

The Legibility of Power and Culture in Ba‘thist Iraq from 1968-1991

Michael K. Degerald

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington
2018

Reading Committee:
Arbella Bet-Shlimon, Chair
Lynn Thomas
Joel Walker

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:
Near & Middle Eastern Studies

© Copyright 2018
Michael K. Degerald

University of Washington

Abstract:

The Legibility of Power and Culture in Ba'thist Iraq from 1968-1991

Michael K. Degerald

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Arbella Bet-Shlimon

Department of History

From 1968 until 1991, the state led by the Iraqi Ba'th Party fought a war against groups in Iraq that did not comply with state dictates. Situated in the Third World of postcolonial lineage, Iraq was in a milieu shaped by regional tensions and the larger Cold War. This work traces a battle of ideas waged by the Iraqi Ba'th on its political opposition, drawing on Ba'th Regional Command Committee (BRCC) files held at the Hoover Institute and hundreds of publications from various branches of the Iraqi government controlled by the Iraqi Ba'th. The dissertation's introduction wrestles with the complex ethical issues of using such controversial archives. Each chapter of this dissertation takes a different lens to explore Iraqi cultural, intellectual, and media history, with the aim of contributing to understandings of the Ba'th period in Iraq and its complex legacy. I show that transnational influences from Soviet interventions around the Third World had a direct impact on Iraqi Ba'thist discourse and cultural production. With the United States distant and ideologically demonized, the Soviet Union proved to be more influential on Iraq, a relationship that eventually turned sour. Iraq had been a member of the Non-Aligned Movement since the movement's beginning but this membership took on new importance when Saddam Hussein issued the *I'lan al-Qawmi* in February of 1980, attempting to promote solidarity among Arab and postcolonial nations as well as pre-empt a potential superpower invasion.

Consistent with Iraq's place in the larger postcolonial milieu, programs to increase literacy were key to attempts to develop society and a stronger Iraqi economy to challenge economic imperialism. These literacy programs were remarkable in their size, scope, and overall results, but they neither eradicated illiteracy nor consistently generated support for the Party, illustrating the limits of the Party's ability to reshape society as it aimed. Drawing on larger debates about tradition and heritage in the postcolonial world as well as in the Arab region, Iraqi Ba'thist use of *turath* or heritage in state discourse was central to efforts to win this battle of ideas. *Al-Turath al-Sha'bi* (Popular Heritage) was a successful and influential state journal that arguably represented the pluralism of Iraqi society throughout the 1970s until being commandeered by the Iraqi Ba'th to increasingly serve as its mouthpiece from the 1980s onward. In contrast, Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba'th moved away from this pluralism in heritage discourse and insisted on the connection between Islam and Arabism (*din wa turath*) as that which gave their *qawmiyya* (Pan-Arab nationalism) strength. As such, debates about *turath* are shown in Chapter Four as a prelude for a later embrace of Islam by the Iraqi Ba'th. Finally, the Iraqi Ba'th used a series of discourses and techniques to manage and repress Iraqi political opposition from 1968-1991. Spatial Arabization campaigns targeting Kirkuk accelerated with the use of *shu'ubiyya* discourse, shown here to begin in February 1980 in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, continuing throughout the war against Iran. The Iraqi Ba'th racialized its enemies as Persians discursively while likewise Arabizing groups into the Iraqi nation, attempting to redefine race based on loyalty to the Iraqi Ba'th. The racialized categories of "Persians" and "shu'ubis" were not accepted by Iraqi opposition groups and thus these attempts at racialization did not ultimately shape new categories of identity. Such

racialized discourses did, however, stimulate sectarianism in Iraqi society. These pernicious, divisive, and violent tactics haunt Iraq to this day.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	7
Introduction	8
Chapter One: Iraq in the Third World	41
Chapter Two: Literacy	89
Chapter Three: <i>Thaqafa</i> / Culture	131
Chapter Four: <i>Turath</i> / Heritage	179
Chapter Five: Opposition	223
Conclusion	271
Bibliography	287

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank and show gratitude to my family, especially my mom, dad, Tom and grandma Mary. They are the core of my family who helped make me who I am today.

My love Lucie and her wonderful family- especially my future sisters in law Aureanne, Elise and Helene, thanks for your support, friendship, and love.

Walid al-Shobbaky, my dear friend, I'm looking forward to your freedom and once again getting lost in conversation with you.

There are many friends from Seattle and UW, but especially Michael Sims, Burcu Ece, Esra Bakkalbasioglu, Jeanene Mitchell, Ayse Nal, Albana Dwonch, Anat Goldman, Zeynep Seviner, Mehmet Kentel, Rafeel Wasif, Yusri Supiyan, Tasha Duberstein, Pinar Ulumaskan, Jeff Haines, Chris Facer, Adrien Kane, Arna Elezovic, Mindy Cohoon, Matt Van Duyn, Lin Hongxuan, Roneva Keel, everyone at UAW 4121. Thanks for being great friends and colleagues!

There are many faculty members and others at UW who have been of considerable help to me while I pursued my PhD. I would like to thank Arbella Bet Shlimon, Lynn Thomas, Joel Walker, Cabeiri Robinson, Ellis Goldberg, Karam Dana, Stephen Myers, David Bachman, Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, Kathleen Woodward, Rachel Arteaga, Jon Hiskes, Verletta Kern, Sarah Ketchley, Walter Andrews, Vicente Rafael, and Richard Block.

There are numerous colleagues and friends outside of UW to whom I owe debts professional and social, including Marwan Kraidy, Marina Krikorian, Dina Rizk Khoury, Bozena Welborne, Leif Stenberg, Haeder Hadi, Alissa Walter, Onur Bakiner, Nova Robinson, Spyros Sofos, Henry Diab, Samer Abboud, Mark LeVine, Michael Vicente Perez, Sarah Tobin, Lina Eklund, Johan Torreson, Darcy Thompson, Amin Parsa, Burak Hacıametoğlu, Jackson Oldfield, Rawan Arar, Michael Brill, Sara Farhan, Wisam Alshaibi, Andy Alger, Zachary Sheldon, Ban Ali, Joseph Sassoon, the late Peter Sluglett, Imad Rasan, Jasim al-Bdaiwi, Abdullah Salman, Jasmine Bager, Juan Cole, Everyone at Qasid, especially Duaa, Aymen, and Ustaz Mohammad Abu Shuleh, Stina Rothman, Anna Hellgren, Tina Robertsson, Mauricio Galvan, Samer al Hasani, Khairy Makhzoomi, Sean Widlake, Daniel Miller, Tyler Miller, Matt Portwood, Cody Olander, Laura Calderon, Ash Sogal, Farzan Sabet, Ayse Dursun, Mark Haines, Robin and Katie Hegedus, everyone at the African and Middle East Reading Room of the Library of Congress, and last but certainly not least, Gittika. Apologies to anyone I forgot.

INTRODUCTION

The year 1979 was a crucial one for Iraq that changed the country forever. The co-imbriication of transnational, intellectual, and social changes at that time is central to understanding the relationship between discourse and material reality in the Ba‘th era in Iraq. In July of that year, Saddam Hussein solidified his dictatorial rule by ousting the previous president Ahmad Hassan al Bakr. Not long afterward Hussein carried out a purge inside the Iraqi Ba‘th Party to ensure his rule. Several months earlier in March 1979, a long series of popular protests in Iran that began more than a year prior culminated in the end of Reza Shah Pahlavi’s rule. The Shah was soon replaced by Ayatollah Khomeini, freshly returned from exile, and Iran became a constitutional theocracy, a shockwave felt around the world. Iraq’s proximity to Iran ensured that Iraq could not escape the reverberations.

Domestically, Iraq reached the height of its material development in 1979. Oil price surges first in 1973 and later in 1979 (due to the Islamic Revolution) had filled the Iraqi state’s coffers with funds for all manner of development programs. The Iraqi Ba‘th endeavored to eradicate illiteracy with a Mass Literacy Campaign, beginning in 1978 and continuing until 1981. Literacy was key to development most broadly in the eyes of the Iraqi Ba‘th, but also for advancement in Party ranks. Limited state capacity in rural areas undermined the campaign’s effectiveness, as the state struggled to muster mass mobilization in rural areas. Adult illiteracy inside the Iraqi Ba‘th Party proved particularly stubborn, as evidenced by reports filed by party members found in the BRCC archives. From 1968-1991, state cultural production was a key part of Iraqi efforts to “modernize” Iraq as well as to win a battle of ideas against political opposition groups, most

centrally the Iraqi Communists and the Iraqi Da‘wa Party, but also against Kurdish groups like the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) led by Jalal Talabani and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Mustafa Barzani. As this work will show, shifts in state discourse were necessitated by shifting threats from these groups and outside states who supported them, under a larger framework of the Third World in the Cold War.¹

The USSR invaded Afghanistan in December of 1979, an event that rippled around the Third World. While not immediately apparent, Soviet actions threatened Iraq and pushed the Iraqi state to shift its discourses and its foreign policy alignments. Saddam Hussein responded to what he perceived as a potential Soviet threat to overthrow him and empower Iraqi Communists by issuing the *I‘lan al-Qawmi* on Feb 8, 1980. Hussein’s “Pan-Arab Charter,” as it was known in English, called for Arab states to come together under the Non-Aligned Movement, mutually supporting each other in the case of any super power aggression against an ally. Hussein chose the date, which was the anniversary of the Ba‘thist coup against former Iraqi president Abdul Karim Qasim, to demonize Iraqi Communists as *shu‘ubiyyun*, resurrecting a discourse synonymous with anti-Arab sentiment. The Iraqi Ba‘th came to include all of its political opponents under the concept of anti-Arab *shu‘ubiyya*, equating this with being “Persian” throughout the war against Iran and up to the 1991 Intifada. A spike in pan-Arab themes (*qawmiyya*) is thus shown to come from the *I‘lan al-Qawmi* as a response to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, predating war between Iran and Iraq. The *I‘lan al-Qawmi* brings together key concepts in this dissertation, namely Iraqi nonalignment and identification with the Third World (chapter one) with Iraqi state racialization of its political opposition (chapter five). These destabilizing influences came at the

¹ The Iraqi Ba‘th used the Arabic translation of Third World (*al-‘alim al-thalith*) in their own discourse and publications. See “a brief note on terminology at the end of this introduction for more on why I use this otherwise problematic term.

same time Iraq was attempting to industrialize and develop economically, something few other nations did successfully post-WWII; that Iraq was trying to do so on the back on oil price shocks added even more uncertainty.

In this dissertation, I take a different conceptual approach in each chapter, all of which are bound in the periodization of 1968-1991, beginning with the Iraqi Ba‘thist return to power in July of 1968 and ending with the *Intifada Sha‘baniyya* of March, 1991. I tell the story of this period in relation to each of five key themes: The Third World, Literacy, Culture, Heritage, and Opposition. They are five different heuristic lenses with which to view this period in Iraqi history, overlapping to tell the story of how the Iraqi Ba‘th Party fought a battle of ideas to legitimize itself and stifle its political opposition. The Iraqi Ba‘th engendered significant change from its top-down attempts at development, but important continuities remained. The Iraqi state not only stood parallel to other Third World states in its tangible postcolonial reality, but identified as such in its investment and participation in the Non-Aligned Movement. The state used cultural production as a form of counterinsurgency coupled with a policy of driving many of its opponents abroad, arresting others, and killing yet more. Consistent throughout the period of 1968-1991 was a tendency by the Iraqi Ba‘th, or indeed Saddam Hussein himself once he was the sole leader, to undertake projects larger than it could realistically achieve. His grandiose plans were not achievable with the resources and level of development of the Iraqi state, especially once he began two wars by aggression, complicating our understanding of Iraqi state power.

Iraq in the Third World: Heritage, Islam, and Authenticity

Central discursive and material issues explored in this dissertation revolve around Iraq's place in the Third World. Here, I situate the mix of nationalism of the Ba'ath relative to other postcolonial countries. Where leftist parties in Europe and the United States largely shirked nationalism, leftist groups pushing for independence from colonialism and growth in the postcolonial period consistently leaned on nationalism. From the time of the consolidation of nation-states, interest in folklore and heritage has proven a fundamental resource for nationalist movements. Some of the most basic questions nationalists have sought to answer focus on identity and history: who are we, and how did we get here? Struggles against colonialism and decolonization produced a series of anti-colonial nationalisms that sought to define their identity and independence. Frantz Fanon, a scholar from Martinique, described the process:

*(Decolonization) transforms spectators, crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history's floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men and with it, a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men.*²

Fanon alludes here to the profound transformation in the process of decolonization. Newly independent nations struggled to catch up to the developed world in the post-independence period. Many of the states in the developed world were their former colonizers. This group of nations referred to during the Cold War as the "Third World" sought to modernize and compete socially, economically, and technologically on a global scale. The Cold War, overlapping with decolonization, offered competing visions of modernity which the US and the USSR tried to push on the Third World.³ Various actors in the Third World accepted, modified, or attempted to create their own programs for modernity. Indeed, the Iraqi Ba'ath had a radical nationalist approach, competing with both Communist and Islamist approaches in their immediate political realm and

² Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 37.

³ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), especially ch. 1-2.

the Arab Middle East more broadly. While there was something powerful and novel about the change ushered in by decolonization, important continuities, especially in state institutions, shaped the postcolonial reality.

A resurgence of tradition and heritage took place in multiple parts of the Third World from the mid-1970s on in search of autochthony and authenticity.⁴ In a perceptive study, Odd Arne Westad splits the Third World primarily into “communists” and “nativists” in his presentation of this phenomenon, though the split is a crude generalization even by his own admission.⁵ “Nativists and Marxists in the resistance movement were divided by their views of their countries’ pasts as well as their futures. While the Marxists generally saw little to emphasize in the precolonial era...” Westad posits, “nativists thought their history and often their religion were weapons against colonialism.”⁶ The broad categories here might be better represented by “communist” and “nationalist” rather than “nativist,” but communist parties in the Third World were not necessarily as hostile to nationalism or religion as their ideological brethren from the West. To wit, Iraqi Communists embraced a form of Iraqi nationalism to oppose Arab nationalism they did not want to be part of. The attraction of leftist and nationalist figures to “nativist” themes like religion was tied to this search for authenticity, Sami Zubaida argues, as it represented a “cultural disillusionment” with aspects of modernity.⁷ While religion need not be considered “nativist,” Zubaida’s larger point about its relationship to modernity should be reckoned with. Heritage, seen from this angle, took on an oversized importance, for a nation’s attempts to escape Western cultural and economic hegemony hinged on heritage providing what the group needed conceptually from

⁴ Anouar Abdel-Malek and Anisujjamana, “Modernity in Crisis: The Resurgence of Tradition” in *Culture and Thought*. Transformation of the World Series; v. 3. (London: Macmillan Press, 1983).

⁵ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 80-86.

⁶ Ibid, 81.

⁷ Sami Zubaida, *Beyond Islam: A New Understanding of the Middle East*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 169.

it. “As the newly imagined national community headed towards the magnetic future,” Benedict Anderson wrote in his study of late nineteenth century Filipino intellectuals, “nothing seemed more valuable than a useful and authentic past.”⁸ One approach to conceive of the way communists saw this emphasis on history is to remember Marx’s observation, that the past “weighs on the brains of the living like a nightmare.”⁹ Hobsbawm and Ranger’s seminal work on tradition also showed how many “traditional” practices and elements are modern phenomena masquerading as continuities of history from pre-modern times.¹⁰ Indeed, many people in various postcolonial milieus felt the influence of the West was overbearing. From culture (such as western pop music) to intellectual models (Kant, Marx, etc) to mass-produced products flooding their shores to replace local goods, it was difficult to escape the West’s influence. This pushed some to reject as much of that Western influence as they could. This logic could be stretched by those struggling with the power of western modernity to argue that nationalism and socialism were likewise western influences. The Iraqi Ba‘th had its own answers to these questions, however questionable, insisting they did not have to jettison nationalism nor socialism while seeking authentic heritage.

This resurgence of tradition presented some in the Third World with what seemed to be a solution to western dominance but was not without its critics. Iterations and critiques of these positions came from all corners of the world and often included either language, religion, or both in their attempts to situate their thought and positions relative to the West. Franz Fanon saw the emphasis by nationalists on ancient heritage and history as a retreat from feelings of inferiority in Western culture.¹¹ Thinkers in Mexico like Leopoldo Zea struggled to reconcile feelings of

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *The Age of Globalization; Anarchists and the Anticolonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2005), 89.

⁹ Karl Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), 15.

¹⁰ E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹¹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 209-210.

inferiority in relation to the West most broadly. Zea found that citizens there most closely identified with a language (Spanish) and a religion (Catholicism) that weren't "theirs" and did not feel connected to the autochthonous cultures there.¹² Consequently, Zea saw this translate into a gap between thought and reality. According to Zea, Latin American thought did not represent Latin American realities, and would remain "an immature imitation of foreign thought."¹³ Peruvian philosopher Agosto Salazar Bondy saw an imbalance toward receptivity in the relationship between Latin America and the West, that Latin America was not giving influence but was only receiving it. This was due to the state of economic and political dependence culminating in foreign hegemony over Latin America. Bondy claimed that this dependent condition can only produce *inauthentic* thought.¹⁴ Another prominent strand of thought in Latin America relevant to these issues was the connection between Enlightenment modernity and colonialism. This position found the violence of colonialism, genocide and slavery experienced by peoples at the hands of European colonizers not as a failure to be modern but rather was the underside of modernity.¹⁵ Latin America experienced European colonization over a much longer period than the Arab Middle East did, so issues of genocide and slavery loom larger in debates about culture relative to the West.¹⁶

African decolonial thought, while distinct from trends in the Arab world and Latin America because of local contexts, bore significant similarities to the ideas discussed above. *Negritude* was a movement for which African identity had to be created out of the cultural resources of Africa itself.¹⁷ It gestated among African and Caribbean students in Paris in the 1930s, coined by Aime

¹² Suzanne Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 309-310.

¹³ Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 310.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 310. Bondy is blunt later in the passage that Kassab quotes: "We are continually experimenting and projecting with always-changing ideologies. There is no single national plan because there is no sense of nation. And there is no sense of nation for the same reason there is no sense of what is Latin America."

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 313.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 317.

¹⁷ Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (London: The New Press, 2007), 81.

Cesaire, but spread to Black communities outside of Africa as well.¹⁸ These thinkers also imbued *Negritude* with a dialectical character. A crude, state-driven version of these ideas was implemented in Zaire (formerly the Belgian Congo). Patrice Lumumba, a Marxist, was forced out of power in the Congo by a Belgian and CIA sponsored coup and replaced with Mobutu Sese Seko, a right-wing dictator supported by the US.¹⁹ Under the title of “*Authenticité*,” Sese Seko sought to change the nation and replace colonial influence by renaming towns and marginalizing other forms of identity.²⁰ Mobutu once summarized *Authenticité* as “being oneself and not how others would like one to be, thinking by oneself and not by others, and feeling at home in one’s culture and country.”²¹ Zaire’s example illustrates that Africans of both left and right-wing positions embraced the return to heritage.²² Ethnophilosophy was another response to a colonial thinking that questioned whether Africans were capable of producing philosophy at all, or framed another way, if there was African philosophy worth studying. Ethnophilosophy is a term in African studies that parallels the phenomena I discuss in relation to the Iraqi Ba‘th. It rejected English and French as intellectual languages as well as European philosophy as colonial. Ethnophilosophy also rejected race or an essentialized “African personality” in favor of seeking essence in cultural traditions or “the” African tradition.²³ Such an essence was seen as something that individuals cannot easily shake off.²⁴ This wave of thought was well underway in the first half of the 20th century, and was

¹⁸ Leopold Sedar Senghor, "Negritude." *Indian Literature* 17, no. 1/2 (1974): 269-73.

¹⁹ This duality was at the heart of the hypocrisy around Sese Seko- his government was heavily supported by the US but his rhetoric championed African authenticity.

²⁰ Mark Charlton, *Mobutism: The Politics of Authenticity in Zaire*, 1976, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

²¹ Kenneth Lee Adelman, "The Recourse to Authenticity and Negritude in Zaire." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 13, no. 1 (1975): 134-39.

²² Debates in various African contexts did not latch onto the term “heritage” but instead focused on “Africanisation” or “authenticite.”

²³ Peter Boele van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses in African Thought: 1860 to the Present*. (London: Praeger, 1999), 147.

²⁴ Boele van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses in African Thought*, 148.

a target of critique by the 1970s as a new generation of thinkers sought to reject received wisdom.²⁵ Cheikh Anta Diop from Senegal was one example of a thinker who tackled issues of heritage and authenticity, arguing that the constituent elements of African specificity were to be found in history, language, and psychology. Trends of heritage and authenticity in African thought were never universally accepted and remained contested throughout their time in the spotlight. While informal, the issues with pressures to westernize are clearly legible in these examples.

The resurgence of tradition and the focus on heritage explored in this dissertation about Iraq was a transition that happened on a regional and even global scale. Early in the 20th century, the search for heritage happened *through* nationalism, seeking to reinforce national identities with historical bona fides. In the Arab Middle East in the late 1960s and early 1970s, secular nationalisms were challenged and largely replaced with a revival of religion, in this case, Islam. This cannot be said similarly of the rest of the postcolonial world, and points to the powerful impact of the Arab defeat in the Six-Day War and the manner in which it largely deflated the overwhelmingly secular Arab nationalism. Islam and Arabic language played a role in the Arab Middle East that differed markedly from the context of language and religion in other parts of the postcolonial world. In Africa, English and French were imposed languages tied to colonialism as was Christianity in the religious sphere. In Latin America, Spanish and Catholicism were likewise brought with colonialism to the continent. Searching for authenticity required moving away from these languages and religion, a process that the Arab World never went through. There was no movement of any size or influence in Iraq or other parts of the Middle East to reject the Arabic language and Islam as imposed remnants of colonialism. Different ethnolinguistic groups indeed resisted Islam in governance or Arabic in education, not because these things were not “authentic,”

²⁵ Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought*, 321.

but rather because they felt they could not live comfortably as minority groups. As such there was no purchase to the claim that Islam or Arabic was not “authentic” to the region. Indeed, a deeper and more fruitful engagement with Islam was sometimes presented as the solution to social and political problems. I connect these examples from the Third World to events and ideas in the Arab World post-1967 in chapter four, which explores how the word *turath* (heritage) became a central facet of Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse, initially tied to Mesopotamian themes and symbols but later to Islam. Iraqi Ba‘thist ideas, especially *turath*, developed in communication and interaction with this global context.

