297.

¹²⁸ British Embassy, Baghdad – to Foreign Office, London, 20 July 1953 // Records of Iraq. Vol. 11.

¹²⁹ “Communists Sentenced By Court Martial”. Baghdad, Iraqi Home Service, 12 July 1953 // FBIS-FRB-53-135 on 1053-07-13.

¹³⁰ RGASPI. F. 495. Op. 216. D. 157. L. 16.

In the Cold War's logic, "Bassam" had been tried and sentenced, and Iraq was now safe to join the West in a collective defense pact that would make U.S. nuclear weapons available to defend the Hashemite monarchy. The editors at *al-Shaab* calculated that, as Dulles would be in the country only twenty hours, of which half would be spent in polite and cordial greetings, "this leaves only 10 hours which the secretary would allot to discussions with Iraqi statesmen." The *al-Difaa* editors queried "what information can the American secretary possibly gather in a lightning trip such as his?" Proposing an answer to their rhetorical question, the editors speculated that "there may be conditions, proposals and demands that were presented to Secretary Dulles who would in turn present them to President Eisenhower."¹³¹ Editors at *al-Izza* deemed Dulles's short day in Baghdad "mystery-shrouded."¹³² Editors at *al-Shaab* shared their impression that Dulles had arrived in the area to abandon, not revive, proposals for collective defense: "Indications are almost unanimous that enthusiasm for setting up an overall defense system for the Middle East is cooling off, even with the United States, which is the first advocate of the plan."¹³³

Dulles's arrival coincided with Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, in Baghdad, where the legal protection of a worker's right to fast was central to the labor struggle. The labor code permitted workers in all industries to reduce their labor by one hour without loss of pay,¹³⁴ while archaeologist Linda Braidwood reported that those working on her dig refused to cook her food or brew her tea, as long as they were not eating or drinking themselves.¹³⁵ So, too, it seems that government officials refused tasks they found burdensome during this month of prayer. Even civil servants refused to break their fasts: editors at *al-Jarida* reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused President Eisenhower's special envoy Eric Johnson the visa he needed to enter the country. So, too, was Dulles's fact-finding tour through the capital cities of the Arab Middle East marked by outbreaks of anti-American and procommunist sentiment. While activists may have fasted by day, at night, they painted "crudely-lettered slogans, 'Dogs of Wall Street, Let Us Alone,' and 'Back Home, Criminal Dulles,'

¹³¹ Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 19 May.

¹³² Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 23 May.

¹³³ Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 29 May.

¹³⁴ Michael Critchley. The Health of the Industrial Worker in Iraq // British Journal of Industrial Medicine. 1955. Vols. 12-13. P. 75.

¹³⁵ Linda S. Braidwood. Digging Beyond The Tigris: An American Woman Archeologist's Story in the Kurdish Hills of Iraq. New York, 1959. P. 32.

often accompanied by a hammer and sickle” on garden walls and the sides of buildings.¹³⁶

Dulles’s short day in Iraq ended with a “vague and diplomatic press handout.”¹³⁷ As Dulles left the region, Prime Minister Jamal al-Madfaï announced an end to press censorship, effective immediately. Editors at *al-Sijil* replied that the proposal for abolition of censorship was met with cheers, given that, on occasion, the authorities “even prevented the publication of news about Britain permitted in the British papers becoming, as the saying goes, more British than the British.”¹³⁸ He promised that martial law would be abolished “in the near future,” and that a bill about the registration of political parties was on its way to the legislature.¹³⁹ The influence of the Soviet Union on responses to Dulles’s visit should be carefully qualified, as the form protests took (graffiti and prison riots) bore the imprint of home-grown political interests.

Prisoners protested to commemorate Dulles’s departure, and the authorities showed no restraint in quelling these demonstrations. The first massacre occurred on June 18, in the central Baghdad prison. The second, on August 14, was when the political prisoners presented a petition to their jailers demanding better conditions at Kut al-Amara (a prison that, a decade earlier, had been the equivalent of a communist university, “with daily courses in party history and ideology, with a library of its own”).¹⁴⁰ Again, on September 3, when the British Embassy hazarded, “a number of communist prisoners, after prolonged disobedience, attacked their guards who opened fire: eight prisoners were killed or died later of their wounds, the director of the jail and several police officers have been dismissed.”¹⁴¹ Yet another massacre took place in the ancient fortress of Nuqrat al-Salman, an “appalling desert prison,”¹⁴² the old castle serving as the “last station for murderers, leaders of clandestine parties, and sheiks of rebellious tribes.”¹⁴³ The final event in this bloody chain of massacres trailing Dulles’s departure

¹³⁶ Martin S. Day. Displaced Arabs Used as Political Football // Washington Post. 1953. 25 October.