As we have seen, the issues of history, heritage and authenticity were hotly debated by intellectuals around the Third World for some time independent of the Iraqi Ba‘th. The Ba‘th Party itself had not previously addressed these issues in any systematic manner. Few if any of their ideological publications from the late 1940s through the 1960s substantially addressed heritage or folklore. Instead, they focused on the Ba‘thi trinity: Unity, Socialism, and Freedom. The Party defined these ideals in their party constitution, written in 1947. The Party established its first branch dedicated to intellectual production in 1954 at the same time it established the “National Command.” The trinity was simple, emphasizing Arab unity in response to the division of the Arab World into multiple competing states, socialism in response to what it saw as a rapacious bourgeoisie intent on undermining local interests by aligning with foreign powers, and freedom from outside rule. If the party offered a vision of history, it sought to bring back the glory of the Arab nation that was, in this view, a nation just like Greeks and others with roots that superficially seemed to trace back thousands of years. Party tracts like *Fi Sabil al-Ba‘th* did not substantively engage with the historical issues the party would take up in the mid-1970s. The themes of Arabism (*qawmiyya*) and Iraqism (*wataniyya*) constitute a thread running throughout this work, tied to

foreign policy, domestic cultural production, education, and opposition groups, and form a multifaceted and dynamic debate about the nature of the Iraqi nation and where it fit relative to the larger idea of Pan-Arabism. Both Amatzia Baram and Eric Davis made huge strides with their academic works toward a better understanding of these issues- it is upon their arguments that I primarily build my own, wrestling with questions they did not ask and dimensions they did not account for.

There is a well-established body of literature looking specifically at these issues in Iraqi historiography. Amatzia Baram has approached these issues from multiple angles, first in his “*Culture, History and Ideology*” where he looked at Iraqi Ba‘thist narratives about Mesopotamia. Despite being written at the end of the 1980s, Baram’s work does not engage with the cultural messages employed by the Iraqi state during the Iran-Iraq war, nor does it place Iraq in a Third World context. Dina Rizk Khoury’s *Iraq in Wartime*, written many years later with greater access to Iraqi Ba‘th sources, delves deeply into Iraqi state cultural production from the Iraqi Army and the Directorate for Political Guidance (*Tawjih Siyasi*). Sherko Kirmanj tackles the question of the mix of *qawmiyya* and *wataniyya* in his book *Identity and Nation in Iraq* (2013). Like Baram and Khoury, Kirmanj draws heavily on Iraqi Ba‘thist reports published by the government, Iraqi government textbooks, Arabic newspapers, and, unlike most other works on this topic, Kurdish newspapers. He cites the 1974 Political Report (*Taqrir al-Siyasi*): “The national tasks are an integral part of Arab nationalism and both are dialectically interconnected” and “(T)o assert a priori the precedence of one over the other leads to regionalism or to infantile adventurism.”²⁶ Kirmanj argues that the temporary embrace of Iraqism was meant to compete with the Iraqi Communists (ICP) and the Kurdish National Movement. He assesses that this approach yielded

²⁶ Sherko Kirmanj, *Identity and Nation in Iraq* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Renner publishers, 2013), 140.

some short term gains for the Iraqi Ba‘th, namely the signing of the 11 March Manifesto and the formation of the National Front with the ICP.²⁷ Kirmanj argues that the overall project failed because Saddam Hussein did not “Iraqize” Mesopotamia but “Saddamized” it instead, meaning that his use of Mesopotamia discourse was merely a vehicle for his personal aggrandizement, nullifying its appeal to those who supported.²⁸ This point, Kirmanj argues, negated the ability of the Iraqi Ba‘thist approach to Mesopotamia to appeal to non-Arab groups in Iraq and further alienated them.²⁹

Eric Davis probed Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production in his *Memories of State*, where this discussion constitutes a smaller part of a much larger work covering Iraqi intellectual history in the 20th Century. Davis’ work uses a Gramscian framework wherein the state and various elements of society seek to establish hegemony in the cultural realm. Davis argues that the mix of *wataniyya* and *qawmiyya* used by the Iraqi Ba‘th was a complex one where the Party tried to present itself as the vanguard of the Arabs *through* its unique history tied to Mesopotamia. He dates this change to the “late seventies” but leaves out the importance of the *I‘lan al-Qawmi* and Iraqi Ba‘thist mixing of non-alignment with Pan-Arabism.³⁰ Davis claims that attempts to rewrite history started informally after the Ba‘th assumed power in 1968, but that it was only in 1979 that the project was officially elaborated. “Why, after consolidating power in 1973,” Davis asks, “did the Ba‘th feel the need to promote the massive undertaking of rewriting the nation’s history and restructuring understandings of its cultural heritage?”³¹ He finds his answers in the need to consolidate elite power and the desire to “expunge the Iraqist nationalist model of political community from the

²⁷ Kirmanj *Identity and Nation in Iraq*, 140.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 142.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 143.

³⁰ Eric Davis, *Memories of State* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 150.

³¹ Davis, *Memories of State*, 156-157.

historical record...”, rather than in the broader resurgence of tradition and heritage across the Third World.³² He also argues that the Ba‘thist desire to justify its role in Pan-Arab leadership was what mattered in an international context.³³ Davis alludes all too briefly to the influence of neighboring nations, stating that “the regime could not afford to alienate the non-Sunni Arab population, especially Shi‘is and Kurds, in the face of hostile neighbors such as Syria, Iran, and Turkey.”³⁴ The Non-Aligned Movement and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are not addressed in Davis’ work. Davis finds that the Iraqi Ba‘th wanted to justify its position leading the Arab World, while it also balanced *qawmiyya* and *wataniyya* “(S)hrewdly, with highly abstract ideological pronouncements.”³⁵ How the Iraqi Ba‘th could succeed at both with such highly abstract pronouncements is not clear in Davis’ analysis. Davis did not have access to Ba‘thist internal documents housed by the Department of Defense at the Conflict Records Resource Center (CRRC), nor the Ba‘th Regional Command Committee (BRCC) Documents at the Hoover Institute, which only became available years after his book’s publication. These documents reveal Saddam Hussein’s intent to mix *qawmiyya and wataniyya* to strengthen the identity of the Iraqi Shi‘a and keep them loyal to the state in the face of the threat posed by Iran after the Islamic Revolution.³⁶ Amatzia Baram quotes Saddam Hussein in his 2014 work *From Secularism to Faith* as saying Hussein wanted to “improve” the Iraqi Shi‘a in regard to both their Pan-Arabism and their Iraqi nationalism (*qawmiyyan wa wataniyyan*).³⁷

This study, in contrast to others, argues that a proper understanding of these attempts to emphasize heritage and rewrite Iraqi history must be triangulated materially and discursively with

³² Ibid, 157.

³³ Ibid, 158.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid, 159.

³⁶ Amatzia Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam, 1968-2003: Ba'thi Iraq from Secularism to Faith* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 103.

³⁷ Ibid.

Iraq's place in the Third World. Ofra Bengio explores Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production broadly in her work *Saddam's Word*, but it too suffers from the methodological nationalism that hindered Davis and Baram. For Bengio, even the rest of Iraqi and regional history is largely absent, and the result is a study of authoritarian discourse that is so removed from Iraq's Third World context that it becomes easier for her to argue that the Iraqi state under the Ba'ath was "totalitarian."³⁸ Additionally, Bengio argues Iraq can usefully be compared to other totalitarian dictatorships around the world, regardless of their unique historical trajectories.³⁹ Davis does engage with state educational and agricultural policy, but the international dimensions are absent. Bengio's work briefly alludes to Iraq's place in the Third World, even doing so by literally quoting Saddam on how Britain continued to make Third World states to shiver and bow before it, but overlooks the larger context of Iraq in the Cold War.⁴⁰ As this study will show, Iraq's role as a non-aligned oil-producing nation in the Third World was a major theme in Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production, promoted during the same years as the Iraqi Ba'athist emphasis on heritage and rewriting history. The Iraqi state's own reports show it complained and struggled to get around illiteracy, even as it was publicly doing what it could to address it. These reports stated that illiteracy was a substantial hindrance to the effectiveness of its cultural production, and questioned the loyalty of illiterate Party members. Additionally, Davis does not account for literacy or reception in any systematic manner, calling into question his argument that the Iraqi Ba'ath achieved any kind of intellectual hegemony.

It has largely been assumed that Iraq was a very educated society, more so than its Arab neighbors, and this was certainly true to a large extent. Iraq's intellectuals and poets were a central

³⁸ Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), viii.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.

part of its 20th century history and had an impact on cultural trends, literary styles, and poetic techniques throughout the Arabic-speaking world. However, if state estimates of its own progress are accurate, rural areas lagged far behind in educational access and literacy, and the state struggled to engage citizens in these areas in the party.⁴¹ In bringing the BRCC Archives to bear on my dissertation research, my work fundamentally departs from Bengio, Davis and Baram, whose works were all published before the archives were available. Compared to the works based on the archives or that draw on them heavily (Sassoon, Rizk Khoury, Faust) my work has a different temporal and thematic focus. All of these authors laid key stones in the path that my work attempts to push forward. Key ethical and methodological issues tied to those archives need to be addressed at the outset.

Archives, Power, and History

In 1989, just before Iraq invaded Kuwait, the publication of a book called *Republic of Fear* introduced many readers in the Anglophone world (especially in the US) to the sobering conditions in Ba‘thist Iraq.⁴² Published under the pen name of Samir al-Khalil, the book’s author later revealed his true identity: Kanan Makiya, a dissident Iraqi architect and scholar. The book became a cornerstone of scholarship on Ba‘thist Iraq. Makiya’s central argument was that the Iraqi Ba‘th had formed a police state that needs to be understood as totalitarian alongside Nazi Germany. This assertion remains a heated point debated by scholars to this day. While it has been the center of significant scholarly controversy since, Makiya’s book stood out at the time for writing clearly and powerfully about the way repressive mechanisms stifled dissent in Iraq.

⁴¹ see chapter three.

⁴² Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The inside Story of Saddam's Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989).

As a prominent Iraqi dissident, Makiya cooperated with the George W. Bush administration in the lead-up to the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. He supported using the force of a foreign military invasion to overthrow Saddam Hussein, claiming, as an Iraqi, to speak on behalf of Iraq.⁴³ He also had a central role in the Iraq Memory Foundation and bringing the BRCC records out of Iraq to the Hoover Institute at Stanford University.⁴⁴ Makiya's own politics, namely supporting the Iraq War, aligned those of the Hoover Institute, to which several Republican members of the Bush administration (Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice) had connections.⁴⁵ For some time researchers could access Mr. Makiya's personal papers as well, though these were eventually closed to the public.

The availability of the archives in the US is a direct result of the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 to overthrow Saddam Hussein, prior to which they were not open to researchers. The provenance of the documents remains controversial, as the documents available to researchers at Hoover were seized in the fog of war by the Iraqi Memory Foundation. Makiya initially helped get the records stored in his family's home in the Green Zone in Baghdad with the help of the US Army. These records were relocated to the US in 2005, copied by the US Army and transferred back to Makiya, who entered into the agreement with the Hoover Institute to house the documents.⁴⁶ These were not the only archives seized in the chaos of post-invasion Baghdad in 2003.⁴⁷ Many individuals on the ground in Iraq were also trying to seize archives, and unsubstantiated rumors about people smuggling records out of the country were common. Several

⁴³ Tim Arango, "Advocating a War in Iraq, and Apologizing for What Came After" *New York Times* 5/13/16. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/14/world/middleeast/iraq-war-kanan-makiya.html>

⁴⁴ See more on Makiya and the BRCC on page 19.

⁴⁵ Michelle Caswell, "Thank You Very Much, Now Give Them Back: Cultural Property and the Fight over the Iraqi Baath Records" *The American Archivist*, vol.74, Spring/Summer (2001): 213

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 214.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 211.

documents seem to have appeared online, though their authenticity cannot be verified.⁴⁸ The following description is provided with the BRCC records collected by the Iraqi Memory Foundation (IMF):

“The correspondence, reports, membership and personnel files, judicial and investigatory dossiers, administrative files and registers, and video recordings in this collection relate to political conditions in, and governance of, Iraq. They were collected by the IMF from the Ba'th Regional Command headquarters and from secondary sources. The materials were digitized by the IMF or the U.S. government, which gave digital copies to the IMF, and these digital files are at Hoover.”⁴⁹

The seizure of the documents was only the beginning of the controversy. The US Department of Defense (DOD) also seized significantly more Iraqi government archives that have not been made publicly available and are not held by Hoover. A small fraction of the records from this large batch gathered by the DOD were available in Washington DC, at the Conflict Records Research Center, an institution founded to house them.⁵⁰ The records were apparently seized in the beginning (by the DOD at least) to search for evidence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or connections to global terrorism.⁵¹ Given the US government's failure to find any proof that Iraq had these weapons, the rationale for seizing the archives began to shift. They became part of public debates over the subject of WMD after the Iraq Study Group determined that Saddam Hussein had terminated his nuclear weapons program in 1991, twelve years before the American invasion.

⁴⁸ No Author, “*al-‘Iraq lan yasbah lil-Sadami abad*” Facebook. January 10, 2014.

https://www.facebook.com/pg/IRAQNO2003/photos/?tab=album&album_id=251110931721327

⁴⁹ No Author, “Register of the Hizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabi al-Ishtiraki in Iraq [Ba'th Arab Socialist Party of Iraq] Records” *Online Archive of California* <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c84j0cg3/admin/#a2> see “historical note” under “collection details” for passage cited above.

⁵⁰ Due to a lack of funding, the center has closed its doors and the archives are not publicly available as of this writing

⁵¹ Bruce Montgomery, “U.S. Seizure, Exploitation, and Restitution of Saddam Hussein’s Archive of Atrocity” *Journal of American Studies*, 48, no. 2 (2014): 568.

In 2008, Saad Eskandar demanded all Ba‘th records in the United States be returned to Iraq on behalf of the Iraqi National Library and Archive.⁵² Makiya’s Iraqi Memory Foundation asserted in response to the Society of American Archivists (SAA) that its consistent position was that the IMF held the records in trust and that its authority to do so was granted by the interim government of Iraq in 2004.⁵³ The argument continued with a series of claims and counterclaims about who in Iraq had authority to sign off on the IMF’s possession of the archives, culminating in a June 2008 letter from Akram Hadi, acting Minister of Culture, insisting that IMF did not, in fact, have the proper permissions and that any claims earlier to the contrary were wrong.⁵⁴ In 2009, the Pentagon began allowing scholars some access to declassified materials from the trove.⁵⁵ Shortly after in 2010, an Iraqi delegation met with the State Department and formally demanded the return of the documents.⁵⁶ Arguments commonly heard in my own personal discussions with various individuals familiar with them found those who defended their seizure insisting that the archives would not have survived the chaos of the war if they were not taken out of Iraq, a claim mirrored in the IMF’s arguments as well. Arbella Bet Shlimon has addressed the history of seizing archives and artifacts from Iraq over the twentieth century and the consistent justification that said seizures were in the interest of preservation.⁵⁷

Sadly, the fear that archives would be destroyed was all too real. Several thousand artifacts were stolen from the Iraqi National Museum in the first months of the war.⁵⁸ The Iraqi National

⁵² Saad Eskandar, “Minerva Research Initiative: Searching for the truth or Denying Iraqis the right to know the truth?” *Social Science Research Council*. 2008. <http://essays.ssrc.org/minerva/2008/10/29/eskander/>

⁵³ Caswell, “Thank You Very Much, Now Give Them Back”, 217-18.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 220.

⁵⁵ Montgomery, ”U.S. Seizure”, 576.

⁵⁶ *ibid*, 584.

⁵⁷ Arbella Bet Shlimon, “Preservation or Plunder? ISIS Files and a history of heritage removal in modern Iraq” *MERIP*. Online 5/8/2018 <https://www.merip.org/mero/mero050818>

⁵⁸ Magnus Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 2.

Library and Archives as well as the Ministry of Holy Endowments (*awqaf*) were looted and set on fire.⁵⁹ Magnus Bernardsson finds this damage particularly abhorrent because the United States DOD met with scholars who warned them about the critical value of the antiquities there in Iraq but ultimately failed to effectively plan for defending them during the invasion.⁶⁰ About a decade earlier, even more documents were taken during the 1991 Intifada against the ruling Ba‘th Party by Kurdish activists. These documents were smuggled out of the country while the Iraqi Ba‘th had lost control of the entire northern section of Iraq. They also came to reside in the US, and digital copies are now held at the Hoover Institute as well, which they call the “North Iraq Dataset” or NIDS.

I drew on these NIDS records in addition to the BRCC archives during my time working in the Hoover archives. The BRCC holds all kinds of documents from the Iraqi Ba‘th Party itself, and as it was coextensive with the entire Iraqi state, one can find many different documents from all variety of Iraqi institutions. The North Iraq Dataset, however, was taken from offices that were, according to the documents I have viewed, much lower in the party chain of command. This means that they present a very different perspective of events on the ground in Kurdistan. Similarly, the concentration of sensitive information about Iraqi citizens gathered by the Ba‘th government presents major ethical problems. For this reason, Hoover required IRB approval prior to allowing access to the archives. This is why the computer terminals the documents are hosted on are not connected to the internet (also because the terminals could be hacked). An irresponsible researcher could reveal the identity of individual collaborators or spies for the Ba‘th, information that could potentially be used to target people and their families. In accordance with IRB requirements for

⁵⁹ Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 3.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

research in materials containing the personally identifying information of non-public figures, I did not record this information during my research and have not revealed it in the present work.

The connection of the archives to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 means their seizure is permanently tied to lies told by policy makers to justify the war. Any points about preservation are *ex post facto* to the invasion itself. Without accepting the justification for the invasion, all decisions made about these documents are contingent upon that major mistake in American foreign policy. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis lost their lives as a direct result of this flawed decision to invade, as did several thousand American troops. Countless more Iraqis were permanently displaced from their homes, several million of whom fled the country. The seizure of these archival documents certainly pales in comparison to these larger crimes, but their seizure must not be written off as inconsequential. This dire set of circumstances highlights several of the ongoing themes of this project: that Iraq was destined to suffer wave after wave of outside influence on its territory by dint of its location and resources; that large amounts of the nation's history and cultural history were lost in the chaos, after decades where Saddam Hussein repressed all independent journalism and research that might question the Ba'ath state. To say there is a cultural and historical lacuna in Iraq post-Ba'ath is an understatement.

Makiya's personal papers were available at Hoover alongside the BRCC and NIDS documents discussed above. Makiya's papers, however, have recently been shown to have contained shocking information about the provenance of the BRCC collection. Wisam Alshaibi recently presented at MESA 2017 in Washington DC, showing how documents he found in Makiya's papers revealed a two-million-dollar contract with the Department of Defense. Makiya and others in the DOD planned to seize archives for years in advance of the actual invasion of Iraq, paralleling what we already know about planning for war in Iraq more broadly. Neoconservative

figures in the US government eyed the possibility of invading Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein for years, and wanted to seize archives to facilitate scholarship that would expose his crimes to the world, thus supporting their justifications of the invasion. This revelation provoked a heated discussion on a 2017 MESA panel in which Alshaibi presented his findings, leading to a debate about whether the archives had been “weaponized” or not.⁶¹ After Alshaibi questioned Makiya about what he discovered, Makiya’s papers at the Hoover Institute were closed to researchers in October of 2017. This revelation also undermines claims of preservation, given that advance planning foresaw the problem and aimed to seize the archives, not for reasons of preservation but truly for demonizing the Iraqi state by exposing its crimes. The criminal seizure of the archives thus needs to be examined from a different angle at this point, namely how it impacts knowledge production and the modern history of Iraq.

What does it mean for a state to have its archival records of the past stolen by another state in war? Michelle Caswell argued that the construction, preservation, and custodianship of the BRCC archive was not separate from politics.⁶² It was an exercise of power by the IMF, in conjunction with the occupying US Armed Forces, to seize the BRCC archives and transport them out of the country. Whoever ultimately ended up with the archive had won a power battle, which Caswell correctly argued directly related to Iraq’s future, indeed its very sovereignty moving forward. To wrestle with the question of “weaponization” of the stolen archive, the thought of Achille Mbembe can be of help. Mbembe sees archives as a limit on state power. The archive acts to record and facilitate state power at the same time it acts as a valuable receipt of debt, i.e. debt

⁶¹ The panel included Sara Farhan, Andrew Alger, Wisam Alshaibi, Alissa Walter, myself, and the discussant Sara Pursley.

⁶² Caswell, “Thank You Very Much, Now Give Them Back”, 221.

to society.⁶³ He theorizes the deliberate destruction of the archive is an act of chronophagy which helps the state kill its ties to the past and the ability of that past to be used against the state. "There is no state without archives", Mbembe avers, indeed "without its archives." Yet Iraq is almost such a state, as it has huge gaps in archives created by the now-defunct Ba'athist government, not to speak of Iraqi state archives from before the Ba'ath period. Much of the state's power, if Mbembe is correct, comes from the state's option of chronophagy, i.e. its ability to destroy its own archives and the historical receipts they contain. Yet where other theorists focused on the ability of the state to be sovereign over a territory, the state must retain possession of archives and control who can access them. Losing the state's archives results either from large scale leaks or from having serious chunks of state sovereignty eroded, a process of degradation exacerbated once the archives are stolen. Mbembe's theorization slips toward a unitary description of the archive in the possession of the state but there is no binary for Iraq (or most states), meaning that the state either has all or none of its archives. Indeed, archives in the plural are frequently distributed throughout a state's territory in various government repositories and offices. This is even clearer in Iraq given the first seizure of archives in 1991, and the later archival seizures in 2003 detailed here.

Crucially, the theft of Iraqi archives is incomplete. A fraction of the total archive, though an important one, was stolen. Only the Iraqi state truly knows the denominator of the fraction, and only the US Department of Defense knows the numerator of the fraction it stole, as that information is not publicly available. The Iraqi state can see the totality of what remains and thus have an idea of what is missing, but the Iraqi state does not (to my knowledge) know exactly what the US stole, as non-state actors also looted archives in the chaos of 2003. It is likewise possible the DOD knows (or can deduce) the total denominator of Iraqi archives from documents it stole. Even if US and

⁶³ Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits" in *Refiguring the Archive* by Carolyn Hamilton et al, (Dordrecht, NL.: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002).

Iraqi officials have communicated about what the US stole, the quantity of records almost certainly means that questions remain about what exact records- and state knowledge- are not accounted for. The obvious conclusion- indeed the aim of the seizure of the archives in war—was to use the Iraqi archive as a rhetorical weapon against the Iraqi Ba‘th state which created it.

Writing the history of Iraq thus comes to resemble a card game in which the entire deck is not present and no one actor knows exactly which cards were shuffled into the fraction of the deck being played with. Other cards (in this case, Iraqi Ba‘thist archival documents) removed from the full deck may appear at any time and their place in the deck will not be immediately clear, or verifiable. Often, dare I say normally, the state retains control over its archival records and can choose what to make available to the public and when. Standards of transparency are negotiated as a facet of the bargain the state has with society, and the repeated transfer of power from one leader to another in democratic systems points to a higher likelihood that later governments will indeed declassify archival documents from the past. Government employees with access to the archive can leverage the secrecy of classified archives against the state, selectively leaking some records to force the state to change policy or admit something it did that is not publicly known. Secrecy is thus a key part of state sovereignty, but always a potential liability. In an authoritarian state, the leader may well be the same ten, twenty, or even thirty years later and opening state archives to scholars and journalists might actually be exposing the current leader’s actions to scrutiny, not those of a previous government. One can likewise see the problem in hereditary monarchies, as a later leader might very well be exposing the actions of his father or other family members by opening archives to the public.

Weaponization of the BRCC archives stolen from Iraq by neoconservative actors cannot account for or answer the questions which remain unanswered about the totality of the state

archives. The unknown quantity of knowledge accumulated (knowledge created by the Iraqi state) could certainly come to harm the very state which stole the archives, the United States. The United States was known to sell arms to Saddam Hussein during the long and draining war against Iran; it also transferred and facilitated the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi Ba‘th.⁶⁴ There may be more such dealings detailed in Iraqi archives. Iraq’s own crimes against its citizens are certainly present and neoconservative figures envisioned the theft of Iraqi archives as a chance to reveal more Iraqi state crimes. The United States cannot easily weaponize a quantity of information as vast as a state archive without simultaneously running the risk that information in those archives boomerangs back to hurt its own reputation or foreign affairs. Yet there is some possibility that the US attempted to do just that. It is mere speculation, but a desire to hide evidence of US dealings with the Iraqi Ba‘th would potentially explain why many of the archives stolen by the United States from Iraq in 2003, now held by the US Department of Defense, remain unavailable for research and unaccounted for. Indeed, just such a situation came to pass for Kanan Makiya and the Iraqi Memory Foundation. information from Kanan Makiya’s own “archive” of sorts came to boomerang back against him after it was made accessible to researchers at Hoover Institute, and Wisam Alshaibi found the incriminating documents about his planning and dealings with key neoconservative figures in the 1990s.

It is this potential to boomerang back that separates the theft of archives by Kurdish activists in 1991 from the American theft of archives in 2003. In both cases, the erosion of state sovereignty permitted the theft of archives, but only in the latter did it truly have the potential to do as much or more damage to the US. Weaponization of the archive is important to study for holding neoconservative figures accountable for their war crimes, but we would be in error to let

⁶⁴ Shane Harris and Matthew M. Aid, “Exclusive: CIA Files Prove America Helped Saddam as he Gassed Iran” *Foreign Policy*, August 26, 2013.

the attempted weaponization of the archive guide us to never engage with the stolen archival records.

To sum up, I unequivocally oppose such seizure of archives in war. The seizure of the BRCC archives was not justified because the government was repressive or brutal; cultural patrimony must be understood as under the sovereignty of the nation and not merely the government in power. Some figures insist that no ethical engagement is possible with the stolen archives; any use of the archive in its current state at Hoover Institute takes advantage of privileged access afforded to foreigners and not Iraqis while ultimately supporting the flawed rationale for the criminal war. I do not dispute the material facts but the conclusion that is drawn from them. This claim indeed needs to be squared with the kind of scholarship produced from the archive, but it must not lead us to a dead end where we ignore the archive because of its fraught patrimony.

It must be said that while it may be tempting to see the BRCC archives as a unique case, is this case ethically different from engaging with colonial archives? The power dimensions skewing the content of the archive is arguably stronger in the case of colonial archives, as the contents of the BRCC were not changed or redacted. British archives about Iraq have been held in locations distant from Iraqis for decades, as have French archives. In both cases, British and French citizens had and continue to have easier access to the archives than the citizens of the colonized nations themselves. This is not raised here as a justification, but to show that this uneven access did not lead to a boycott of scholarly engagement with those British and French archival collections. The argument against the use of the BRCC archives at Hoover thus boils down to two key points- Iraqis have higher barriers to research than Americans do, and any scholarship which paints the Iraqi Ba‘th in a bad light is arguably what the DOD and Makiya wanted, arguably aiding the weaponized use of the archive described above. Does that mean all new evidence of the state policies contained

in the archive must remain ignored? The de facto reality is that places even more power in Hoover's hands, making the engagement of scholars with those records contingent on Hoover returning them first. What if Hoover refuses to ever return the archive to Iraq? This is indeed possible. At what point in the future will it be conceded that an important chunk of Iraq's historical record rests there, and needs to be engaged with? Refusing to ever use the BRCC until they are returned to Iraq may effectively amount to a blanket erasure of anything the state did that might be revealed through those records. Such a refusal to engage with the flawed reality ultimately is tantamount to saying no engagement with the stolen records is better than some engagement by foreign scholars, while Iraqis remain largely, but not completely shut out. Whose interests does that serve? No such policy would be accepted by all scholars of Iraq; it would represent a level of consensus impossible to achieve around such a fraught and politicized issue. As Dina Rizk Khoury points out, scholars who would not agree with the denunciations of the theft of archives would end up being the only ones working with the archive in the short to medium term until the records were returned to Iraq. At that point, Iraqi state policy would have to make the records available to Iraqi citizens for research, although there is no guarantee the Iraqi state would let this happen.

Ignoring the archives does not undo their theft or the horrible crimes committed against the Iraqi people. Researchers must weigh ethical concerns with any state archive, making sure not to purely replicate the state's view of reality. Careful scholarship and triangulation of events and information from the archives is necessary to ethically engage with the archive, to be sure, but this is true of all archival records. Archives are never the unfiltered truth. Finally, my own work in the archives has found fascinating documents that do not merely demonize the Iraqi Ba'ath. Instead, these records expose issues of state capacity and planning that are far more nuanced than mere demonization. As readers will see, reports and documents I located in the BRCC show complex

issues inside the state that help us understand public phenomena in new light. These documents show a state struggling mightily to reshape society, appraisals of its own shortcomings, and its prolonged issues with illiteracy in society as well as among party members.

I write those words with the privilege of political, cultural, and material distance from the events. Many others, including Haider Hadi, the Iraqi archivist for the Iraqi Memory Foundation who dedicated his hard work to the project and endured significant personal hardship for working with the documents, did not have the comfort and privilege of that distance. Haider's help in the archives was invaluable. He is one of the people who did the work to code and organize the archives, and he is also one of the most knowledgeable people to speak with about them. He has a better overview than almost anyone of what is contained in those millions of scanned documents. He was very helpful to me multiple times when I struggled to read handwritten Arabic documents, or struggled to grasp the meaning of others. If my words are critical of larger government policies relating to the seizure of these records, I must not let that criticism fall on the shoulders of principled individuals like Haider who made key decisions to save their country's heritage, and endured real consequences as a result. I thank Haider for his dedication to preserving these archives.

This discussion of Iraqi archives, ethics, and power is inseparable from my project as a whole. A project attempting to shine new light on power dimensions and ideas in Iraq and the postcolonial world more broadly could not ignore the very power dimensions that facilitated the project. The literacy, opposition, and culture chapters of my dissertation were possible because these archives are available outside of Iraq and because I fall in a privileged category of people able to access them. The painful downside of that is that it is very hard for Iraqis or other Arab scholars to access them, as one must first get a visa to enter the United States (no easy task) and

one must then complete IRB procedures as well, and that is not to speak of travel costs. The costs of living in Palo Alto or Mountain View to access the archives at the Hoover Institute are also among the most expensive in the United States, making long-term stay prohibitively difficult for those who do not have some pre-existing family ties in the area or who manage to get a prestigious long-term grant to fund themselves. The cheapest accommodation I could find in Silicon Valley for extended stay to work in the Hoover Institute's archives was significantly more than my monthly rent in Seattle, and Seattle is one of the most expensive rental markets in the United States. The barriers to entry for these archives are very high, and sadly accessing these archives is a privilege. That this privilege is afforded primarily to Americans, by dint of the location of the archives, and not Iraqis, is yet another painful truth to reverberate from the violent shock that was the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Hoover should return the BRCC originals as soon as possible, and the Iraqi state must not lock them up once they're returned. Until the records are returned, Hoover should dedicate some of its funds specifically to giving scholarships to Iraqis to come work in the BRCC archives that are sufficient to cover the significant costs of travel to and living in Palo Alto. It is the least the Institute can do while it holds onto the archives.

Iraqi Ba'athist Cultural Production

The second key source base this dissertation draws on is a vast trove of Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production in the form of books, magazines, journals, and newspapers held in libraries around the world. The first large cache of books I located was at the University of Jordan, the Jordanian National Library in Amman, and the Hameed Shoman Foundation Library in the summer of 2014. Spread throughout these three collections, I struggled to identify and separate books that were published by the Iraqi state from those that merely covered the same ground and

themes, but I figured out enough of the markers and specifically the names of the publishing houses run by the Iraqi state. I gathered and copied some I later came to realize were not part of what I was looking for. This first batch of texts showed me the variety of topics covered by the state and encouraged me to continue digging for others.

My home institution, the University of Washington (UW), has an impressive collection of Arabic texts that were part of the cultural production at the center of this dissertation. Selected issues of *Afaq 'Arabiyya* in the late 1980s in UW's library first exposed me to the content they contained, pushing me to seek out more at the Library of Congress. Some key texts came from other institutions through interlibrary loan (ILL), but UW's collection often had its own copies. Interesting stamps and information on many of the texts in UW's collection give us clues about their provenance. For example, one text has a sticker on the inside indicating it was a gift from one Sabah Jabbouri, an Iraqi graduate student in Forestry Sciences in the early 1980s. Another such sticker indicates it was a gift of the Iraqi Embassy in Washington DC. Others held by UW have stamps indicating they were gifts from the University of Baghdad, a feature shared by some books in Jordan and in the Library of Congress. The "gift" label on so many is telling and should not be ignored. Swimming in oil cash from 1972 forward, even with the peaks and troughs of oil prices, the Iraqi Ba'th Party was much less worried about selling these books for profit, but most indeed had a price. The state hoped people would read them and become convinced of the ideas they contained. Another small but key set of sources were PhD dissertations written by Iraqis at US universities in the early 1980s, covering the Mass Literacy Campaign, a study of Iraqi television, Iraqi state education in rural areas contained key insights on nuanced facets of Iraqi society and state policy. I treat the dissertations as an extension of state cultural production because students

were funded by the Iraqi state and were not free to write whatever they wanted- their dissertations needed to please their supervisors but also the Iraqi state.

A small number of the Iraqi state publications I located in the UW auxiliary stacks, seemingly never used, were texts labeled on the inside cover with a stamp of “Public Law 480 Program” and were perhaps the most interesting of all. Public Law 480 Program ties these Iraqi Ba‘thist texts to US Cold War policy. In the early 1950s, Public Law 480 was passed to sell US agricultural surplus to the Third World at discount prices in food aid, partially as a means to keep Communism at bay, but primarily conceived because of accumulating grain surpluses the US could not effectively store or sell.⁶⁵ In its first decade, PL480 constituted almost one-third of total US agricultural exports.⁶⁶ Close on the heels of the Marshall Plan, the US sought to address the needs of countries like India, Tunisia, Israel, the United Arab Republic and later Egypt under Sadat, all of which received food aid under this program. Currency surpluses generated in the countries receiving food aid were appropriated to purchase large quantities of foreign language books for areas studies purposes in the Library of Congress and participating US universities.⁶⁷ A concerted lobbying effort was made to realize the book purchases, appealing to national security by arguing that adequate funding for the area studies collections would effectively *weaponize* research libraries against Communism.⁶⁸ The interesting wrinkle is that Iraq was not part of the Food Aid program, as it had no working relationship with the US from 1968 on, so the Iraqi texts brought to the US under PL480 had to be purchased in another Arab state that was part of the program. Not being part of PL480 may have ultimately been to Iraq’s advantage, as the PL480 effectively

⁶⁵ Alex Boodrakas, “Total Literature, Total War: Foreign Aid, Area Studies, and the Weaponization of U.S. Research Libraries” *Diplomatic History*, September 21, 2018, p.11.

⁶⁶ William J. Burns, *Economic Aid and American Foreign Policy Toward Egypt, 1955-1981* (Albany: Suny Press, 1985), 126; see <https://www.merip.org/mer/mer145/public-law-480-better-bomber>

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Boodrakas, “Total Literature, Total War”, 13; emphasis mine.

dumped large quantities of wheat abroad and artificially lowered wheat prices in other countries, contributing to increasing budget imbalances for countries dependent on wheat sales.⁶⁹ Ironically, attempts to weaponize area studies collections for national security effectively vacuumed up Iraqi state cultural productions, bringing these publications stateside. If the texts at UW are any indication, these texts of Iraqi state cultural production largely gathered dust in US research libraries, printed in Arabic and esoteric in their focus. The PL480, even if it did not directly bring all of the texts to the US, laid the groundwork for how many of the texts did arrive, and is a fascinating link from US Cold War policy to the present day.

Public Law 480 texts from Iraq apparently came to the US via Cairo. Public Law 480 Program and its book acquisition facets worked heavily in conjunction with the Library of Congress (LOC). The LOC Cairo center was established in 1962 in direct connection with PL 480, and acts as a hub for the entire Arab World.⁷⁰ In the mid-1970s (the period from which I have found texts with this label), Egypt was in the process of making peace with Israel and aligning itself staunchly with the US, to the consternation of many other Arab states, but it is not accurate to say PL480 was implemented in Egypt because of Anwar Sadat and his strengthening of Egyptian ties to the US. The PL480 program began while Gamal Abdel Nasser was still running Egypt, and part of the Non-Aligned Movement. The LOC Cairo center was responsible for gathering Iraqi materials, though frustratingly it could not collect them during the sanctions period in the 1990s and had to make retroactive efforts once sanctions were lifted.⁷¹ As this dissertation will show in Chapter Three, the quantity of Iraqi state cultural output plummeted during that period, and civil society was heavily repressed. The troubled times in Iraq notwithstanding, the Iraqi collections at

⁶⁹ Ibid, 12.

⁷⁰ Carol Mitchell, James Armstrong, "Understanding the World: The Library's Operations Overseas" *Information Bulletin*, May 2005. <https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0505/overseas.html>

⁷¹ Ibid.

the LOC represent a treasure trove of modern Iraqi history that should be accessed by more scholars. Unfortunately, many texts had indications they had not been opened for some time, if ever, after having been bound.⁷² I did significant research in the collections of the LOC to find as much Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production as I could in my research time. Chapters One and Three both rely on *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* copies I located at the LOC. Chapter Four draws heavily on the copies of *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* I located there as well. In sum, the processes by which Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production made its way outside of Iraq and to academic libraries in the United States were complex and shaped by power dimensions of US post-war dominance.

A Brief Note on Terminology

This dissertation deliberately employs phrasing and terminology to describe events in Iraq and the region more broadly in a manner meant to minimize unnecessary linguistic and epistemological baggage. Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq from 1979-2003, is never referred to merely as “Saddam” to avoid furthering the cult of personality this work seeks to move beyond. He is referred to by his full name or by his last name as is done with any other leader. The Iraqi Ba‘th Party is always referred to as such to avoid more general confusion stemming from “the Ba‘th Party” when both Syria and Iraq were led by mutually antagonistic branches of the Party. If “Ba‘th” is found without a national qualifier or clear reference in the sentence, it is deliberately worded as such to refer to shared ideological principles. The term “regime” is not used in this dissertation, unless quoting in the process of quoting someone else, as it cannot be clearly defined. “Regime” is most often a synonym for “government” but is loaded with a negative tone deployed

⁷² Also of note for researchers: many of the Iraqi state publications I located in the Library of Congress were held in collections outside the Africa and Middle East reading room, maybe 20% of what I found fits this description. Some were in the general collection, some in the law collection, and some held offsite in Ft. Meade or other locations.

by speakers to speak in a derogatory manner of government actions or policy. As such, this dissertation refers to the “Iraqi government” or “Iraqi Ba‘th government.”

At different points in this dissertation, the word “counterinsurgency” is used to describe systematized state attempts to control armed opposition groups through various means. This term is chosen for its straightforward description of reality, where insurgency was ongoing, varying, and taking place in different parts of Iraq. The choice of words is not a reference to any military studies or other examples where the term has been used, like Vietnam or Iraq post-2003. Rather, it is chosen because of the consistent presence of various types of repressive action targeted against political opposition groups throughout the period of 1968-1991 covered by this dissertation. There is no prolonged period in that timeframe in which the state is not facing at least one movement that can accurately be called insurgency, and thus state policies to address ongoing insurgency by different groups is called “counterinsurgency.”

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this dissertation avoids the word “propaganda” and instead speaks of “cultural production” in reference to the Iraqi Ba‘th. Like the word “regime,” “propaganda” does indeed appear in quotes of others. First, in the interest of objectivity, the word propaganda is loaded with negative connotations in English. The wide variety of publications (journals, books, small pamphlets, speeches, newspapers) is better captured in “cultural production” since much of this content involved original research, citations and academic style. This work is clear, however, to speak about the consequences of state rhetoric and cultural production when it slipped toward racist and violent themes, and indeed fueled state violence. This work makes no attempt to whitewash or exonerate the actions and crimes of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba‘th and such choices of terminology should not be interpreted as such.

CHAPTER ONE: IRAQ IN THE THIRD WORLD

A standard narrative has emerged in scholarship on Iraqi history about the year leading up to war with Iran in September of 1980. The Islamic Revolution in Iran culminated in Ayatollah Khomeini's assumption of power in March of 1979, jolting the entire region. The shock from the revolution led to a period of escalating tensions between Iran and Iraq. In July of 1979, Saddam Hussein ousted Ahmad Hasan al Bakr from the presidency of Iraq, while Ayatollah Khomeini tried to "export the revolution" from Iran to Iraq and other neighboring states. Military skirmishes between the two countries culminated in war in September of 1980.⁷³ The basic narrative makes sense, explaining why Saddam Hussein began pushing nationalist cultural narratives during the war that demonized Persians to motivate Iraqis to fight them. The tensions the narrative encapsulates were most certainly real. The problem is the narrative is not entirely accurate. This chapter uses a close reading of forgotten sources to paint a more complex picture reshaping what

⁷³ Phebe Marr advances a narrative along these lines, with significantly more nuance than I recreate here in the intro. See Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* third ed. 2012, 176-182. Adeed Dawisha presents his own version, emphasizing the Iraqi Dawa Party more than Marr did but essentially the same argument. See Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation*, 221-223. Years earlier, Dawisha discussed the *I'lan al Qawmi* in detail, though he attributed it to new threats facing Iraq from Israel and Egypt after Camp David. His account later in the same article of the lead up to war with Iran again centers on Iraq responding to escalating Iranian provocations. The USSR is not discussed in this section in connection to *shu'ubiyya* or the *I'lan al Qawmi*. See Adeed Dawisha, "Iraqi Foreign Policy: Motives, Constraints, and Performance" in *Sources of Domestic and Foreign Policy in Iraq* ed. Z. Michael Szaz (Washington DC, American Foreign Policy Institute, 1986). Finally, a third article from Dawisha in *Foreign Policy* in Winter of 1981 discusses the tensions between the Soviet Union and Iraq in some detail, but does not advance the argument I present here. Instead, he ties the *I'lan al Qawmi* to Camp David, as a message to Arab states. He does not connect the *I'lan al Qawmi* to Soviet actions despite explicitly addressing both Iraqi-Soviet relations and the *I'lan al Qawmi*. See Dawisha "Iraq: The West's Opportunity" *Foreign Policy* (Winter 1980-1981) no.41, 134-153. Marion Farouk Sluglett and Peter Sluglett advanced a similar narrative, focusing on Iran, see Marion Farouk Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*, 255-257. Sherko Kirmanj speculates in his work *Identity and Nation in Iraq* that the Iraqi Ba'th may have been afraid of a pro-Communist coup based on events in Afghanistan, but he does not connect it to the events outlined in this chapter nor does he offer any other evidence. Indeed, Kirmanj references the 1978 Coup which brought the Communists to power in Afghanistan, not the subsequent Soviet invasion. See Sheiko Kirmanj *Identity and Nation in Iraq*. Edmund Ghareeb argued that Ba'thist use of Arab nationalism was a response to Iranian leaders' use of jihad and Islamic terms against the "atheist Ba'th." See Edmund Ghareeb "Domestic Politics and Development" in *Sources of Domestic and Foreign Policy in Iraq* ed. Z. Michael Szaz (Washington DC, American Foreign Policy Institute, 1986), 20-21.

we think we know about this already well-studied period in Iraqi history. The realignment detailed in this chapter shows Iraq was deeply enmeshed in the Third World in ways that need further study.⁷⁴ Iraq's relations with Syria, the USSR, its membership and activities in the Non-Aligned Movement, Soviet policies in the Third World, and finally the powerful impact of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on the region as a whole, and Iraq in particular are important to understanding state discourse and its bases in material reality.