¹³⁷ Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 23 May.

¹³⁸ Iraqi Press Roundup // Iraq Times. 1953. 6 June.

¹³⁹ Iraqi Premier Gives News of Ending of Press Censorship // Iraq Times. 1953. 14 June.

¹⁴⁰ Laqueur. Communism and Nationalism. P. 195.

¹⁴¹ British Embassy, Baghdad – Foreign Office, London, 17 September 1953 // Records of Iraq. Vol. 11. P. 205.

¹⁴² Tariq Ali. Bush in Babylon. London, 2003. P. 115.

¹⁴³ Saadi Youssef. Fadhil al-Marzoog // Banipal: Magazine of Modern Arabic Literature. 2000. No. 26. Pp. 40-52.

occurred at Baqubah, north of the capital, on the rail line to Mosul.¹⁴⁴ On the floor of the Chamber of Deputies, opposition political figure Kamil Jadarji appealed to the prime minister to investigate the “brutal murder” of “defenseless citizens.”¹⁴⁵

As we can see, Shi’i poets’ condemnation of WMDs, solidarity from newspaper editors and members of the Lawyers’ Association, civil servants and communists breaking their fasts together – all were, by all available evidence, strictly local developments. During the autumn after the prison massacre, the Soviet diplomatic mission began to collect back issues of underground local ephemera (including a special declaration from the CPI in connection with the thirty-fifth anniversary commemoration of the October Revolution) and send them back to Moscow.¹⁴⁶ Forwarded to Moscow, these documents lay – mute and untranslated – in the archives. At the time, the USSR’s material and ideological commitment remained with leftists in Egypt and Syria – not Iraq.¹⁴⁷ Moscow’s political investment in Iraq was meager after the arrest of “Bassam.”

Due to his success in organizing in the predominantly Shi’i south of the country, the communist activist Salam Adil was invited to join the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Consequently, he helped Karim Ahmad Daud co-write the party’s next political report, “The National Front: Struggle Against War and Imperialism.” This report surveyed Kamil Jadarji’s al-Hizb al-Watani al-Dimuqrati (National Democratic Party), which A. J. Toynbee described as “leftish,”¹⁴⁸ and which would begin meeting secretly with army officers during 1956.¹⁴⁹ The CPI report also surveyed other political parties legally registered as the opposition, inferring that their leaders “will view our party as a political force only if our party is realistic [and can] achieve the goals of our people in peace, national independence, and democratic freedom.”¹⁵⁰ In response to strictly local factors, the CPI decided to abandon the Stalinist “two-camps” position before Moscow did.

¹⁴⁴ I. I. Garshin. *Irakskaiia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia v bor’be za natsional’nuiu nezavisimost’ i demokraticeskoe razvitie strany* // *Borba Narodov protiv kolonializma*. Moscow, 1965. P. 33.

¹⁴⁵ British Embassy, Baghdad – to Foreign Office, London // *Records of Iraq*. Vol. 11. P. 205.

¹⁴⁶ RGANI. F. 5. Op. 28. D. 96. Ll. 6ff.

¹⁴⁷ Karen Dawisha. *Soviet Cultural Relations with Iraq, Syria and Egypt, 1955–70* // *Soviet Studies*. 1975. Vol. 27. No. 3. Pp. 418–442.

¹⁴⁸ Arnold J. Toynbee. *Survey of International Affairs*. Oxford, 1955. P. 200.

¹⁴⁹ Rony Gabbay. *Communism and Agrarian Reform in Iraq*. London, 1978. P. 121, no. 14.

¹⁵⁰ Ismael. *Rise and Fall*. P. 47.