The Iraqi Ba'ath membership and activities in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) are key to understanding this period of Iraqi history. Iraq's strong role in the NAM from 1975 until at least 1982 explains the larger positions the Iraqi Ba'ath Party took domestically and internationally, which were intricately linked. Connections between the USSR and the Iraqi Ba'ath were strongest in the early 1970s, but weakened without breaking in the late 1970s and 1980s. After cutting ties with the US in 1967, Iraq had no formal relations with the US until the early 1980s. A cold approach to capitalism and a lukewarm approach to the USSR helped Iraq fit into the Non-Aligned Movement, the members of which frequently shared such a stance. Iraq was caught in a position uniquely characteristic of the Third World. The basic narrative explained above ignores this Cold War reality completely. Indeed, the Cold War spawned many "hot wars" in the Third World, highlighting a striking distinction: The Cold War brought prolonged peace to Europe and North America while Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East saw a series of brutal hot wars.⁷⁵ The Iran-Iraq War was the most intense and costly in terms of lives lost of these wars that took place in the Third World during the global "Cold" War. This is all true; yet Habib Bourgiba

⁷⁴ I use the term "Third World" here despite its ties to modernization theory and deeply problematic meaning, i.e. the period of history this dissertation covers before the end of the Cold War. For historical accuracy, I use the term "Global South" with the same geographic and political parameters for the period *after* the Cold War up to the present day.

⁷⁵ Robert J. McMahon, "Introduction" *The Cold War in the Third World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.6-7.

foresaw the tensions that would befall North Africa (and arguably the Middle East more broadly) in 1946:

*North Africa is one of the best [assets] in the eyes of the Anglo-Saxon world: key to the central Mediterranean and an ideal base of operations against a Europe on its way to Bolshevization. It is not therefore for our beautiful eyes that the Anglo-Saxons interest themselves more and more in our fate.*⁷⁶

Intricately tied into the question of the progression to war is a question about Iraqi state messages and discourse. Why did Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba‘th re-embrace Pan-Arabism (*qawmiyya*) after a decade of emphasis on Iraqi nationalism (*wataniyya*) through Mesopotamian themes and images? Eric Davis argued that such a shift from *wataniyya* to *qawmiyya* is illusory and that the Iraqi Ba‘th deliberately mixed *wataniyya* and *qawmiyya* throughout the 1970s and 1980s.⁷⁷ Indeed, Davis argues that the Iraqi Ba‘th was distinct for pushing such a mix in the larger Arab World. There is good evidence for Davis’ position. However, Davis’ view does not account for the role of the Non-Aligned Movement and the *I‘lan al-Qawmi*, a central part of transnational developments detailed in this chapter. Saddam Hussein issued the *I‘lan al-Qawmi* in early 1980, reinvigorating Pan-Arabist discourse *before* the war began against Iran and without any of the anti-Persian themes that emerged less than one year later.⁷⁸ Only Phebe Marr mentions the *I‘lan al-Qawmi* and points to it as indicative of a shift in ideology, but she does not tie it to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan or domestic issues with the Iraqi Communist Party.⁷⁹ When one returns to press accounts from this period prior to the beginning war, It is easy to see why the historical

⁷⁶ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 46.

⁷⁷ Eric Davis, *Memories of State*, 150.

⁷⁸ This was a speech given by Saddam Hussein and widely reproduced by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture. Its title translates to “The Pan-Arab Announcement.” The speech and its contents are explored in detail later in the chapter.

⁷⁹ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq third ed.* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 166.

consensus settled as it did, linking the outset of war between Iran and Iraq to the Islamic Revolution in Iran, with tensions growing between the two states in the period of almost eighteen months between the two events.

The transnational analysis of this chapter will show how the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, not Iran or the Islamic Revolution, was the motivation for the *I'lan al-Qawmi*, leading Saddam Hussein to call for all Arab states to come together under the Non-Aligned Movement to mutually support each other in the event of a superpower invading an Arab state. The influence of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was easy to miss because it fell squarely in the period of rising tensions between Iran and Iraq. For all the fears in Iraq about Soviet designs on their state, Iraq's invasion of Iran and the prolonged war effectively precluded the possibility that Soviet leaders would indeed try to overthrow the Iraqi Ba'ath. The Iran-Iraq War also came to dominate historical memory, pushing the Soviet threat out of many histories of the period. There indeed was a shift in the balance of *wataniyya* and *qawmiyya* in Iraqi Ba'athist discourse and policy, and the reason for the shift was transnational and reflective of tensions in the Third World, not because Iran and Iraq went to war. The first layer of transnational influences to be explored is that of relations between Syria and Iraq, both ruled by factions of the Ba'ath Party.

The Ba'athist Civil War: Syria vs Iraq

The Iraqi Ba'ath became a Sunni-dominated party over the decades but was decidedly mixed in its roots. Party founder Michel 'Aflaq was a Christian as was Tariq Aziz, a stable Ba'athist figure for decades. The Iraqi Ba'ath blended Arab nationalism and socialism while denying the party was racist or connected to the Nazis.⁸⁰ Key first Ba'athists in Syria were borderline *effendiya* with the

⁸⁰ Hizb al Ba'ath al 'Arabi al-Ishtiraki, *al-Ba'ath wa Mawqif min al-Aqliyat al-Qawmiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al Thawra, 1974), 13. The text cites a Michel 'Aflaq speech from 1955 in which 'Aflaq equated Nazi tendencies with ignorance.

class position and means to go abroad for studies like ‘Aflaq did to the Sorbonne. Saddam Hussein, born in Tikrit with none of the privileges that ‘Aflaq had, managed to change the party and consolidate power first around Tikritis, and later around his own family and tribe. Salah Jadid led a leftist faction in the Syrian Ba‘th which ousted the original generation of ‘Aflaq and Bitar in favor of more rural members. ‘Aflaq found refuge in Baghdad with the Iraqi Ba‘th and remained an influential member, shown in his title *al-qaid al-mu’assis*, or the founding leader.

Syrian-Iraqi relations after 1968 began with both governments trying to consolidate themselves at the other’s expense and later turn into a competition for regional influence after both states grew in power.⁸¹ Salah Jadid was forced out by Hafez al Assad in 1970, consolidating the Syrian Ba‘th around military figures, specifically from the Air Force.⁸² Through the 1970s, Syria and Iraq remained at odds. In 1972, Syria raised transit fees for oil moving through its territory, something Iraq had little recourse over.⁸³ Iraq found itself in a stronger position, freed of the drain of battling Iranian influence after the Algiers Agreement, but this did not last long as the Syrian Ba‘th ratcheted up its efforts to undermine the Iraqi Ba‘th. In 1975, Syria constructed a dam on the Euphrates at Tabaqa that caused major issues downstream in Iraq.⁸⁴ Shi‘a were disproportionately affected by the consequent drought in Iraq, something Faleh Jabbar argues was a significant factor in the increasing frustration among Iraqi Shi‘a with the Iraqi Ba‘th

The context in the text refers to Arab nationalists who do not want to incorporate Kurds and want to forever ostracize them.

⁸¹ Eberhard Kienle, *Ba‘th v. Ba‘th: The Conflict between Syria and Iraq, 1968-1989*. (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 1990), 170. The background of the split is too complex to explain here; Kienle offers an in-depth account of how the Ba‘th Party fragmented.

⁸² Raymond Hinnebusch, “Syria-Iraq Relations: State Construction and Deconstruction and the MENA States System” *LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series, no. 04*, October 2014.

⁸³ William J. Olson, “Iraqi Policy and the Impact of the Iraq-Iran War” in *The Middle East After the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon* edited by Robert O. Freedman 1st ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 172.

⁸⁴ The Iraqi Ba‘th mentioned cutting the water of the Euphrates in their response to a Syrian Ba‘thist statement about tensions between the two nations. See No author, *al-‘Iraq sura haya lil tamassuk al thabit bi- muntalaqat al-tahrir*, (Baghdad: al-Wizarat al-I‘lam, Dar al Huriyya, 1975), 7-8.

government.⁸⁵ The Syrian Ba‘th supported the leftist Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) against the Iraqi Ba‘th after the group’s formation in Damascus, a tactic the Iraqi Ba‘th referred to as “helping the pocket of agents”, meaning those aligning themselves with foreign states.⁸⁶ The PUK split off and formed after the Iraqi government had successfully struck an agreement with the KDP and co-opted it into the Progressive National Front. Syria was also angered by the gathering of Iraqi troops near its northern border.⁸⁷ Iraq, for its part, apparently returned the favor by establishing a radio station of unclear provenance which repeatedly broadcast calls inside Syria to overthrow the Syrian Ba‘th and to help the people of Lebanon challenge their Syrian antagonists.⁸⁸ According to Kienle, one of the few researchers to write about this subject, both the Syrian and Iraqi Ba‘th parties carried out assassinations and terrorism in each other’s cities between 1976 and 1978.⁸⁹ In 1976, Syria completely cut the oil pipeline from Iraq that it previously raised transit taxes on.⁹⁰ In this period, relations became especially violent and provocative, as each side supported factions challenging the other state. Iraq tried to deflect the embarrassment of a domestic uprising against its “popular” leadership by accusing Syria of fomenting the 1977 uprisings in Karbala. The headline of a two-page feature in a February 1977 issue of *Alif Ba* screamed that secret documents proved the Syrian state was acting as a traitor to the Palestinians in Lebanon, with the documents published square in the middle of the page.⁹¹ Iraq continually took a position completely rejecting UN Resolutions 232 and 338, and demanding that Syria do likewise as Iraq

⁸⁵ This example can also help disabuse us of the idea that Syria was formulating policy in a sectarian manner at the time.

⁸⁶ No author, *al-Iraq sura haya...*, 8.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸⁸ Kienle, *Ba‘th v. Ba‘th*, 118.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 116-127.

⁹⁰ Olson, “Iraqi Policy and the Impact of the Iraq-Iran War”, 172.

⁹¹ No Author “*al-watha’iq tu’akad sahat tahleel hizb al ba‘th al-‘arabi al-ishtiraki lil- dawr al-tanfizi al-khiyani al-ladhi yumarisahu al-nitham al-suri fi lubnan wa al-mantaqa al-‘arabiyya*” *Alif-Ba*, Vol 9, no 437, (Feb 2, 1977).

took acceptance of those resolutions as acknowledging the existence of Israel.⁹² Relations between Iraq and Syria were bitter, violent, and showed little chance of improving.

The shock of Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in late 1977 and the continued talks between Israel and Egypt pushed Iraq and Syria to end their hostilities for a brief but important period. Robert Springborg additionally argues that unification was understood by both Syria and Iraq as a bulwark against increasing Islamic fundamentalism spurred by events in Iran, though it should better be understood as an agreement to stop mutual support for such movements challenging the other.⁹³ The rapprochement between the two states culminated in a charter of shared Arab Nationalist action and a plan to unify the two states.⁹⁴ It likewise reopened relations between Syria and the USSR, as the latter had been withholding arms sales until the Syrian Ba'ath cooperated with Iraq. Saddam Hussein did not support the planned unification, and near its planned date of culmination, he moved to unseat Ahmad Hassan al Bakr to avert its realization, under which Hussein would have remained a deputy to Hafez al Assad.⁹⁵ The purge carried out by Hussein after seizing power has been widely written about, the cold nature of his use of violence immortalized. Once holding full power, Hussein wanted nothing to do with the Syrian Ba'ath, and relations between the two Ba'athist states deteriorated once again. The relationship between the two governments did not improve during the Iran-Iraq war, as Syria took Iran's side, refusing to back the Iraqi Ba'ath after their call for Pan-Arab solidarity behind Iraq. According to Iraq, the Syrians continued to support

⁹² No author, *al-Iraq sura haya...*, 9.

⁹³ Robert Springborg "Baathism in Practice: Agriculture, Politics, and Political Culture in Syria and Iraq" *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.17, no.2, (April 1981): 191.

⁹⁴ No Author, "Mithaq al 'Aml al Qawmi al Mushtarik bayn al Qatrayn al 'Iraqi wa al Suri" in *Afaq Arabiya*, Vol.4, No.4 (1978): 2-4; Haim Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968-1988: In the Shadow of the Iraq-Iran Conflict*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 155.

; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*. 3rd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 166.

⁹⁵ Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 214.

the Kurdish insurgency, Iraqi Communists, and the Da‘wa Party.⁹⁶ Indeed, the Ninth Regional Congress Report from the Iraqi Ba‘th bitterly complained that Syria had been “playing the card of insurgency in the northern part of Iraq since the beginning.”⁹⁷ An article from the Iraqi Ba‘thist *al-Thawra* (The Revolution) on April 12, 1981 was representative of much of the rhetoric toward the Syrian Ba‘th. The headline of the article blasted Syria for being in gross breach of charters between Arab states, repressing Syrian society, and taking the side of “racist” Iran against Iraq.⁹⁸ Such was the tension that Iraq pointed out that it reserved the right to defend itself against Syria as necessary and accused Iran of cowardice in waiting to pick sides between Iran and Iraq based on who seemed to be winning rather than principled solidarity with a fellow Arab state.⁹⁹ Attempting to further weaken its Syrian counterpart, a front of Syrian opposition groups supported by the Iraqi Ba‘th was founded in March 1982, named “The National Alliance to Liberate Syria.”¹⁰⁰ Syria and Iran released a joint statement accusing Iraq and the US of fomenting uprisings in Hama against the Syrian state.¹⁰¹ The only text I can locate so far published by the alliance was a 1989 work by Shibli al-‘Aysami, a Syrian Ba‘thist who had defected to Iraq years before and became a potent intellectual voice behind the Iraqi Ba‘th.¹⁰² In the book, titled, *The Syrian Regime and its Role in the Deterioration of the Arab World*, al-‘Aysami denounced the Syrian Ba‘th Party as “fascism in democratic clothing.”¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Hizb al-Ba‘th al-‘Arabi al-Ishtiraki. *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress, June 1982*. (Madrid: Unigraf, S.A, 1983), 60.

⁹⁷ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress*, 59. The accusation of supporting and fomenting Iraqi insurgency was also directed at the Libyan state .

⁹⁸ Sabri Hammadi “al-Nidham al-Suri...Fasalaka Khiyani wa Kharraq Fadhil lil Mawathiq al-‘Arabiya wa al-Dawliya” *al-Thawra*, April 12, 1981.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Derek Hopwood, *Syria 1945-1986: Politics and Society*. (London: Routledge, 1986), 67. The February uprisings against the Assad government that were brutally crushed in Hama happened merely one month prior.

¹⁰¹ Hopwood, *Syria 1945-1986: Politics and Society*, 67.

¹⁰² Shibli al-Aysami published dozens of political and intellectual works for the Iraqi state in the 1970s and 1980s.

¹⁰³ Shibli al-‘Aysami, *al-Nitham al Suri wa Dawrahu fi Taraddi al Wad‘a al- ‘Arabi* (no location: al-Tahaluf al Watani li-Tahrir Suriya, 1989), 4.

Iraq took covert measures domestically and in Syria, many of which left traces in the Ba‘th Regional Command Committee (BRCC) Archive. For example, the Iraqi Ba‘th put Syrian students in Iraq on payroll and monitored the actions of Syrians in Iraq.¹⁰⁴ They had a cell in Damascus report from there on the groups of dissidents and “Persians” there organizing against the Iraqi Ba‘th.¹⁰⁵ The continued animosity between the two branches of the Ba‘th pushed the Syrian government to join the international coalition against Iraq when Saddam Hussein led Iraq’s army to invade and occupy Kuwait. The tensions between the two presented one of the most tangible barriers to broader Arab support for the Iraqi Ba‘th in its self-styled attempts to lead and speak for all Arabs. Where Iran and the USSR presented competing ideologies to undermine the radical nationalism of the Iraqi Ba‘th, its Syrian half challenged Iraqi Ba‘thist legitimacy at its roots. Because neither state had relations with the US at this time, the most influential power the Ba‘th parties had to negotiate and deal with was the Soviet Union.

Iraqi-Soviet Relations

Saddam Hussein came to fear the possibility of a Soviet invasion of Iraq after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. The established historiography offers a good base for looking at Soviet-Iraqi relations in this period. Phebe Marr argued that Iraq turned to the USSR out of a feeling of isolation after conservative monarchies, Iran, Israel and the US all aligned against Iraq and its efforts to resolve problems with the Kurds in the north.¹⁰⁶ Marr’s argument builds on much of what is well-known in Iraqi international relations in the 1970s, specifically connections between Israel, the Shah of Iran, and Kurdish leaders rebelling against Iraqi Ba‘thist rule. Sluglett and Farouk-Sluglett,

¹⁰⁴ BRCC 006-2-2-0491.

¹⁰⁵ BRCC 006-2-2-0500.

¹⁰⁶ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 146.

on the other hand, saw Iraq's foreign policy towards the USSR at that time as a continuation of trends in the Arab World dating to the late 1950s as well as Iraq's desire to present itself as "progressive."¹⁰⁷ I find tensions in this very relationship between the USSR and radical nationalists at the heart of tensions between the USSR and the Iraqi Ba'ath. These issues are also intertwined, this chapter argues, with developments and instrumental changes in Iraqi Ba'athist discourse.

The Soviet Union was heavily involved in the Arab Middle East but involvement should not be confused with control. "Moscow has made a heavy investment in Syria and Iraq, so far without getting the influence it wants," began a CIA secret assessment of Moscow's relations with the Syrian and Iraqi Ba'ath parties from 1969.¹⁰⁸ Such an assessment fits with what is known about Ba'athist ideology since the party's beginnings, in that the Ba'ath had been quite hostile to Communism as an ideology and a practice. Iraqi Ba'athist accommodation of the USSR, however, is largely explained by the circumstances of the time and it would be a mistake to understand the Iraqi Ba'ath at this time as a Soviet proxy. The USSR had been involved in Iraq since 1959 when Iraq removed itself from the Baghdad Pact under Abdul Karim Qasim, the Iraqi president from 1958-1963.¹⁰⁹ Qasim's government offered scholarships for Iraqi medical students to go abroad to Eastern Bloc countries, one facet of the linkages that developed.¹¹⁰ In Iraq itself, the USSR sent teams who helped the Iraqi state carry out a large scale campaign to vaccinate Iraqis against smallpox.¹¹¹ From the 1958 coup that overthrew the Hashemite Monarchy in Iraq through the end of 1971, arms sales from Communist governments provided Iraq a total of 1 billion USD of

¹⁰⁷ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), 124.

¹⁰⁸ CIA. *Weekly Summary Special Report Soviet Relations with the Baathists in Iraq and Syria*. CIA-RDP79-00927A007200010003-1, 1.

¹⁰⁹ David Styan, *Franco-Iraqi Relations and Fifth Republic Foreign Policy, 1959-1990* (PhD Dissertation, London School of Economics, 1999), 136.

¹¹⁰ Omar Dewachi, *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq*, (Palo Alto, CA.: Stanford University Press), 23.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

weapons.¹¹² The USSR also invested heavily in developing infrastructure for Iraq's oil industry. It is unlikely that Soviet support of Iraq's oil industry was out of a need for oil; the USSR had plenty of its own. Rather, as the historian Haim Shemesh has argued, Soviet investment was aimed at strengthening an ally and marginalizing Western oil companies in Iraq.¹¹³ The USSR also continued to support Iraq's efforts at developing a peaceful nuclear program, which had been underway since Qasim's tenure in the early 1960s.¹¹⁴ The fact that Communists never governed Iraq in this period did not prevent aid from the USSR to the Iraqi Ba'ath, consistent with Moscow's willingness to cooperate with various groups for geopolitical and not purely ideological ends. Iraq's relationships interfaced with complex dynamics in the Communist world and were not limited to the USSR. Iraq recognized East Germany in 1969 as the Soviets wanted, opening the way for more economic cooperation.¹¹⁵ Between 1969-1970, Iraq received economic aid from Communist states, namely Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, East Germany and Czechoslovakia.¹¹⁶ Communist aid to Iraq supported electric and oil infrastructure, a dam, a radio station, a sugar refinery, and other projects.¹¹⁷ CIA measurements tallied some 815 "Communist economic technicians" worked on oil projects in Iraq in the early 1970s.¹¹⁸ According to a KGB defector, Iraq at that time was the only country in the non-Communist world where the KGB stopped its espionage activities.¹¹⁹

¹¹² CIA "Recent Trends in Communist Economic and Military Aid to Iraq" Intelligence Memorandum, March 1972. CIA-RDP85T00875R001700030031-3, 2. In contrast, non-Communist aid to Iraq in this period pales in comparison, totaling 68 million USD.

¹¹³ Haim Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations 1968-1988: In the Shadow of the Iraq-Iran Conflict*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 44-45.

¹¹⁴ Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations 1968-1988*, 45.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 28.

¹¹⁶ CIA, "Recent Trends..."3.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 4.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 6.

¹¹⁹ Artemy Kalinovsky, "The Soviet Union and the Iran-Iraq War" in *The Iran-Iraq War: New International Perspectives* edited by Nigel Ashton and Bryan R. Gibson. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 233.