According to Tareq Ismael, it was Adil's personal qualities that helped him to gain his colleagues' confidence. Mahdi 'Abd-ul-Karim told the scholar: "He had the very unusual talent of making you feel valued, and soon after talking to him you realized he was a man of integrity who liked people but was angry at how people were treated."¹⁵¹ The trial of eleven trade union activists, charged with inciting the strike among the cigarette factory workers, revealed that the CID was able to exploit rifts among the communists. Fuad Bahjat, former member of the Party's Central Committee, served as an expert witness for the prosecution in the trial of those who organized a labor action among cigarette workers.¹⁵² Salam Adil's efforts might be traced among the ephemera surviving the 1954 strike: leaflets praised the workers' bravery. In reply, the strikers' chant "Workers of the world unite!" suggested the solidarity they felt for the CPI. The workers' slogans, "We want a republic led by the working class," "We want a popular government with Kamil al-Jaderji for premier," and "Down with the Zahedi government in Iran!" suggest their endorsement of the party's most recent program, "The National Front Struggle Against War and Imperialism."¹⁵³

The country's Communist Party would find its direction and support far from Moscow, among the European left. Not only did Salam Adil build solidarity between the CPI and striking workers, he also developed new sources of funding for its activities. When he traveled to London during April 1954 to represent the CPI at the British Communist Party's second conference in London, Rahim Ajinah (a medical student) acted as his translator and host. He later recounted to Tareq Ismael how he "was impressed with the man's intellect. While dictating the speech in Arabic, he struggled with every word of its translation, and made me check the meaning so many times in the Oxford dictionary."¹⁵⁴

The text, which Salam Adil and Rahim Ajinah wrote, was read to the congress by the Welsh miner and editor Idris Cox. It emphasized two intertwined points. The first was that the Hashemite monarchy's suspension of civil rights ("the people are denied the privilege of exercising their electoral rights... martial law in Iraq has become the common rule") rendered communists and their supporters vulnerable ("the government is hunting down every peace partisan to throw him in jail... delegates from democratic organizations to the world youth and students' meetings are arrested... fascist

¹⁵¹ Ibid. P. 49.

¹⁵² Communists Led Tobacco Strikes, Says Ex-Red // Iraq Times. 1954. 1 February.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ismael. Rise and Fall. P. 48.

laws are applied to communist fighters”). In short, communists in Iraq would find their freedom with restoration of the rule of law.

Adil’s second point was built on his first, that “the experiences of the past eighteen months” of massacres, prisoners’ demonstrations, raids, sentences, and trials, indicate the desirability of the Communist Party’s allying with the nationalist groups.¹⁵⁵ During the years the Communist International was active, that organization had encouraged communist parties to form such “National Fronts” with socialist parties, against fascism; the Communist Party of Great Britain was unique among European parties not to have suffered political setbacks on account of such a program. With carefully chosen words, Salam Adil’s text continued, “our party has won a position of respect, trust, and guidance among all the national forces more than ever,” to the point that “the beloved [news] paper of our party, *al-Qaida*, is penetrating into all national circles... Despite its illegality and the heavy sentences imposed on those found with copies in their possession, its circulation is double that of the largest legal newspaper so far published in our country.”¹⁵⁶

‘Abd-ul-Khaliq al-Bayati (engineering student) told Tareq Ismail that Salam Adil succeeded in rejuvenating the party’s finances, bypassing revenue streams from Moscow. Of the Iraqi Student Society in the UK, al-Bayati confessed, “the group [had been] active but had little contact with the home party. As soon as ‘Adil came to London, he held a number of meetings and visited groups and students, even those who had lost contact with us.” ‘Adil was as effective in motivating women, as he was men. Al-Bayati continued, “with his personality, knowledge and enthusiasm, he brought a lot of us back so much that we all felt reborn and at the time I was so taken by it that my fiancée and I donated all our wedding savings to the party.”¹⁵⁷

‘Abd-ul-Khaliq al-Bayati and his fiancée ran significant risks when they donated their wedding savings to the party. A letter signed by the education minister was later discovered in government archives. It was alleged to have stated, “the *chargé d’affaires* of the British Embassy... discussed with me the behavior of Iraqi students in Britain and their communist activity.” As much as the official foreign policy of the Hashemite monarchy espoused the “collective defense” position that communism stemmed from Moscow, cabinet members were attuned to the national movement’s newest revenue

¹⁵⁵ Idris Cox. *The Heroic Fight In Iraq // Allies for Freedom. The Report of the Second Conference of Communist and Workers’ Parties of Countries within the Sphere of British Imperialism, Held in the Caxton Hall, London, April, 1954.* London, 1954. Pp. 84-85.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. Pp. 88-89.