While it impacted other parts of the Third World, the Sino-Soviet split does not seem to have been a huge factor in Iraq. In June 1971, Iraq embraced direct trade with China and the two nations signed a bilateral agreement.¹²⁰ China not only had its own interests in garnering hard currency for its modernization projects at home, but it also sought to decrease superpower influence in Iraq, as the Sino-Soviet split was already underway.¹²¹ By the 1960s, despite their split, both Moscow and Beijing had produced ideological concepts that supported forming alliances with bourgeois democratic forces.¹²² Importantly, this was not the only such split in the Third World; Faleh Jabbar pointed to consistent structural tensions between radical nationalists like the Iraqi Ba‘th and Communist groups and the USSR.¹²³ Radical nationalists in the Third World saw overlap with Communism in practice, particularly in large state sectors, agrarian reforms, and one-party rule as similar to Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe, but the USSR still saw an ideological gap between themselves and radical nationalists.¹²⁴ This gap was present not only between the economies of Soviet satellites and radical nationalist states in the Third World, but also in their differing treatment of Communist parties as well.¹²⁵

Cooperation between the Iraqi Ba‘th and the USSR could not exist separate from tensions between the Iraqi Ba‘th and the Iraqi Communist Party. From 1968-1972, continued Iraqi Ba‘thist persecution of Iraqi Communists acted as a barrier to deeper relations. While Iraq and the USSR had lukewarm but largely cooperative relations from 1968 into the early 1970s, a friendship treaty

¹²⁰ Hafizullah Emadi, "China and Iraq: Patterns of Interaction, 1960-1992." *Economic and Political Weekly* 29, no. 53 (1994): 3316-317. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4402191>.

¹²¹ Emadi, "China and Iraq: Patterns of Interaction, 1960-1992", 3317.

¹²² Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. (New York: The New Press, 2007), 158.

¹²³ Faleh Jabbar, "The Arab Communist Parties in Search of an Identity" in *Post-Marxism and the Middle East*. (London: Saqi Books, 1997), 96.

¹²⁴ Jabbar, "The Arab Communist Parties in Search of an Identity", 96.

¹²⁵ *ibid*, 96.

between the countries was signed on April 9, 1972.¹²⁶ In hindsight this period between 1972-75 marks the high-water mark of Soviet-Iraqi relations.¹²⁷ While a relatively unknown figure at the time, Saddam Hussein, was the Iraqi representative responsible for negotiating and signing the agreement with the USSR.¹²⁸ Indeed, Hussein handled Soviet relations throughout the 1970s before becoming President.¹²⁹ This rapprochement represented by the Friendship Treaty with the Soviets likely explains why the Iraqi Ba‘th softened its approach to the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and focused its repression on the Kurds.¹³⁰ CIA intelligence estimates claim that the Soviets, for their part, were pressuring the Iraqi Communist Party to join the National Front with the Iraqi Ba‘th at this time.¹³¹ Fuad Matar, a writer who profiled Saddam Hussein, alleges that the USSR used Bulgaria as a base to try to destabilize Iraq while Hussein was still Vice President.¹³² Later in 1978, Iraqi officials claimed to have uncovered a coup in the making by Iraqi Communists in the army, backed by the USSR. Shortly after, Hussein announced to the world that Iraq would not choose sides in the Cold War purely because it had recent problems with one side or the other. “Whenever this happens,” Hussein insisted, “we remain Iraqi pure and simple.”¹³³

Such pressures effectively that international relationships with multiple outside states had decisive influence over Iraqi Ba‘thist policies toward domestic opposition groups. The Iraqi Ba‘th relationship with the USSR constrained the degree of repressive tactics it could use against the

¹²⁶ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *Revolutionary Iraq, 1968-1973: The Political Report Adopted by the Eighth Regional Congress of the Arab Ba‘th Socialist Party-Iraq*, (Baghdad: Hizb al Ba‘th, 1974), 219.

¹²⁷ Styan, *Franco-Iraqi Relations*, 137.

¹²⁸ Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009) 213; Styan, *Franco-Iraqi Relations*, 138.

¹²⁹ Fuad Matar, *The Man, The Cause, and the Future* (London: Third World Centre, 1981), 87-88. The author, a semi-official biographer of Hussein, claims that support for Hussein in the Arab world increased even more when he “assumed overall responsibility for the Party and the State.”

¹³⁰ Johan Franzén, *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism before Saddam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 177-178.

¹³¹ CIA. *Iraq under Baath Rule 1968-1976*. November 1976. CIA-RDP79T00889A000900040001-6, 17

¹³² Matar, *The Man, the Cause, the Future*, 112.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 121.

Iraqi Communists by its. In regard to the National Front between the Iraqi Ba‘th and the Iraqi Communists, others have already made this argument. This chapter will expand it, showing how it was not merely true in the early 1970s in Iraqi Kurdistan, but that the transnational dynamics from neighboring states and Cold War powers prominently shaped Iraqi Ba‘thist policies toward opposition groups until the 1991 Intifada.

Iraq and the USSR cooperated most effectively in the economic realm. An Iraqi Ba‘th Party report from early 1974 stated that “relations with the socialist countries and the Soviet Union occupy an advanced and special position in our foreign relations,” noting the recently signed treaty.¹³⁴ In 1974, the USSR was repaid in oil for its help developing the Rumaylah oilfields and construction of a pipeline to Fao, on the coast of the Persian Gulf near Basra.¹³⁵ In the aforementioned report, the Iraqi Ba‘th goes on to say that “{T}he Soviet Union and the socialist countries are closest to us of the strong and advanced countries,” and that “our revolution must therefore converge with that of the Soviet Union and socialist countries, the largest forces of the world revolution, since we are all part of the same whole.”¹³⁶ In late 1976, Iraq and the USSR finalized a multi-billion-dollar arms deal, to the consternation of Syrian President Hafez al Assad.¹³⁷ As Iraq grew more assertive in its own relations after 1975, it also began to move away from the USSR ever so slowly. This was not fast enough for Henry Kissinger, who met with then-Iraqi Foreign Minister Sa‘adun Hammadi in 1975 and offered to bring Israel to heel if Iraq would decisively break with the USSR and soften its radical stances in the region.¹³⁸ No such deal was

¹³⁴ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *Revolutionary Iraq, 1968-1973*, 219.

¹³⁵ CIA, *Iraq under Baath Rule 1968-1976*. November 1976. CIA-RDP79T00889A000900040001-6, 30.

¹³⁶ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *Revolutionary Iraq, 1968-1973*, 220.

¹³⁷ No Author, "Iraq-Soviet Arms Deal Confirmed" 12/17/1976. *Events Magazine*.

¹³⁸ Greg Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow: The Long Reach of America's Most Controversial Statesman*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2015), 124-125. Grandin doubts Kissinger's sincerity and reads the offer as a ruse.

ever struck between Iraq and the US, but a different deal between Egypt and Israel profoundly reshaped relations in the region and provoked Iraqi Ba‘thist anger.

Iraq and the Camp David Accord

On a regional level, Nasser’s death in 1970 fundamentally changed relations between Arab states and Cold War superpowers. Soviet policy in the Arab Middle East had settled on supporting Gamal Abdel Nasser, despite Egypt having a foundational role in the Non-Aligned Movement. Even after Nasser’s death, and Anwar Sadat’s turn towards economic liberalization, known as *infitah*, the USSR did not let its key ally go so quickly. In 1971, the USSR signed a friendship treaty with Egypt to build relations with Sadat, but this would not last.¹³⁹ While Sadat soon moved closer toward the US and away from Egypt’s increasingly tense relationship with the Soviets, it was Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem in November 1977 that shook the region to the core. Syria and Iraq, while hostile to each other, found themselves as the USSR’s strongest allies after Egypt fell out of favor.¹⁴⁰ Prior to this point, Egypt, the most populous Arab state, had been steadfastly against Israel, and had spearheaded multiple wars to try to defeat Israel. Sadat’s willingness to recognize Israel, travel to Jerusalem, and initiate the Egyptian-Israeli peace process was not well received by other Arab states. From a Soviet point of view, Sadat’s policy change was the final straw in breaking their relationship with Egypt, as Egypt gravitated toward the US and agreed to participate in US-brokered talks with Israel.¹⁴¹ Egypt led by Sadat had also developed a growing relationship with Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran throughout the 1970s, and the Shah cheered Sadat’s actions.¹⁴² A

¹³⁹ Robert O. Freedman, *The Middle East after the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon*. 1st ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 4.

¹⁴⁰ Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968-1988*, 154-156.

¹⁴¹ *ibid*, 154.

¹⁴² R.K. Ramazani, “The Impact of Khomeini’s Iran” in *The Middle East after the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon* edited by Robert O. Freedman (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 1986), 139.

regional realignment was taking place; Iraq's leaders saw opportunity in this crisis, and moved to position Iraq to lead the Arab World, seizing Egypt's old role. The Iraqi Ba'ath also moved in this period to take Nasser's place as the prominent Arab leader in the Non-Aligned Movement.

The realignment of power provoked by Camp David led to a confusing series of events in the short term. Iraq hosted an Arab Summit in early November 1978 to coordinate Arab actions in response to the Egyptian-Israeli peace deal.¹⁴³ In an account of the Summit published in 1981, Hussein's biographer Matar claimed the summit increased Arab support for the soon-to-be new Iraqi leader, as well as changing the minds of European leaders who were otherwise inclined to support Camp David.¹⁴⁴ The Arab League decided to cut off relations with Egypt.¹⁴⁵ Egypt found its delegations ostracized in both the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the United Nations.¹⁴⁶ Cairo's NAM delegation went to both the 1979 and 1981 summits with the sole goal of pushing back against radical Arab members and preserving Egypt's membership in good standing.¹⁴⁷ In response to Egypt's embrace of Israel, a coalition of Arab states called the "Steadfastness and Confrontation Front" was formed by the PLO, Libya, Syria, Algeria, and South Yemen (PDRY).¹⁴⁸ This new front among Arab republics proved to be a problem for Iraq's regional ambitions. Iraq sent a low-level representative to the group's summit in Tripoli and ultimately refused to join the coalition because of ongoing tensions with Syria.¹⁴⁹ In negotiations, Iraq wanted Syria and the others to reject UN resolutions 242 and 338, for Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and open its

¹⁴³ Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968-1988*, 155.

¹⁴⁴ Matar, *The Man, The Cause, and the Future*, 87. The author claims that support for Hussein in the Arab world increased even more when he "assumed overall responsibility for the Party and the State." (page 88).

¹⁴⁵ Youssef Ibrahim "Arabs Smooth Way to Resume Ties with Egypt". *New York Times*. 11/12/1987. <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/12/world/arabs-smooth-way-to-resume-ties-with-egypt.html>.

¹⁴⁶ Richard L. Jackson, *The Non-aligned, the UN, and the Superpowers* (New York: Praeger Press, 1983), 63.

¹⁴⁷ Jackson, *The Non-aligned, the UN, and the Superpowers*, 63.

¹⁴⁸ In Arabic, the coalition was known as *jabhat al-sumud wa al-tasasddi*.

¹⁴⁹ Shemesh, *Soviet-Iraqi Relations, 1968-1988*, 155.

borders to the PLO.¹⁵⁰ Iraq attempted to subdue Syria with these demands and make them toe Iraq's line on regional issues. Various parties tried to push negotiations over the conflict in different ways to different ends. Algeria tried to mediate these tensions between Syria and Iraq so as to consolidate the Steadfastness and Confrontation position.¹⁵¹ The Iraqi Ba'ath tried to coordinate hosting the Steadfastness and Confrontation summit in Baghdad, which would have placed Iraq in a more dominant position.¹⁵² This was not meant to be; Algeria hosted the summit instead when initial agreements discussed between Algeria and Iraq about the summit's location were scrapped, apparently to Baghdad's surprise.¹⁵³ The Iraqi Ba'ath could not align itself with the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front without conflict, but the party had other tricks up its sleeve. Dishon's account of the year 1980 supports this understanding of the tensions, arguing these policies were part of Iraq's attempts to seize the mantle of regional leadership but that substantive opposition to Iraqi positions coming from other Arab states, causing Iraqi efforts to hit a wall by the summer of 1979.¹⁵⁴ This would not be the last time Iraq and the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front could not reconcile their positions.

Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production wasted no time nor ink in taking on what the Iraqi Ba'ath perceived to be Egypt's treachery. From late 1975 through 1979, articles appeared prominently and consistently in the first section of the thick copies of *Afaq 'Arabiyya*. Published by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Media, *Afaq 'Arabiyya* served as an intellectual center for Iraqi Ba'athist political and cultural articles. In these pages, Iraqi Ba'athist attacks against Sadat predated his visit

¹⁵⁰ CIA "Arab States: Egyptian Reaction; Arab States: Tripoli Summit Landing" *President Carter and the Role of Intelligence in the Camp David Accords* 6 Dec 1977. FOIA: 527b88eb993294098d51774a.

¹⁵¹ CIA. "Egypt; Israel" *President Carter and the Role of Intelligence in the Camp David Accords* 27 Jan 1978. FOIA: 527b88eb993294098d517744. Algeria also brokered the Algiers Agreement between Iraq and Iran several years earlier.

¹⁵² CIA. *Iraq-Algeria Relations become Strained*. 26 May 1978. CIA-RDP05-01219R000300440071-7.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Daniel Dishon, "The Iraqi-Iranian War" *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980), 23.

to Jerusalem. Written by a variety of Ba‘thist intellectuals, these pieces and large images trashed Sadat from all angles. They depicted Sadat’s image being ripped up; another showed his image in a trash heap with the Egyptian pyramids in the distance.¹⁵⁵ They called his policy “surrender” to the “Zionist enemy” and accused him of having given up all his bargaining chips in exchange for nothing.¹⁵⁶

The manner in which domestic opposition groups undermined Ba‘thist claims to speak for all Iraqis was paralleled by Egypt and its influence on a regional level which challenged Iraqi Ba‘thist claims to speak in the name of Pan-Arabism. The regional shifts engendered by Sadat’s peace with Israel opened an opportunity for the Iraqi Ba‘th to seize the mantle of regional leadership in Pan-Arab matters. The Iraqi Ba‘th had been frustrated with the actions of fellow Arab states for some time, either out of jealousy or anger. Sadat’s actions reinforced this view and the feeling that Iraq needed to assert itself. Egypt did not support Iraqi opposition groups, but was now allied with two states that did, Israel and Iran under the Shah.¹⁵⁷ After Camp David, the Iraqi Ba‘th spoke with a “we told you so” attitude about Sadat. These regional tensions intertwined with the influence of the larger Cold War powers, the US and the USSR. Beginning in the middle of this period, Iraq asserted itself more prominently in the Non-Aligned Movement, an international policy that is key to understanding the state’s foreign policy more broadly as well as the way the Iraqi Ba‘th identified as a member of the Third World.

The Iraqi Ba‘th and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

¹⁵⁵ No Author, “image” *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, vol.4, no.8, (1979): 160.

¹⁵⁶ Hamid abd al Karim al-Zoubi, “*al-Aba‘d al-Haqiqiyya lil Nahj al-Istislami lil Sadat*”, *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* vol.3, no.11, (1978): 90-97.

¹⁵⁷ This alliance would break apart shortly after when the Shah was overthrown and replaced by Ayatollah Khomeini who wanted nothing to do with Israel or Egypt, but the Iraqi Ba‘th could not have known this.

Three days after the first Ba‘th Party Conference in 1947, one of the founding figures Michel ‘Aflaq argued that Arabs would only be harmed by aligning with either of the two Cold War powers.¹⁵⁸ Whether ‘Aflaq was speaking off-the-cuff or not, nonalignment became party policy years later. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is almost completely absent from established historiography on Iraq. This lacuna in the historiography exists despite the importance the party placed on the NAM in Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production.¹⁵⁹ This omission has misshaped the historiography of Iraq during this period, omitting key details that reframe much of what was accepted about the 1970s and 1980s. The Iraqi Ba‘thist emphasis on development, solidarity with other Third World countries, and its membership in the Non-Aligned Movement were central facets of Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse.

The roots of the NAM took shape in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955 spearheaded by Tito, Nehru and Nasser while Iraq was still under Hashemite monarchical rule.¹⁶⁰ As the name implies, these Asian and African nations refused to align themselves explicitly with either of the Cold War powers, but many still leaned toward the USSR.¹⁶¹ Iraqi history changed completely with the 1958 Revolution; Iraq joined the NAM officially in 1961, as did Egypt and Lebanon, when the movement first consolidated. In one of the largest texts in Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production to address the Non-Aligned Movement, the party notes that this period was still rife with colonial actions, including the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt and the Suez Canal, the dispatch of US

¹⁵⁸ Kamel Abu Jaber, *The Arab Ba‘th Socialist Party: History, Ideology, and Organization* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1966), 27.

¹⁵⁹ There is a page and a half about the Non-Aligned Movement in one short chapter about Saddam Hussein’s political thought- see: Peter Mansfield, “Saddam Husain’s Political Thinking: The Comparison with Nasser” in Tim Niblock *Iraq, the Contemporary State* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

¹⁶⁰ Josip Broz Tito was the President of Yugoslavia, Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India, and Gamal Abdel Nasser was the President of Egypt.

¹⁶¹ Jackson, *The Non-aligned, the UN, and the Superpowers*, viii-ix. The USSR overestimated this inclination among non-aligned Third World nations, and never successfully coaxed them into the Soviet orbit despite the dispersal of years of aid. See Mark Atwood Lawrence, “The Rise and Fall of Nonalignment” in *The Cold War in the Third World* ed. By Robert J McMahon, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 146.

troops to Lebanon in 1958, the Congo Crisis in 1960, etc.¹⁶² Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt was the primary Arab leader at the NAM, but Algeria and its war of independence against France catapulted that nation to the center of both Arab and NAM politics. These political alignments were not without their tensions, despite shared opposition to imperialism.

Nasser's role in the NAM and in Arab-African relations was not as smooth as some might expect; his rhetoric toward African states engendered uncertainty at best. Opposition came from some African leaders who perceived uncomfortably strong notes of Arab nationalism as well as condescension in Nasser's tone. Nasser came off in speeches as if it were his duty to civilize sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁶³ Adding to these tensions, Cairo had already become a center for African political exiles by the late 1950s, many of whom continued to agitate against their home states with help from the Egyptian state.¹⁶⁴ Mark Atwood Lawrence argued that the 1964 second summit in Cairo was the height of the NAM movement in terms of unity, with many new African members attending as well as Cuba representing the first Latin American state.¹⁶⁵ When the Iraqi Ba'ath became more involved in Non-Aligned politics and Arab-African solidarity years later, a complex history of relations and tensions already existed where the Iraqi Ba'ath would seek solidarity.

The Third NAM Summit in Lusaka (1970) was the first such summit to take place since the Iraqi Ba'ath returned to power. The Non-Aligned Movement lost several important leaders in the six-year period between its second summit in Cairo (1964) and the third, including Sukarno (Indonesia), Nkrumah (Ghana) and Nehru (India).¹⁶⁶ A new generation of leaders filled their

¹⁶² Bassam al-Kubba, *Iraq and the Non-Aligned Movement* (Baghdad: Dar al-Ma'mun For Translation and Publishing, 1982), 22.

¹⁶³ Victor T. Le Vine and Timothy W. Luke, *The Arab-African Connection: Political and Economic Realities* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), 2-4. One manifestation of this tension was rivalry between Nasser and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.

¹⁶⁴ Le Vine and Luke, *The Arab-African Connection*, 5. Those receiving help from Nasser came from Cameroon, Gabon, Congo/Brazzaville, the Ivory Coast and Morocco, among others.

¹⁶⁵ Atwood Lawrence, "The Rise and Fall of Nonalignment", 144-145.

¹⁶⁶ al-Kubba, *Iraq and the Non-Aligned Movement*, 30.

places, and it was in this second generation of the NAM that Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba‘th found their place.¹⁶⁷ Even in the Iraqi Ba‘thist account of the Third Summit, Iraq was not notably active.¹⁶⁸ African movements fighting for independence from the last vestiges of colonial rule, namely South Africa and Rhodesia, sought additional help from the Non-Aligned countries at the 1973 Summit in Algiers.¹⁶⁹ In early 1974, the Iraqi Ba‘th outlined their shared circumstances with other nations of “the so-called Third World of Asia, Africa, and Latin America” in an important statement released along with their 8th Regional Party Summit.¹⁷⁰ The 1974 Report emphasized that the Arab homeland extends across two continents and that it was in Iraq’s interest to have strong relations with these neighbors.¹⁷¹ The report highlighted the new relationships Iraq had developed with various African and Latin American countries, before stating that “{T}he Revolution,” a synonym in Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse for their party/movement, “has done everything to further consolidate and strengthen the world’s non-alignment movement.”¹⁷² The Iraqi Ba‘th did not limit their policy to the NAM; Iraq signed economic cooperation agreements with Kenya (1969), Central African Republic (1972), Guinea (1972), and Chad (1973) as well as receiving multiple African heads of state in Baghdad.¹⁷³ Iraq had burgeoning relations with Nigeria, Tanzania, and Senegal.¹⁷⁴ The Iraqi Ba‘th also mentioned an agreement with Somalia in this period.¹⁷⁵ Yet the party also confessed in its 1974 Report that the steps they had taken in developing

¹⁶⁷ Stability in the leadership of the countries cooperating in the NAM meant a lack of democracy domestically in those states.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 30.

¹⁶⁹ Associated Press, “Africans seek increased help from 3rd World”, *The Oregonian*, 05 September, 1973, 2.

¹⁷⁰ Hizb al Ba‘th, *Revolutionary Iraq, 1968-1973*, 227.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 228.

¹⁷² ibid.

¹⁷³ Tareq Y. Ismael, “Ideology in Iraqi Foreign Policy” in *The Iran-Iraq War: New Weapons, Old Conflicts* ed. By Tahir-Kheli, Shirin and Ayubi, Shaheen (New York: Praeger, 1983), 118.

¹⁷⁴ I‘sam Muhsin al-Jabouri, *al-‘Alaqa al-‘Arabiya al-Ifriqiya 1961-1977* (Baghdad: Dar al-Rashid Lil-Nashr, al-Jumhuriya al-Iraqiya, 1981).

¹⁷⁵ Hizb al Ba‘th, *Revolutionary Iraq, 1968-1973*, 229.

relations with the “Third World” fell short of their ambition.¹⁷⁶ It was difficult to get dozens of members to agree but for some time the NAM emphasized both support for Palestine and the end of Apartheid.¹⁷⁷ Reaching consensus on how to deal with Egypt and Camp David was much more difficult, as many African nations were disinclined to make the issue something the NAM needed to take a position on, to the consternation of many Arab states.¹⁷⁸ For its part, Israel already had a well-established diplomatic and military presence in Africa. Israel’s relationships, like an alliance with Imperial Portugal to use the Azores as a supply base and its support of the Biafra breakaway state in eastern Nigeria arguably helped sour Israel’s relations with other African states.¹⁷⁹

In the second half of the 1970s, Iraq’s participation in the NAM increased, hosting several summits, and further incorporating its membership in the NAM into domestic discourse about development. This period was arguably one where the NAM had already started to decline in status and unity, casting an interesting light on the timing of Iraq’s increased participation.¹⁸⁰ President Bakr affirmed continuing Iraqi economic assistance for African countries “to achieve final liberation from the remnants of colonialism and racist regimes,” at the Twelfth Afro-Asian Solidarity Organization meeting in Moscow on 15 September 1975.¹⁸¹ The Iraqi Ba’th also delivered on their plans to be more active in the NAM, and with the Third World more broadly. The party lists the Fourth (1973), Fifth (1976) and Sixth (1979) NAM conferences as well as a Ministerial conference in Lima (1975) as events they played a larger role in.¹⁸² Iraq was able to

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*, 228.

¹⁷⁷ John A. Graham, “The Non-Aligned Movement after the Havana Summit” *Journal of International Affairs*, vol.34, no.1, (1980): 154.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁹ Le Vine and Luke, *The Arab-African Connection*, 9-11.

¹⁸⁰ Atwood Lawrence, “The Rise and Fall of Nonalignment”, 148-149. Iraq was trying to revive Pan-Arabism once it was already on the way down and likewise joined the NAM after that movement’s heyday.

¹⁸¹ Tareq Y. Ismael, “Ideology in Iraqi Foreign Policy” in *The Iran-Iraq War: New Weapons, Old Conflicts* ed. By Tahir-Kheli, Shirin and Ayubi, Shaheen. (New York: Praeger, 1983), 120.

¹⁸² al-Kubba, *Iraq and the Non-Aligned Movement*, 68.

join the coordination committee of the NAM in 1976 (along with the PLO), as decided at the Fifth Summit in Colombo.¹⁸³ In a 1976 publication, Taha Muhiddin Maroof, the Iraqi Vice President, laid out ways for NAM member states to deal with the global recession.¹⁸⁴ He argued firmly that non-alignment is a cornerstone of Iraqi foreign policy.¹⁸⁵ This firm stand was reciprocated at the Sixth NAM Summit in Havana (1979) when Iraq was placed in charge of a series of fields for the NAM's program of action. These included raw materials, trade/transport/industry, technical cooperation/consulting, food/agriculture, the role of women in development, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.¹⁸⁶

At this same summit, the Iraqi Ba'ath also engaged directly on the question of NAM policy towards the Camp David Accords, and by extension, Palestine.¹⁸⁷ The Iraqi Ba'ath claimed success in not only isolating Sadat from the NAM because of his reconciliation with Israel, but it also saw this as preserving the NAM's policy toward Palestine, which was credited as being "the best on the international level."¹⁸⁸ Camp David caused the strengthening in Iraqi connections with African nations to stall as there was no consensus among African countries on Israel and many were not ready to isolate Egypt for Camp David.¹⁸⁹ Zaire, in particular, was mentioned as a country clearly under the influence of the West in its alignment with Israel.¹⁹⁰ While a broad consensus of OAU states had cut diplomatic ties with Israel in the wake the 1973 War, many quietly continued to

¹⁸³ *ibid*, 40.

¹⁸⁴ Taha Muhiddin Maroof, "An Assessment of the Non-Aligned Movement" *Third World Forum: Non-Aligned Movement: An Assessment by Iraq*. Colombo (Sri Lanka: Vantage Enterprises, 1976), 9-11.

¹⁸⁵ al-Kubba, *Iraq and the Non-Aligned Movement*, 12.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 72.

¹⁸⁷ Hizb al-Ba'ath, *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress*, 328-329.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 329.

¹⁸⁹ Nasrin al-Hashemi, "Ifriqiya: Siyasat 'Adm al Inhiyaz Mithl lil-Tadamun al-'Arabi al-Ifriqi" *Afaq 'Arabiyya*, vol.8, no.6, (1983): 43.

¹⁹⁰ al-Hashemi, *Ifriqiya: Siyasat 'Adm al Inhiyaz Mithl lil-Tadamun al-'Arabi al-Ifriqi*, 44.

cooperate. The Non-Aligned Movement certainly realized synergy in its international positions but its internal structures were not so synergistic.

Iraq's representative presented a working paper at the 1977 New Delhi summit about how to restructure the NAM to be more efficient.¹⁹¹ The paper proposed to establish a secretariat with a permanent headquarters that would prepare and run conferences as well as facilitate communication and coordination among members.¹⁹² The proposal was also meant to make the movement more accountable; Iraq perceived that many resolutions were adopted in NAM summits and never acted upon.¹⁹³ This restructuring did not entail cracking down on authoritarian members or pushing them to be more democratic; the NAM showed no scruples about how its members repressed dissent at home. Iraqi Ba'athist repression of the Iraqi Communists was one example of such authoritarian tendencies, with parallel issues of state repression of communist parties by NAM member states Sudan and Indonesia.¹⁹⁴

The NAM and its members blurred a standard left-to-right political divide by taking a mix of doctrinal positions shaped by their reality in the Third World. While on a global scale one would be tempted to view the NAM as a leftist phenomenon, both in its opposition to the capitalist power the US as well as its inclination toward the USSR, in practice many members violently repressed communist groups in their own countries. Prashad argues that this destruction of the Left in the Third World ushered in "the most conservative, even reactionary social classes attained dominance over the (NAM)."¹⁹⁵ The main way this was possible was through shared perceptions of international relations. The Iraqi Ba'ath spoke strongly against "imperialism and racist regimes like

¹⁹¹ Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, 163.

¹⁹² al-Kubba, *Iraq and the Non-Aligned Movement*, 78.

¹⁹³ *ibid*, 88-89.

¹⁹⁴ Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, 163.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*.

Israel and South Africa,” which they saw as forces of imperialism led by the United States. While the Iraqi Ba‘th called for self-determination, they also denounced fascist leaders like Pinochet in Chile.¹⁹⁶ From a different angle, Saddam Hussein referred to the overthrow of Allende in Chile as an example to be learned from, arguing that Chile lacked “revolutionary leadership.”¹⁹⁷ In comparison, Hussein referenced Cuba, arguing that “imperialism and reaction” have not been able to defeat that government.¹⁹⁸ Such rhetoric praising Cuba would be much harder to come by later, after the Iraqi Ba‘th grew wary of its actions on behalf of the USSR. Vijay Prashad decried the form of nationalism embraced by many in the Third World (in contrast to Communism) as a “cruel cultural nationalism that emphasized racialism, religion, and hierarchy. They took shelter in a manufactured vision of tradition as they claimed to be the representatives of authentic culture and not merely stooges of Western influence.”¹⁹⁹ The appeal of nationalism to respond to colonialism and imperialism was far too strong to be jettisoned by even Communists in many parts of the Third World.

Third-Worldism was the central node for Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse, uniting political, economic, and nationalist aspects of state messaging. In portraying Saddam Hussein as the new leader of the Third World, his biographer Iskandar gushed: “The Third World is reappearing, making itself felt once again through this tall youth from the East, from a great nation which has given mankind all known prophets.” Iskandar continued, “(H)ere is the Third World recovering its face of struggler (sic) in this Knight, not yet forty-three, who speaks profoundly... as if Tito had left him experience, Nehru his rationality, and Gamal Abdul-Nasser his Arab decisiveness, his

¹⁹⁶ Maroof, “An Assessment of the Non-Aligned Movement”, 19-21.

¹⁹⁷ Saddam Hussein, *One Common Trench or Two Opposite Ones?* (Milan: Grafis S.p.A, 1977), 44.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, 163.

leading magnetism and proud youth.”²⁰⁰ Saddam Hussein used a speech to the Sixth NAM Summit in Havana to discuss the themes of heritage and authenticity.²⁰¹ The October 1979 issue of *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* presented the Sixth Non-Aligned Summit to its readership. At this point after the Islamic Revolution in Iran but before the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, Iraqi Ba‘thists labeled the NAM in this *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* article as a movement to “deepen the unity of the struggle,” and that it had “an effective and prominent Pan-Arab (*qawmi*) role.”²⁰² In the speech he gave at the summit itself, Hussein touted the NAM as a *haraka munadhila*, or a “movement of struggle,” indicative of the movement’s desire to challenge global power relations. Hussein also emphasized the shared experiences under colonialism of NAM members and their desire to push back against its ongoing manifestations, most importantly in his mind was Zionist control over occupied Palestine.²⁰³ *Qawmiyya* and Third-Worldism were tied concretely through the Palestinian cause, a central facet of Arab Nationalism and Iraqi Ba‘thist ideology. The most tangible policy offered by Saddam Hussein in the summit speech was Iraq’s intention of providing long-term, interest-free loans to needy members of the NAM in the hopes of kick-starting their economic growth.²⁰⁴ “It would, if applied,” Hussein explained to those gathered, “solve one of the basic problems in relations between the economies of the developing countries and the economies of the industrialized developed countries, and would be a corner-stone of the new international economic order.”²⁰⁵ Iraq also suggested the development of a fund to combat the effects of inflation brought to developing nations by industrialized nations, as this inflation was argued to be a key factor harming

²⁰⁰ Amir Iskandar, *Saddam Hussein: The Fighter, the Thinker, the Man* (Paris, Fr.: Hachette Realites, 1980), 326.

²⁰¹ Saddam Hussein, *Harakat ‘Adam al-Inhiyaz, Hakatha Nafhamuha* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1980).

²⁰² No Author, “*Qimmat ‘Adm al-Inhiyaz*” *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, in vol.4, no.2 (1979).

²⁰³ Hussein, *Harakat ‘Adam al-Inhiyaz, Hakatha Nafhamuha*, 12.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 21-22; Al-Kubba, *Iraq and the Non-Aligned Movement*, 42-43. Hussein also called out other members for decisions from the Colombo summit that were never implemented.

²⁰⁵ Matar, *The Man, the Cause and the Future*, 106; Iskandar, *Saddam Hussein*, 324-325.

economic development in the Third World, irrespective of their political and economic systems.²⁰⁶ Advanced industrialized nations would be called on to contribute to the fund, as would OPEC nations. What Iraq did do, apparently, was transfer approximately \$500M to various Third World nations in Africa and Asia to offset rising oil prices.²⁰⁷ Iraq's ambition to assume the leadership of the NAM had been affirmed in 1980, when it was decided that Iraq would host the Non-Aligned Summit in 1982 in Baghdad.²⁰⁸ The decision represented the seeming success of Iraqi Ba'athist foreign policy in Africa and in the Non-Aligned Movement. Matar wrote in his 1981 hagiography of Hussein that the idea was to be put in front of the Nonaligned Conference in 1982 when Iraq was to host it, indicating that Iraq wanted to use its position of leadership there to advance the proposal.²⁰⁹ Unfortunately for all involved, events outside of Iraq's borders, first in other parts of the Third World but most importantly in Afghanistan, pushed the state to change its discourses and policies in response to a perceived Soviet threat.

Soviet Influence in the Arab Middle East and the Third World

Soviet policies toward the Third World varied under different leadership in the twentieth century. The archetypal Soviet approach to the Third World arguably found its first manifestations in Soviet policies toward Mongolia, namely collectivization, antireligious messaging, and education policies.²¹⁰ The Comintern, set up in 1919 under Lenin, was meant to gather workers parties together but under Stalin was known for leaving Communist parties abroad with little to no help, feeling that the conditions were not in place for socialism.²¹¹ Soviet help to "bourgeois

²⁰⁶ Iskandar, *Saddam Hussein*, 326.

²⁰⁷ Dawisha "Iraq: The West's Opportunity", 143. It is not clear to me if the financial assistance Dawisha describes is the same project the Iraqi Ba'ath had previously outlined.

²⁰⁸ Ofra Bengio, "Iraq" *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980), 524.

²⁰⁹ Matar, *The Man, the Cause and the Future*, 125-127

²¹⁰ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 51.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, 54-55.

nationalist” movements grew under Nikita Krushchev, but was still largely risk averse.²¹² Leonid Brezhnev continued these policies after coming to power in 1964 while taking more risk and aligning more strongly with Communist parties abroad.²¹³ The late 1970s represented the culmination of these changes under Brezhnev, with extraordinary activism in word and deed from the USSR to different situations in the Third World.

Tense regional affairs between the USSR and Iraq, among other Arab states, form the backdrop for relations in the late 1970s leading up to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan. These tensions resulted from increasing involvement of both Cold War powers in the Third World, pushing newly independent states into Cold War struggles for influence. Important factors influencing Iraqi decision-making can be traced to the influence of one or both Cold War powers- if not directly on Iraq, then on neighboring countries and/or Iraqi allies. Tensions cannot be overlooked between Iraq and other states in the third World like Iran, Syria, Egypt, and others.

The Somali invasion of Ethiopia in July 1977 was one such Cold War conflict which embodied the key tensions shaping Cold War conflicts in the Third World. The Somalis tried to catch the Ethiopians off guard by invading, but the balance of the war was shifted decisively by Soviet and Cuban intervention on behalf of Ethiopia. Somalia had a relationship with the Soviets but disregarded Soviet disapproval of its designs on Ethiopia, another Soviet client.²¹⁴ The USSR sent large quantities of arms to Ethiopia, tripling their stocks, while Cuba sent some 17,000 troops and Cuban air forces to support Ethiopia as well.²¹⁵ The success of Soviet air supplies to Ethiopia showed they could project their military power far outside their borders. For Fidel Castro, this

²¹² A.K.M Abdus Sabur, *Post-Brezhnev Soviet Policy Toward the Third World* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 1988), 24.

²¹³ Ibid, 24.

²¹⁴ CIA-RDP9700S289R000100190006-3, 7.

²¹⁵ ibid, 8.

intervention in Ethiopia as a step following his nation's successful military intervention in Angola, and likewise saw these attempts to support revolutionaries as a counterweight to "Egypt's betrayal."²¹⁶ Castro imagined that the potential loss of Ethiopia and Somalia would leave South Yemen isolated.²¹⁷ Soviet support for their allies looked ominous to the Iraqi Ba'ath; the Soviets had successfully moved large amounts of weaponry by air to intervene in a foreign conflict; would Iraq be able to stop similar designs on its territory? The least Iraq could do was be vocal; the Iraqi Ba'athist *al-Thawra* explicitly criticized the Soviets for their role in Ethiopia.²¹⁸ The same piece went a step further, asking why Soviet support for the Arabs in 1967 and 1973 was lacking.²¹⁹ Ba'athist Iraq supported the Somalis and the Eritreans in against the Soviet-backed Ethiopians. Following the USSR's increasing aggressiveness, the Iraqi Ba'ath intensified rhetoric against the Soviets to cast doubt on their intentions. Ethiopia was no exception; it represented the largest example of Soviet interventionism to date with more than seven thousand experts, both civil and military, stationed in Ethiopia.²²⁰ Moreover, as we will see later in this chapter, the Iraqi Ba'ath had already attempted to leave their own footprint in Africa by supporting socialist governments with loans. Watching the USSR and Cuba do so on a larger scale through military intervention almost completely overshadowed Iraqi Ba'athist efforts and came to threaten Iraq's allies.

A different facet of the equation influencing Iraqi decision making came from growing US arms sales to Iran and Saudi Arabia. Beginning in the mid-1970s, the Shah worked behind the scenes to attempt to pull Afghanistan away from Soviet influence.²²¹ The US actively cooperated with the Shah not only to support Kurds and foment insurgency against the Iraqi Ba'ath, but also to

²¹⁶ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 275.

²¹⁷ *ibid*, 275.

²¹⁸ Marvine Howe, "Iraq Concerned over Security in Persian Gulf" *New York Times*, January 17, 1980.

²¹⁹ *ibid*.

²²⁰ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 279.

²²¹ Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow*, 130.

arm Iran to whatever level the Shah could pay for. Given that the CIA, Iranian Savak, and Pakistani agents did their best to support Islamic fundamentalist coup attempts in 1973 and 1974, the USSR was worried about their attempts to undermine its working relationship with the Afghan government at the time.²²² Thus despite the Islamic Revolution in Iran being seen from the US angle as something out of its control and against its interests, Sunni Islamic fundamentalism had been promoted for years already by a combination of the CIA and US allies in the region to weaken an Afghan government aligned with the USSR. From the Soviet point of view, it was easy to see US influence behind these policies. The converse was also true, namely that the US was deeply troubled by Soviet support for revolutions in the Third World.²²³ Iraq, stuck in between these two powers and their attempts to out maneuver each other, was wary of both but more so of the USSR.²²⁴

The Iraqi Ba‘th had been unnerved by a series of events in the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in June 1978 which changed the balance of power there.²²⁵ In late June 1978 North Yemeni President Ahmad Hussain al-Ghashmi was killed by a bomb in a briefcase carried by a South Yemeni representative. Two days later, South Yemeni President Salim Rubayyi Ali was assassinated for his role in al-Ghashmi’s death, and was replaced by Abd al-Fattah Ismail, who had strong ties to the USSR.²²⁶ Iraq and Gulf states saw the USSR’s influence

²²² *ibid*, 130.

²²³ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 283. Indeed, Westad argues the USSR was “unaware of the profound effects their Third World policies were having on American perceptions of the future of the *détente* process.”

²²⁴ An anecdote illustrates how the Iraqi Ba‘th perceived power relations to have shifted between itself and the USSR. This chapter already discussed how the USSR’s significant economic and development aid program to Iraq in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In a 1979 meeting with the Minister of Information from Mauritius, Hussein described how in 1970 an Iraqi delegation went to the USSR to try to defer a debt of seventeen million dinars from military purchases, but that by 1978, it was the Soviets asking Iraq for \$150,000,000 in petrol to be paid for later. Yet one would be mistaken to read this confidence to mean the Iraqi Ba‘th did not feel threatened by the USSR. See Iskandar, *Saddam Hussein*, 215.

²²⁵ Francis Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*: Prepared for the United States Air Force by RAND corporation 1980, 69.

²²⁶ Bettie M Smolansky and Oles M. Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 202; Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq*, 58.

in the overthrow of Rubayyi Ali, and Iraq felt it had lost an ally in favor of a Soviet-aligned leader.²²⁷ In early 1980, top figures in the US government, namely the chairman of the National Intelligence Council, was worried that Iraq might intervene in Yemen to forestall the PDRY taking over the North, a scenario hypothesized to be the Soviet goal in the region.²²⁸ Indeed, Iraq supported Saudi Arabia in moving to the government of North Yemen from moving under the wing of the Soviets, notably Iraq gave some \$300M in aid and training to North Yemeni military forces in March of 1980.²²⁹ Later that same month, Iraq helped form a united front of groups opposed to the Soviet-backed government of South Yemen.²³⁰ Events in South Yemen came on the heels of Soviet and Cuban intervention in Ethiopia, framing events in South Yemen in the Iraqi Ba‘thist worldview. In her yearly report on events in Iraq for 1980, Ofra Bengio argues that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979 “aroused deep anxieties in Baghdad...”²³¹ Saddam Hussein spoke bluntly in an interview with Newsweek in July 1978, barely a month later, stating “[T]he Soviet Union sees its security in spreading Communism while the U.S. believes its security comes from having the world in a bourgeois system... they (the USSR) won’t be satisfied until the whole world becomes Communist.”²³²

Iraqi Ba‘thist fears of Soviet intentions stemmed from domestic issues with the Iraqi Communist opposition as well. In mid-1978, the Iraqi Ba‘th executed 21 people and sentenced another ten to prison for a failed Communist plot to overthrow the Iraqi government, testing relations with the USSR. The Iraqi Ba‘th implemented several more purges throughout 1978, and

²²⁷ Smolanksy and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 202; Fukyuama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq*, 58.

²²⁸ Richard Lehman “Memorandum for all National Intelligence Officers” CIA, Jan 18, 1980. CIA-RDP83B01027R000100180019-8.

²²⁹ Adeed Dawisha, “Iraq: The West’s Opportunity” *Foreign Policy* (Winter 1980-1981) no.41, 137-138

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Bengio, “Iraq”, 524.