¹⁵⁷ Ismael. *Rise and Fall.* P. 49.

stream. The Iraqi cabinet minister “informed him that the matter was not one of students violating their school contracts, but it is much deeper than this, and more important than the British think.” The Arab statesman continued, “the information received by us shows that these students are in close contact with British communists and with the principle communist representative in Europe.” The Iraqi terminated his missive to the UK colleague with a request “to refrain from renewing the residence visa of those students...” and specified that “these students are no longer considered as such because they have been dismissed from the scholarship system on charges of communism.”¹⁵⁸

That said, Anis ‘Ajinah, then in charge of the Iraqi Communist Party’s cell in London, credited “Adil’s visit with revitalizing the movement.” He related, “we began regularizing our contributions to the party on a monthly basis.”¹⁵⁹ In total, the Iraqi students in European capitals “delivered more than 3,000 [pounds sterling]” to Salam Adil. In addition to giving the Iraqi party a necessary transfer of funds, it also provided “Adil more clout within the financially pressed Central Committee.” Tareq Ismail credits the students’ contributions with “enriching the intellectual foundations of the party and permeating the professional associations [to which] they would belong.”¹⁶⁰ These developments suggest that Iraqi communists drew not only – and maybe not so much – on Moscow as they did on the left-leaning Iraqis both in the country and in Europe.

Let us conclude with the attention Tareq Ismail has drawn to the first issue of a new *World Marxist Review*. In this inaugural issue, “the national liberation movement in the Arab East” was equated with an “anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution” in general and a simultaneous “movement for the solidarity of peoples.”¹⁶¹ Among the many valences of “anti-imperialism” and “anti-feudalism” in circulation in the middle of the twentieth century was the assumption that states in the region should be protected from adversaries. After the Suez war, this was a priority for the Arab Mediterranean, where the USSR was rapidly emerging as the area’s leading weapons dealer.¹⁶² At the other end of the Arab world, in Iraq, “anti-imperialism” and “anti-feudalism” meant, albeit briefly, things other than faster-than-the-speed-of-

¹⁵⁸ “Mahdawi says invaders to be destroyed”. Baghdad, Iraqi Home Service // FBIS-FRB-59-048 on 1959-03-11.

¹⁵⁹ Ismael. *Rise and Fall*. P. 50.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* P. 50.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* Pp. 45-46.

¹⁶² Galia Golan. *Soviet Policies in the Middle East from World War Two to Gorbachev*. Cambridge, 1990.

sound fighter aircraft.¹⁶³ If the Soviet Union did not represent an “alternate modernity” for the Arab states, then at least Iraq represented an “alternate anti-imperialism” for the USSR.

By the middle of the century, Iraq was in the process of emerging as the Soviet Union’s latest heartthrob among postcolonial communities. In part, it was related to Iraq’s relatively developed antiwar movement. At the Moscow Youth Festival, Kassem Samawi explained that “the kinds of meetings I’ve had at the festival keenly remind me of distant Iraq, its cities and its villages, about the ordinary people who have only one desire – to be free and live in peace.”¹⁶⁴ Among other reasons for Iraq’s special place in the Soviet Middle Eastern engagement, Oles Smolansky and Bettie Moretz Smolansky suggest that Soviet support for Iraq’s revolution can be attributed to the Kurdish national liberation movement. The Kurdistan Democratic Party and warriors led by Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani came to exemplify the Kurdish political direction that would partner Colonel Abd al-Kerim Kassem and the revolutionary government.¹⁶⁵ Uriel Dann further attributed the assertion that Kassem’s mother was Kurdish to “hostile biographers.”¹⁶⁶ For Juan Lennart Michel Romero, Iraq’s drift to the left was inspired by Jawaharlal Nehru’s concept of nonalignment (which Dulles called “an immoral and short-sighted conception.”)¹⁶⁷ As Yaacov Ro’i had long asserted, the victorious officers’ “communiqué no. 1” after the revolution pledged to respect the principles of Bandung.¹⁶⁸

In this essay, we addressed a first hypothesis that Soviet solidarity with Iraq was due to a coincidence in time between regime change in Iraq and the anniversary of the October 1917 Revolution. On further consideration, we have rejected this idea for another, attempting to assess a number of factors. Our second hypothesis was that seemingly unrelated developments (in Iraq as well as in neighboring Iran and distant Egypt) interacted with one another, linking late Soviet society to Arab culture in unforeseen ways. We began by identifying the Hashemite monarchy’s roots in Ottoman imperialism and British neocolonialism.