²³² Roland Flamini, “Saddam Hussein in 1978: interview” United Press International. web. <https://www.upi.com/Saddam-Hussein-in-1978-interview/86931032023250/>

fleeing members of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) caused an international kerfuffle of sorts. Many Iraqi Communists fled to the USSR, but one ICP member who fled to South Yemen was killed there by Iraqi agents. His death was part of causing relations between Iraq and South Yemen to collapse.²³³ In May 1979, Saddam Hussein expressed this anxiety toward Soviet encroachment:

*We must draw our weapons against any foreigner ... who violates our sovereignty; we must not differentiate in this between a progressive and a non-progressive; a Zionist or a Frenchman or a Soviet citizen or an American. Regardless of the relationship of friendship that connects us on the official level, we cannot allow the Soviet Union, which is a friend of Iraq, to occupy the land of the Saudis, because Saudi Arabia does not lie outside of the Arab map.*²³⁴

Saddam Hussein tried to parlay a higher profile role in the NAM with his regional ambitions. Indeed, Hussein was clear about his intentions at the time, stating that "...we want Iraq to play a leading role in the area and especially in the Arab homeland. We want Iraq to play a leading role in the consolidation of anti-imperialist policies at the international level."²³⁵ In the 1982 Ninth Regional Congress Report, the Iraqi Ba'ath emphasized this expanded role in the NAM as a deliberate policy decision.²³⁶ In beginning this push, Iraq hosted a NAM summit on women's rights and development in Baghdad in 1979, and produced a large amount of media and cultural production around this time trumpeting its role in the NAM more broadly.²³⁷

A chain of events outside of Iraq were magnified through the prism of the NAM in 1979 and caused striking changes in Iraq. In years leading up to this, Cuba under Castro's leadership came to be a strong leader in the Non-Aligned Movement. Cuba's interventions in Angola (1975) and Ethiopia (1978) with Soviet backing are exemplary of this growing role and power. As

²³³ Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 59.

²³⁴ Smolansky and Smolansky, *The USSR and Iraq*, 203.

²³⁵ Eberhard Kienle, *Ba'ath v. Ba'ath: The Conflict between Syria and Iraq, 1968-1989* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 94.

²³⁶ Hizb al-Ba'ath, *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress*, 334.

²³⁷ Hussein, *Harakat 'Adam al-Inhiyaz, Hakatha Nafhamuha*, 27.

mentioned above, Havana hosted the 1979 NAM summit, but with significant financial support from the USSR to do so.²³⁸ This was controversial among many NAM members because Cuba was perceived to be explicitly aligned with the USSR, clearly not implementing nonalignment in practice. Cuba even moved to have the NAM recognize the USSR as a “natural ally” of the movement at the Havana Conference.²³⁹ Cuba’s leadership became still more controversial with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, as Cuban leadership refused to condemn the invasion and took the USSR’s side, infuriating other NAM members.²⁴⁰ A split developed inside the movement, with one side condemning Soviet actions and the other defending them.²⁴¹ Those defending the USSR insisted on adding language critical of the US in response to language critical of the USSR on Afghanistan. While this split was sometimes portrayed as one between “moderates” and “radicals” inside the NAM, Iraq did not easily fit on either side regarding all divisive issues. Iraq was certainly against softening language critical of Egypt on Camp David, though “moderates” were successful in stifling this language in NAM statements. On the other hand, “radicals” like Cuba were generally closer to the USSR, seeking to defend it from denunciation over Afghanistan, a position Iraq did not take. In sum, Iraq struggled to align itself completely with the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front and it likewise found itself with the “moderates” inside the NAM on some issues and the “radicals” regarding others. These splits did not heal and manifested themselves again later during the 1980s.

The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and its impact on Iraq

²³⁸ Jackson, *The Non-aligned, the UN, and the Superpowers*, 66-69.

²³⁹ Michael J. Berlin “Nonaligned Policy Paper at UN Creates Radical, Moderate Split” *The Washington Post* October 2, 1981.

²⁴⁰ Jackson, *The Non-aligned, the UN, and the Superpowers*, 66-69.

²⁴¹ Michael J. Berlin “Nonaligned Policy Paper at UN Creates Radical, Moderate Split” *The Washington Post* October 2, 1981.

The chapter so far has detailed a complex series of events which were part of the deterioration of relations between the USSR and Iraq in the late 1970s. Upheaval in Afghanistan built on these trends but was in no way only about Iraq, Afghanistan, and the USSR. In mid-1978, a coup overthrew Mohammad Daoud Khan in Afghanistan, bringing Communists to power. Soviet policy makers at the time were willing to deal with Daoud, a secular modernizer in the mold of the Shah, despite the fact he was not ideologically aligned with them and despite there being a Communist Party in Afghanistan at the time. Soviet influence in Afghanistan was not new; the USSR had been involved in aiding Afghanistan for decades, all the way back to the 1920s. The USSR saw this policy as a way of having a stable and predictable government on their southern border.²⁴² Long-term involvement in Afghanistan was also a means for the USSR to minimize the influence of other strong states in the area, namely Iran and Pakistan, both of which were aligned with the US.²⁴³

Daoud faced similar challenges to those faced by the Iraqi Ba‘th, with urban-based Communist and Islamist movements challenging his government.²⁴⁴ Daoud used repression to attempt to keep opposition groups at bay, much like the Iraqi Ba‘th. The Soviets, for their part, told their Communist allies they expected them to find a balance with Daoud but events spiraled out of Soviet control.²⁴⁵ To the surprise of the Soviets, a coup by Afghan Communists on 27 April 1978 unseated Daoud, although the coup only prolonged instability rather than settling it. Communist infighting dogged the new government and a rising Islamist movement came to a head in the Herat Rebellion. Groups of Islamist fighters inspired by the successful revolution in Iran challenged the split Communist Party that had replaced Daoud. The USSR saw this as the

²⁴² *Westad, The Global Cold War*, 300.

²⁴³ *Ibid*, 300.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁴⁵ *ibid*, 302.

beginning of its own version of the domino theory, in which one country would tip to Islamist leaders followed by another, and another.²⁴⁶ Acting on this fear, the USSR invaded Afghanistan and overthrew Hafizullah Amin in late 1979, replacing him with their ally, Babrak Karmal. Powers around the world were nervous upon seeing the Soviet tanks traverse a southern boundary that had not been crossed since the end of WWII.²⁴⁷ The invasion was roundly criticized and many wondered what Soviet leaders were thinking. Archival records showed that the Politburo was staunchly opposed to the idea of invading Afghanistan not even one year prior.²⁴⁸ Soviet intervention in both Ethiopia and South Yemen set the stage for a more explicit intervention on behalf of a Communist ally by the USSR. Indeed, the Iraqi Ba‘th would explicitly cite events in South Yemen as a precedent for Soviet behavior in the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan.²⁴⁹

With the tension building over the last several years, the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan apparently unsettled Saddam Hussein deeply. He asserted as much in a speech a few days into 1980, stating that foreign intervention in Afghanistan was “erroneous behavior,” a serious phenomenon that could not be justified.²⁵⁰ Iraq’s Foreign Minister, Sa‘adun Hammadi, declared that “the motives of the Russians (sic) are both ideological and political,” and that they had “no right to interfere in our internal affairs in any way.” “Unlike Afghanistan,” he added for emphasis, “Iraq will not accept any possible help from Soviet troops.”²⁵¹ Hussein used a different speech at the Symposium for Arab-European Dialogue for Journalists to highlight Iraq’s postcolonial

²⁴⁶ Gilbert Achcar, *Eastern Cauldron: Islam, Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq in a Marxist Mirror*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004), 26.

²⁴⁷ Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 32.

²⁴⁸ James D.J. Brown, “Oil Fueled? The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan” *Post-Soviet Affairs* vol. 29, no.1 (2013): 57.

²⁴⁹ Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq since 1968*, 58

²⁵⁰ FBIS MEA 1/7/80 and 1/8/80 cited in Francis Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq since 1968*: Prepared for the United States Air Force by RAND corporation, July 1980, 69-70.

²⁵¹ Ofra Bengio, “Iraq” *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980), 524.

position, indeed that of the entire Arab World. On February 6, 1980, just two days before the *I'lan al-Qawmi*, Hussein demanded that 'Europeans', a collective term he used throughout his speech, reckon with their colonial past and the ongoing issues in Palestine with Zionism.²⁵² Saddam Hussein repeatedly emphasized that Iraq was a small country, but that as part of a larger Arab *Umma* it was not alone. "It has been told to us, and indeed we've said it ourselves," Hussein told the gathered journalists, "that in our world today a small country like Iraq is not allowed to be independent."²⁵³ The speech repeatedly returned to the commitment of the Iraqi Ba'ath to the Arab *Umma* and its search for justice. Indeed, the speech was titled "Our Struggle on Behalf of the Arabs and Humanity."²⁵⁴

The response of the Iraqi Ba'ath to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan triggered changes that would reverberate for decades. Saddam Hussein gave a speech that came to be called the *I'lan al-Qawmi* in February of 1980.²⁵⁵ The *I'lan al-Qawmi* laid out an approach to international relations for Arab states to answer superpower encroachment. Saddam Hussein organized eight points that made up the structure of this approach. Arab states were to avoid all armed conflict between themselves, and were to promise to support one another in the situation of one being invaded. All Arab states were called upon to remain non-aligned in the Cold War and to come together explicitly under the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The Iraqi Ba'ath had already positioned themselves to lead the NAM, so the call likewise implied Iraqi leadership of the Arab World. This was the most tangible policy to-date linking Arab Nationalism and Third Worldism through Iraqi attempts to lead the Non-Aligned Movement. This action under the auspices of the

²⁵² Saddam Hussein, *Nidhalna min ajl al-'Arab wa al-Insaniyya*, (Baghdad: Dar al-Huriyya, 1980).

²⁵³ Hussein, *Nidhalna min ajl al-'Arab wa al-Insaniyya*, 26.

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵⁵ Saddam Hussein, *I'lan al-Qawmi al-Asda' wa Afaq* (Baghdad: Wizarat al-Thaqafa wa al-'Ilam Daira al-I'lam al-Dakhli al-'Ama, 1980).

Non-Aligned Movement represented the culmination of actions that began less than a decade earlier when the Iraqi Ba‘th moved to stake a bigger position for itself in the Non-Aligned Movement. War between Iraq and Iran, two NAM members, strained the movement already in decline.

These statements were merely a prelude of what was to come. In classified cables, CIA analysts attributed the timing of the Iraqi Ba‘th in releasing the crucial *I‘lan al Qawmi* in early 1980 as a reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.²⁵⁶ The Christian Science Monitor quoted unnamed Arab diplomats who understood the *I‘lan al Qawmi* to be clearly anti-Soviet, not directed at both sides of the Cold War.²⁵⁷ Temko’s write-up of the charter even went so far to argue that Iraq’s anti-Soviet stance was actually a boon to US policy in the region.²⁵⁸ Moreover, the timing of the *I‘lan al Qawmi* and the content of the speech both independently support the conclusion that it was a response to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan. The Soviets had successfully projected their military might into Ethiopia not even three years prior; doing so in Iraq was a task the Soviets could likely manage. The Soviets had moved closer to the Iraqi Ba‘th after frustration with the Syrian intervention in Lebanon, but Iraq voted at the UN to condemn Soviet actions in Afghanistan and the Soviets switched back to supporting the Syrian Ba‘th, who abstained from the UN vote.²⁵⁹ These tensions from Soviet actions and those of their proxies alarmed the Iraqi Ba‘th and events

²⁵⁶ CIA. *Iraq’s Pan-Arab Charter*. 6 March 1980. CIA-RDP85T00287R000100550002-1; Moss Helms, 1980, 78. This was called “The Pan-Arab Charter” by the CIA, its literal title translates to “The Pan-Arab Announcement.” Phebe Marr came closest to this reading of the history in her 2011 work. She notes the importance of the *I‘lan al-Qawmi* (166), and mentions Iraqi Ba‘th worries about a Communist coup, but she does not tie them to the Soviet Invasion. Finally she talked briefly about Iraq becoming active in the Non-Aligned Movement, but she did not connect them, and thus while she correctly ties the *I‘lan al-Qawmi* to “Iraq’s new ideological stand,” (167) the link policy inspired by Communists bleeding over into the Iran-Iraq War is missing. The one researcher who did make the connections between the *I‘lan al-Qawmi* and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan was Francis Fukuyama in a little-acknowledged RAND policy note about Soviet-Iraqi relations published in July 1980. As this was before the war broke out between Iran and Iraq, this observation was largely ignored and never tied to the Non-Aligned Movement or the introduction of *Shu‘ubiyya* discourse.

²⁵⁷ Ned Temko, “Surprise Iraq Plan may help US in the Middle East” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 15, 1980.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 71.

in Afghanistan pushed Iraq toward substantive action. In a semi-official biography released shortly after the release of the *I‘lan al-Qawmi*, the Charter plays a key role in the author’s account of events in Iraq. Fuad Matar, the biographer, states bluntly that “(T)he Charter was proposed after the Soviet role in Afghanistan, which President Saddam Hussein regarded as more of an occupation than as assistance to a revolutionary regime.” The biographer acknowledges that many in the Arab World understood the Charter’s timing to mean it was primarily aimed at the USSR, and Hussein’s answers to Matar emphasized that Arab nations allowing Soviet bases on their soil was no better than allowing US bases.²⁶⁰ Where Hussein promised that the *I‘lan al Qawmi* did not seek to replace the Arab League Charter, Matar argued the *I‘lan al Qawmi* was superior because it provided for binding commitments and repercussions for breaking those commitments.²⁶¹ Also according to Matar, “Saddam Hussein remains unconvinced that the United States can defend any country...thus the regimes that had depended on American protection would soon find that the proposed Charter would be a better guarantee.”²⁶² The Iraqi Ba‘th Party directly addressed the issue in a March 25, 1980 meeting of the “National Popular Conference” to discuss the *I‘lan al Qawmi*, receiving Saddam Hussein’s approval. In the Iraqi Ba‘thist statement, the Party presented that:

(T)here are those who link the timing of the Declaration with the Soviet Union’s intervention in Afghanistan. We have not lessened our criticism of this intervention and we still stand against intervention of this kind in any other place it might happen; but the United States’ exploitation of this intervention is equally dangerous, as is its search for military bases in the Arab world. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan has aggravated this dangerous condition and has led to increased international conflict over resources and

²⁶⁰ Matar, *The Man, The Cause, and the Future*, 94-95. Essentially, Matar raises the claim that the Charter was a directed at the USSR, and then does not refute it. Instead various statements in his work all passively support the claim and none reject it.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 97.

²⁶² Ibid, 95. Note that Matar refers to the *I‘lan al Qawmi* as “the Charter.”

strategic positions involving the Arab nation and exposing it to external threats...

Response by other Arab states to the *I'lan al-Qawmi* was initially positive. King Hussein of Jordan spoke with Saddam Hussein by phone to support the principles of the charter.²⁶³ Kuwait was one of the first Arab countries to voice its approval, along with Jordan.²⁶⁴ Bahrain and Libya both expressed their support, as did the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen).²⁶⁵ By March 4, twelve Arab states had spoken out to support Iraq's charter, while Syria, the PDRY, Djibouti, Somalia, Oman, and Lebanon remaining as the states which did not support the charter.²⁶⁶ As of March 10, Syria expressed uncertainty about agreeing to the declaration, stating it offered nothing new.²⁶⁷ Matar emphasized that Saudi Arabia responded very positively to the Charter and was not put off by Hussein's "progressive" political positions that were very different from those of the Saudi Monarchy. Saudi King Khalid bin Abdel Aziz was confident that Arab states would adopt the Charter in the interests of "the Arab and Islamic nation."²⁶⁸ Notably, Andreas Papandreu, the head of the Greek Socialist Movement at that time received the *I'lan al Qawmi* positively, stating that the principles of the Declaration could extend beyond the Arab world to "the Mediterranean and to the non-aligned nations, and to the progressive and socialist parties and movements around the Mediterranean basin, of which our party is one."²⁶⁹

While the text of the *I'lan al Qawmi* itself was limited to claims about the present, Saddam Hussein explicitly mobilized Iraqi historical memory in his introduction to the *I'lan al-Qawmi* in an attempt to marginalize the Iraqi Communists. Hussein began the speech by recalling the coup

²⁶³ "Reaction to Saddam Husayn's Pan Arab Declaration" *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* February 12, 1980.

²⁶⁴ Ned Temko "Surprise Iraq plan may help US in Middle East" *Christian Science Monitor*, February 15, 1980.

²⁶⁵ "Saddam Husayn's Pan Arab Declaration" *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, February 17, 1980.

²⁶⁶ "Summit Conference on Pan Arab Charter" *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, March 5, 1980.

²⁶⁷ "Saddam Husayn's Pan Arab Charter" *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, March 10, 1980.

²⁶⁸ Matar, *The Man, The Cause, and the Future*, 94.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 98.

that first brought the Ba‘th to power in Iraq, February 8, 1963. This date marked the seventeenth anniversary of the revolution in which Abdul Karim Qasim was overthrown and killed.²⁷⁰ He insisted on the need to renew and affirm the specific nationalism (*wataniyya*) and Arabism (*qawmiyya*) of Iraq, clearly demonstrative of his position of blending the two.²⁷¹ Hussein’s speech attacked the Iraqi Communists and their understandings of freedom and democracy, painting them as being ignorant of Iraqi history, culminating in rhetorically asking “...so how would it be if they were in power?”²⁷² Not even a full year into his period of sole power, Hussein felt it necessary to address and dismiss the idea that Iraqi Communists could or should govern Iraq. Iraq could not denounce the USSR in too stringent of terms; Iraq remained dependent on Soviet arms sales.²⁷³ Shortly after the announcement of the *I‘lan al Qawmi*, an event marking the eight-year anniversary of the Friendship Treaty between Iraq and the USSR went ahead as planned.²⁷⁴ Instead, Hussein drew a direct link between the Qasim government which preceded the Ba‘th in Iraq and the forces of “hateful atheist *shu‘ubiyya*.”²⁷⁵ This quote from Hussein’s introduction before the *I‘lan al Qawmi* best captures how Saddam Hussein tied his opponents to the political violence in the country:

*So the shu‘ubiyun gathered under the cover of Abdul Karim Qasim, under the shameful brigade of the Iraqi Communists. They transformed Iraq into a wide river of blood, and they wanted to isolate Iraq from the Arab Umma and from the Arab struggle, just as they wanted to isolate Iraq and cut its historical roots... they wanted to blow up the bridges between Arabs and Kurds, between them in the shared, majestic history.... They wanted to create a monstrous regime with no honorable connection between qawmiyya and wataniyya ...*²⁷⁶

²⁷⁰ Saddam Hussein, *al-I‘lan al-Qawmi: Istijabat li-Duwa‘I al-Masu‘liya al-Qawmiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1980), 5.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 5-6.

²⁷² Ibid, 13.

²⁷³ Ofra Bengio, “Iraq” *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980), 525.

²⁷⁴ Matar, *The Man, The Cause, The Future*, 122.

²⁷⁵ Hussein, *al-I‘lan al-Qawmi: Istijabat...* 9.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 10.

The Iraqi Ba‘th widely disseminated copies of the *I‘lan al Qawmi* in pamphlet form as they often did with Saddam Hussein’s speeches. The Party also followed up with a prominent article in the Ba‘thist intellectual monthly *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*. The piece looked at the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan through a lens of changing international dynamics throughout the 20th century, but did not contain the explicit condemnations voiced in *al-Thawra*.²⁷⁷ The Soviets responded to the thrust of the Iraqi Ba‘thist rhetoric in their Arabic language broadcasts in early February 1980 by accusing the Iraqi Ba‘th of deviation from progressive values.²⁷⁸ While these slights from both sides in the media were directed internationally, the divisive rhetoric in the *I‘lan al Qawmi* was for domestic Iraqi consumption.²⁷⁹

The *I‘lan al Qawmi* heralded the change in discourse that this chapter centrally investigates. While others have argued that no such shift took place, the Non-Aligned Movement likewise was central to this pivot, as we saw earlier that the Iraqi Ba‘th was attempting to draw a key connection between Pan-Arabism and the NAM with shared policy toward Palestine centrally linking them. As part of this policy, Saddam Hussein sought to unite Arabs under the NAM, trying his best to keep other Arab states out of the orbits of both Cold War powers.²⁸⁰ Notably, Iraq claimed in a 1982 publication on the subject that it did its best to keep Arab differences out of the NAM conferences and to handle them “among the Arab group itself.”²⁸¹ Iraq wanted Arab powers working together, nonaligned, but did not want their internal issues dealt with through the NAM. Saddam Hussein wanted to hedge against any possible repeat of the Afghan precedent in Iraq

²⁷⁷ No Author, “Matha Yantathar al-Itihad al-Sufiyeti wa al-‘Alim min Nataij Ba‘d al-Tadakhkhul fi Afghanistan?” *Afaq Arabiyya* vol.5, no.6, (February 1980): 6-19.

²⁷⁸ Fukuyama, *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*, 70

²⁷⁹ A deeper investigation of this rhetoric will come in chapter five that will look at the Iraqi Ba‘thist approach to political and ethnic minority groups.

²⁸⁰ CIA. *Iraq’s Pan-Arab Charter*. 10 March 1980. CIA-RDP85T00287R000100660001-0

²⁸¹ Al-Kubba, *Iraq and the Non-Aligned Movement*, 61.

through a strong Arab alliance, with him at its helm, that would deter the Soviets from ever intervening to support the Iraqi Communist Party against him. The Steadfastness and Confrontation Front, previously shown to be at odds with the Iraqi Ba‘th despite their substantively very similar foreign policy positions toward Sadat’s Egypt and Israel, refused to take Iraq’s side against Iran. Front members sided with Iran or tried to remain neutral and no Arab unity materialized. Outside of this support from politically radical Arab republics, Iran found little to no help from the rest of the Third World.²⁸²

Hussein’s fear of superpower intervention may well have been part of his decision to invade Iran. In a piece published in the *New York Times* on October 26, 1980, Marcia Wright argues as much, asserting that Hussein had invaded Iran because of a fear that Ayatollah Khomeini could not hold Iran together and that ongoing instability from the Revolution would prompt at least one of the two superpowers to invade.²⁸³ Early in the war, Saddam Hussein continued to strike notes of Iraq’s identity as a member of the so-called Third World.²⁸⁴ “For the first time in modern history,” Hussein articulated, “a Third World state has successfully fought a defensive war... without being under the umbrella of a particular military pact or the influence of a particular great power...”²⁸⁵ Hussein was not alone in making such proclamations. Indian academic B. Singh wrote the introduction to a short pamphlet about Iraq in early 1980 lauding the Iraqi Ba‘th as being “one of the leading members of the Non-Aligned Movement...making a positive contribution to the

²⁸² Daniel Dishon, “The Middle East in Perspective: A Review of 1980” *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1981), 6.