¹⁶³ Alam. *Iraqi Foreign Policy Since Revolution*. 1995. P. 112.

¹⁶⁴ Kassem al Samawi. *My ne dopustim voyny!* P. 132.

¹⁶⁵ Oles Smolansky and Bettie Moretz Smolansky. *The USSR and Iraq: the Soviet Quest for Influence*. Durham, NC, 1991. P. 64.

¹⁶⁶ Uriel Dann. *Iraq under Qassem*. P. 21.

¹⁶⁷ Juan Lennart Michel Romero. *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East* / Ph.D. Dissert.; University of Texas, 2008.

¹⁶⁸ Yaacov Ro’i. *Encroachment To Involvement: A Documentary Study Of Soviet Policy In The Middle East, 1945–1973*. New York, 1974. P. 260.

Assessing the foreign-language capabilities of the generation of Iraqis who grew up under the monarchy, we then took note of the research capacities of Iraqi leftist students in California as well as the financial contributions of those in London. In the course of this narrative, we have noted the contradictory roles played by members of the Chamber of Deputies and the police. The legislature, by excluding women, inspired their activism. As genuine as the warmth Iraqi youth expressed in the monarch's presence was, government administration looked shabby and threadbare in the light of florescent tubes. While the police threatened the lives of communists jailed for finite sentences, they also helped the communist organization to control self-seeking elements. With the extensive network of secret agents, the monarchy's public figures were surprisingly ignorant of the policies and tactics within the communist underground.

In other contradictions, we have also noted that the predominantly Sunni police force, coached by the British and directed by Dulles, were inspired by pronouncements of Sunni Egyptian clerics – these same pronouncements that had a contradictory influence on Iraq's Shi'i intelligentsia. Just as pilgrims crossed the border between Iraq and neighboring Iran in numbers, so too did Shi'i activism extend into the fields of secular politics (to the point that it was difficult to determine, among those who thirst for justice, where the Ja'afari ended and the Marxist began). In considering the growth of organizations such as the League for the Defense of Women's Rights and the Peace Partisans, we have acknowledged how their members were stimulated by lifestyle concerns, which included dignity and health as well as diet and beauty. In short, they organized against the atomic politics of the Cold War because it threatened the possibility of living a good life. While none of these factors uniquely determined the success of the 1958 revolution, all the changes noted for 1953–1954 were evident on the day of the coup. By that year, the local communists “could boast of over 8,000 active members.”¹⁶⁹ Coordination with the CPI, League, and Partisans was the army officers' greatest asset. And although later the Iraqi revolution would be written by Soviet authors as a narrative of the worldwide march of socialist liberation begun by the October Revolution, Soviet observers were likely as surprised as anyone else by the success of the Iraqi revolution.

¹⁶⁹ Gabbay. *Communism and Agrarian Reform*. P. 73, no. 13.

SUMMARY

В статье Элизабет Бишоп предпринимается попытка критически пересмотреть распространенное в СССР конца 1950 – начала 1960-х годов представление о том, что революция 1958 года в Ираке вдохновлялась примером Октябрьской революции 1917 года и была следствием советской помощи и поддержки. Автор предлагает микроисторию левого движения в Ираке, которая учитывает его политические, экономические, культурные и гендерные аспекты, а также логику развертывания событий на месте, т.е. в самом Ираке, в арабском мире и в зарубежных иракских диаспорах. Бишоп показывает, что к 1950-м годам иракская коммунистическая партия проводила достаточно независимую от СССР политику и имела иные источники финансирования, а иракская революция не опиралась на поддержку III Интернационала или на помощь СССР. Однако в статье отмечается и тот факт, что для иракских революционеров СССР оставался примером “альтернативной модерности”, и именно в этом качестве он должен анализироваться историками иракской революции.