²⁸³ Marcia Wright, “Behind Iraq’s Bold Bid” *New York Times*, October 26, 1980.

²⁸⁴ In my research looking for all cultural production or speeches that addressed the issue of the Non-Aligned Movement, I have yet to locate any instances of Saddam Hussein or the Iraqi Ba‘th questioning the term “Third World” in reference to Iraq and other nations.

²⁸⁵ Saddam Hussein, *President Hussein’s Speech on National day (1981)* (Baghdad: Dar al Ma’mun for Translation and Publishing, 1981), 11.

movement.”²⁸⁶ Singh’s introduction heaps praise on the Iraqi Ba‘th, gushing about positive exchange between the two countries as emblematic of the kind of support Third World states need to provide each other.

Having reached its peak in this crucial period post-Islamic Revolution, the Iraqi Ba‘thist vision of becoming a leader in the NAM failed resultant from Iraq’s miscalculated aggression against Iran and the prolonged and draining nature of the war. The very weakness in the Non-Aligned Movement Iraq sought to address with its proposed reforms in 1977 came back to pose problems. Iraq was seen to be on track to replace Cuba in the NAM presidency in a CIA intelligence report from mid-1979, something the CIA estimated would give the “radical” members an edge inside NAM negotiations.²⁸⁷ Jackson argues that growing unease abroad with rising authoritarianism in Iraq was part of Saddam’s reasoning in seeking the prestige and recognition of being the NAM’s rotating presidency.²⁸⁸ Complicating this, however, is evidence that Iraq had apparently started calling for Baghdad to host the 1982 Summit as far back as 1976.²⁸⁹

The 1982 Nonaligned Summit was set up to be the height, until that point, of Hussein’s influence and stature in the Third World. Political independence for the Third World had been achieved by then with the collapse of Portugal’s empire in the mid 1970s, but economic independence remained a goal not yet realized. Hussein laid out some of his plans in multiple meetings with then-President of Seychelles, France Albert Rene.²⁹⁰ Hussein considered it essential to develop deeper economic, cultural, and political ties between members in the NAM, especially in the fields of science and technology. Without closing the gap between the Third World and the

²⁸⁶ Attar Chand, *The Revolutionary Arabs: A Study of the Arab Baath Socialist Movement* (Delhi, India: Homeland Publications, 1981), 5.

²⁸⁷ CIA-RDP80T00942A000900060001-9, p.iii

²⁸⁸ Jackson, *The Non-aligned, the UN, and the Superpowers*, 69.

²⁸⁹ Maroof, “An Assessment of the Non-Aligned Movement”, 13

²⁹⁰ Matar, *The Man, The Cause, and the Future*, 106. Of note, Rene was a despot who led Seychelles from 1977-2004.

Industrialized nations in this regard, independence would not truly be achieved.²⁹¹ Still flush with oil revenues, the Iraqi Ba'ath saw itself in a position to be such a leader, facilitating unity in the Arab World and the Non-Aligned Movement.

When Iraq invaded Iran, the Non-Aligned Movement did little of substance; two of its members had started a brutal war and neither faced real consequences inside the movement. A committee of NAM member states held a meeting on November 2nd in Belgrade, but were unsuccessful in their attempts to make peace.²⁹² Two weeks later, Cuba's Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca traveled to Baghdad, acting as the representative of the NAM, though it was not his first visit in attempts at mediation. He visited Iran earlier in the week, relaying Iran's demands and requests for clarification, but no settlement was reached. As the war continued, tensions mounted about the idea of Iraq hosting a NAM summit, but Saddam Hussein lobbied aggressively and expanded Iraqi foreign aid to other NAM and Arab states.²⁹³ When Iran's offensive crossed into Iraq in July 1982, Hussein insisted everything was fine but other NAM members were already moving against him. Fidel Castro moved to have other members acknowledge India's role in the NAM presidency.²⁹⁴ Iran's government, for its part, also lobbied against Iraq holding the summit.²⁹⁵ Iran initially proposed that Cuba host the summit instead, but conceded that they had never consulted Cuba about this idea.²⁹⁶ Iran also spoke cryptically about the safety of any ministers traveling to Baghdad, pointing out the death of an Algerian Minister in a plane crash on his way to mediate the Iran-Iraq War, implying that Iraq had killed him.²⁹⁷ For too many other member nations, the idea of two NAM members fighting each other while one hosted the summit

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² No Author "Group Meets in Belgrade to Seek Iran-Iraq Peace" *New York Times*. November 3, 1980, A19.

²⁹³ Jackson, *The Non-aligned, the UN, and the Superpowers*, 70.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 70.

²⁹⁵ A. W. Singham and Shirley Hune, *Non-alignment in an Age of Alignments* (London: Zed Books, 1986), 238.

²⁹⁶ Singham et al, *Non-alignment in an Age of Alignments*, 238.

²⁹⁷ *ibid*, 238.

was just unacceptable. Despite all of Saddam's efforts, the Baghdad Summit of 1982 became the New Delhi Summit. At the time of publication of Matar's semi-official biography of Hussein in 1981, Matar claimed that Hussein planned to move the entire NAM to vote on accepting the provisions of the *I'lan al Qawmi* when Iraq was to host the NAM Summit in August of 1982.²⁹⁸ Such a move to internationalize the *I'lan al Qawmi* beyond the borders of the Arab world never materialized. This was a huge setback for Saddam Hussein's regional aspirations and a clear message from outside that Iraq's foreign relations with others could not remain untouched by its ongoing war with Iran. Iran seems to have pushed for this knowing that Iraq hosting the summit would be a large boost for its rival's international credibility, and deliberately sought to undermine it. In this, Iran succeeded. The tensions between Iran and Iraq continued at the 1986 Non-Aligned Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe. Officials struggled to keep the two delegations separate, as each reportedly arrived with weapons that were confiscated by Zimbabwean authorities upon arrival.²⁹⁹ During the summit itself, Iranian President Ali Khamenei demanded that Iraq be ousted from the movement, but live television coverage of his speech was interrupted without explanation.³⁰⁰ The NAM took steps in the beginning to quell the war, but ultimately would not take sides nor punish either member. By the end, the movement could merely hope for peace between Iran and Iraq, and a working paper presented to members estimated that an end to the war would strengthen the NAM as a whole.³⁰¹ Of course, the collapse of the USSR soon presented the movement with a different challenge of resituating itself in a unipolar world.

²⁹⁸ Matar, *The Man, The Cause and The Future*, 95.

²⁹⁹ Mike Williams, "Zimbabwe Capital Turned on its Head as Nonaligned Summit Gets Started" *Wall Street Journal, Eastern Edition*. September 3, 1986.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ No Author, "Gulf Peace will Strengthen NAM" *The Times of India*, September 9, 1988.

Iraqi Ba‘thist investment symbolically and ideologically in the Non-Aligned Movement represents a forgotten facet of Iraqi and regional history. When tied to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the *I‘lan al Qawmi* issued by Saddam Hussein in response, an alternative trajectory for Iraqi history comes into focus. Iraq’s decision to invade Iran took the two countries down a long and bloody path of war. This forgotten history resituates many important changes in Iraq itself in a Cold War context. Challenged by the Iraqi Communist Party and with relations deteriorating with the Soviet Union, the Iraqi Ba‘th moved to address the threat of superpower influence or even invasion.

The Non-Aligned Movement, for its collective part, suffered from the weaknesses that undermined other international movements and organizations. It could not balance national sovereignty with effective mechanisms of membership and coercion. The Iraqi Ba‘th attempted to address this very weakness in their 1977 proposal for reform of the movement’s structures. In this, the NAM was no better or worse than the UN or the League of Nations. Internationalism remained voluntary, largely abstract, and productive of many resolutions and statements but few, if any, actions. Postcolonial nations were no more eager than their ex-colonial counterparts to submit national sovereignty to an organization they could not control.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored Iraqi relationships with the USSR, the Non-Aligned Movement, and regional trends based on a mix of CIA documents, Iraqi Ba‘thist state cultural production, and media reports from the period in question to re-interpret this period in the nation’s history. The role of the Iraqi Ba‘th in the Non-Aligned Movement has been emphasized here as a largely forgotten yet critical facet of Iraqi history. Discursive changes for the Iraqi Ba‘th balanced Saddam

Hussein's desire to win the battle of ideas against opposition groups with pragmatic, instrumental goals. Iraqi Ba'athist policy and discourse on both domestic and international levels were shaped by these transnational forces. Nonalignment offered the Iraqi Ba'ath a crucial internationalist dimension that it otherwise lacked in competition against Communism and Islam. On a world scale, Arab nationalism could not appeal to broader polities but the principles of nonalignment could. Where other scholars have focused on *qawmiyya* and *wataniyya* in Iraqi Ba'athist discourse, this chapter has shown that a marked shift occurred after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and that *qawmiyya* discourse was tied to Iraqi membership in the Non-Aligned Movement to forestall a potential Soviet intervention in Iraq to oust the Iraqi Ba'ath and hoist the Iraqi Communists into power. In the *I'lan al Qawmi*, Saddam Hussein resurrected the *shu'ubiyya* discourse and directed it at the Iraqi Communist Party.³⁰² Nowhere in this speech from early 1980 do we find any mention of Iran or Shi'a, but it is replete with slander of the USSR and Iraqi Communists. The *shu'ubiyya* discourse initially chosen to deal with fears of Communism later bled into war propaganda against Iran. Finding that it was triggered, at least in part, by fears of a Soviet Invasion changes the established historiography to reinsert Iraq in Cold War dynamics in the Third World. The presence of mujahideen, many of whom were foreign fighters, grew to unprecedented levels in Afghanistan during the 1980s to fight Soviet troops there, supported by the US. This blueprint of US reaction to Soviet military intervention could have been repeated, as Saddam Hussein feared, in either Iraq or Iran. Reading Iraqi state racism alongside growing Islamic radicalism in Afghanistan paints a different picture of ideological tensions boiling into extreme violence between powers in the Third World. It is tempting from a Western point of view to understand Iraq as a US client pushed to start a war against Iran, a known antagonist of the US. This reading of history does not align with

³⁰² The *shu'ubiyya* discourse will be explored in depth chapter five about Iraqi Ba'athist discourse toward political and ethnic minorities.

the available evidence; Iraq had no relationship of any kind with the US in the entire second half of the 1970s and the first few years of war between Iran and Iraq. There was no functioning US embassy in Iraq for more than fifteen years after Iraq cut relations during the Six Day War.³⁰³ Only in late 1982 and moving into 1983 did Iraq and the US truly move closer and resume normal diplomatic relations.³⁰⁴ Tim Weiner, in his history of the CIA, *Legacy of Ashes*, describes US intelligence about Iraq in the 1980s as woefully out of touch. The US never succeeded in getting informants inside Iraq's state, and was reliant on informants who were diplomats and trade officials abroad.³⁰⁵

One can now see a trajectory across the first decade of Iraqi Ba'ath rule in which the relationship with the USSR grows until the Algiers Accord, and deteriorates progressively from that point on, culminating in Saddam Hussein's fears that the USSR might intervene in Iraq to hoist the Iraqi Communists into power. It is the most important example of a phenomenon this chapter has demonstrated to be present at various points since 1968, in which the Iraqi Ba'ath made decisions about how to deal with domestic opposition largely influenced by shifting international relations with countries backing those opposition groups.

³⁰³ Joyce Battle "National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book no.82" *National Security Archive*, February 25, 2003, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB82/>

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*

³⁰⁵ Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2007), 492.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERACY

Iraq's place in the Third World with one foot stepping forward was reflected in state attempts at development and modernization in the 1970s consistent with other postcolonial states. The developmentalist ethos of the Iraqi Ba'ath was captured well in two different glossy books with color photos from 1978. The first, *Al- 'Iraq: 'Ashira Sanawat min al- 'Ita' al-Thawri*, celebrated the first ten years of Iraqi Ba'athist rule, highlighting growth and development in different sectors of Iraqi government and society.³⁰⁶ While written in Arabic, the text was published in Switzerland and printed in Milan for distribution abroad. The images featured glimpses of Iraqi society showcasing Iraqi women and men at work, in public space, and in schools. The text emphasized the achievements of the Iraqi Ba'ath in developing education, agriculture, and health among others. Universal free education for Iraqis and centers to battle illiteracy were listed among the achievements pushing Iraq forward. It is hard to imagine such an optimistic text could come even a few years later once the war between Iraq and Iran dragged on and the Iraqi state struggled to continue meeting its development targets, but in the late 1970s, such optimism was fitting. The second text, *al Insan Hadaf al Thawra, ma qadammatahu thawrat al sha'b li-jamahihiha khilal al sanwat al 'ashir, 1968-1978*, was produced directly by the Ministry of Planning, featuring more statistics and graphs about trade, population growth, electrification, and education alongside color images.³⁰⁷ The second text was published and distributed from Beirut, despite clearly being the product of the Iraqi Ministry of Planning. In conjunction with the images and data of these texts

³⁰⁶ No Author, *al- 'Iraq 'ashira sanawat min al- 'ita' al-thawri* (Lausanne: Sartec, 1978). Lest there be any doubt this was a publication from the Iraqi Ba'ath, this is the same European publisher the Iraqi Ba'ath used on other occasions.

³⁰⁷ No Author, *al Insan Hadaf al Thawra, ma qadammatahu thawrat al sha'b li-jamahihiha khilal al sanwat al 'ashir 1968-1978*, (Beirut: al-mu'assisa al'arabiyya lil-dirasat wa al nashr, 1978). As both texts rely on data straight from the state, this chapter treats the information they contain as claims and as part of state cultural production, as the data cannot be easily verified.

was a quote from Saddam Hussein, used in the introduction to a different text published by the Iraqi Ba‘th in the mid-1980s. When asked at a conference of journalists about the “greatest of achievements of the revolution,” Hussein answered “...it is surely the new Iraqi person.”³⁰⁸

All three of these examples embody the policies and rhetoric of the Iraqi Ba‘th aimed at full development of the nation to compete socially and economically with the rest of the world. Iraq needed to expand the state apparatus to rural areas and the Iraqi Ba‘th Party sought to shape political subjectivities in line with their “revolution.” Schools, laws, and institutions went a long way in shaping Iraqis but many adults were not functionally literate. To develop economically and disseminate the cultural messages it wanted Iraqis to embrace, the Iraqi Ba‘th needed mass mobilization to educate everyone, especially peasants and women, bringing them closer to the state and closer to being the political subjects the Iraqi Ba‘th wanted them to be. Before this dissertation explores the content of state cultural production in more depth, this chapter must measure tangible developmentalist policies as best as is possible with available data.

Literacy and its promotion were not envisaged as a two-way street by the Iraqi Ba‘th. Other states in different parts of the world worried that too much education would give citizens the tools to challenge the state, exposing them to more information and critiques of state policy. For example, Paulo Freire in Brazil fought to educate peasants and teach them how to read as a means of undermining Brazil’s military dictatorship. Not unlike Brazil’s military state in this example, the Iraqi Ba‘th shared worries about the ideas of opposition groups, but this did not stop the Party from implementing the Literacy campaign. Saddam Hussein might have feared other intellectual currents and their ability to undermine his power, but the effectiveness of the efforts his

³⁰⁸ Hamid Ahmad al Ward, *al-Insan wa Bina’ al-Mujtama’ : fi fikr wa tajriba al hizb al-ba‘th al-‘arabi al-ishtiraki* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1984), 9.

government took can and should be questioned. Put most directly, the Iraqi Ba‘th was worried about the power of ideas.

To begin to address this fear, the Political Guidance branch of the Iraqi Ba‘th monitored publications, seized books from markets, and followed dissidents.³⁰⁹ Illiteracy was more prominent in rural areas due to weak school systems, and while urban areas had significantly higher literacy rates, illiteracy was not unknown. Many of the Iraqis who were literate and would not show up in illiteracy statistics nonetheless had trouble with advanced reading. How would reception of Iraqi government print messages be impacted overall if sizable numbers of Iraqi citizens remained illiterate or only semi-literate? What about party members? While the Party equated raising the cultural level with solidifying support from the masses, one should not assume that merely being literate would mean citizens would *accept* the messages from the state, rather there would certainly be a mix of acceptance, ambivalence, and rejection.

This chapter thus explores the question of illiteracy in Ba‘thist Iraq through a variety of primary sources. It will briefly explore parallel problems with illiteracy in other parts of the Third World during the Cold War; Iraq was not unique in struggling with illiteracy. Documents from the BRCC were the first clues found in my research indicating that illiteracy was a much larger issue than previous scholarship had accounted for. Subsequent searching of Iraqi Ba‘thist texts related to culture found numerous sections, rarely if ever the primary focus of the text, which cover the issue of illiteracy. Finally, two PhD dissertations about Iraq’s Mass Literacy Campaign were key to research for this chapter. The first was written by an Iraqi graduate student who later became an Iraqi diplomat to the UN. Sameer al-Nima’s access to the government and the campaign as it was

³⁰⁹ NIDS 1346862. The Political Guidance branch is discussed further in chapter three. This document was about removing copies of Mohammad Baqir As-Sadr’s books from library shelves and NIDS 1346888 about removing copies of a three-volume Encyclopedia of Iraq from stores and libraries. There are similar files in this box about other works to be censored and removed.

taking place allowed him a front row seat to the large-scale attempt by the Iraqi Ba‘th to eradicate illiteracy. Part dissertation, part Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production, Al-Nima’s work has proven indispensable to an understanding of this campaign. Many of the government publications he cited cannot be found online or through Interlibrary loan nor have I found them cited in any other works on this topic. His reading of these sources and empirical data about the program they contain cannot be easily verified but this PhD was defended at the University of Missouri, Columbia in 1982, a baseline of quality. All that said, al-Nima’s dissertation paints a rosy, modernizing picture of the campaign and the Iraqi Ba‘th Party and as such I categorize it above as “part Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production.”

Turki Khabbaz Birmani’s dissertation was far more quantitative and sound in its measurements than al-Nima’s work. Much more can be discerned about Birmani’s background because a copy of his curriculum vitae was included at the end of his dissertation. The CV details his work as a teacher in Baghdad from 1965-1971, before he worked his way up through the ranks of education administration in Iraq and came to train other teachers before becoming the Assistant Director schools in Babylon, Iraq.³¹⁰ His dissertation more honestly evaluates the Mass Literacy Campaign for adults by interviewing participants with a standardized questionnaire. When Birmani’s results are read alongside other evidence, the overarching picture that emerges is one of mixed results from the campaign to eradicate illiteracy by the Iraqi Ba‘th. This chapter will speak about these results not in terms of failure and success but in terms of continuity and change. BRCC records from the late 1980s at the end of the Iran-Iraq War reveal how the Iraqi Ba‘th still struggled with how to deal with illiterate party members. This is not to say gains were not made by the

³¹⁰ Turki Khabbaz Birmani, *The Impact of the Adult Educational Program on Socio-Economic Development in rural Areas of Iraq as Perceived by Citizens who participated in the Program*, University of Northern Colorado Dissertation, 1981.

campaign, indeed large scale change occurred and many Iraqis were reached by government efforts to address illiteracy.

Third World with Illiteracy in the 1970s

A wide range of nations in the Third World undertook efforts to improve literacy in the post-WWII era. Latin American nations like Brazil, Chile, and Nicaragua all experienced large-scale literacy drives in the 1960s and after.³¹¹ Iran hosted a 1975 conference of Ministers of Education to address literacy, resulting in the 1975 “Persepolis Declaration.”³¹² This was a full decade after the first such conference, also in Iran, produced the concept of “functional literacy” for economic development. “Functional literacy” as emphasized by the Persepolis Declaration was not just learning to read, write, and do math, but was also “the liberation of man and his full development.”³¹³ Furthermore, the declaration argued that education needed to act to even out class hierarchies, something that was not present in Iraqi Ba‘thist rhetoric; rather, the framing of power relations by the Iraqi Ba‘th emphasized international dimensions, largely ignoring domestic power dimensions. The EWLP (Experimental World Literacy Program) resulted after the 1975 Iran conference and incorporated eleven initial projects in countries including Algeria, Ecuador, and others to develop functional literacy in support of economic development.³¹⁴ Iran began an ambitious literacy program (*Nehzat-e Sahad Amuzi-ye Iran*) in December 1979 after the Islamic Revolution to address that nation’s ongoing issues with illiteracy.³¹⁵ At the time of the Revolution

³¹¹ Andrew Kirkendall, *Paolo Freire and the Cold War Politics of Literacy*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

³¹² International Symposium for Literacy Final Report (Persepolis, Iran, September 3-8, 1975). See <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/persepolis-declaration-literacy-1975-en.pdf>

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ H.S. Bhola, *Campaigning for Literacy: Eight National Experiences of the Twentieth Century, with a memorandum to Decision-Makers*. (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), 11-12.

³¹⁵ Golnar Mehran, “Social Implications of Literacy in Iran” *Comparative Education Review* vol. 36, no.2 (1992): 194.

in 1979, 63.5% of Iran's population above age 15 was illiterate.³¹⁶ This problem with illiteracy continued despite Reza Shah Pahvlavi's attempts to address it as part of the White Revolution. In 1972, UNESCO had awarded Iran its Krupskaya Award for these very efforts to tackle illiteracy.³¹⁷ UNESCO awarded the prize yearly from 1970-1992, it was sponsored by the USSR and named after Soviet politician Nadezhda Krupskaya. Various governmental agencies from Syria, Sudan, Egypt, Kuwait, Yemen and Iraq were all nominated for the Krupskaya Award in the 1970s, with Syria taking top honors in 1976 and Iraq taking them in 1979. Egypt, to take one example, was estimated to have 62% of its workforce illiterate in 1970, and the government sought to address this with a nationwide effort which would hopefully eliminate the issue by 1980.³¹⁸ Despite significant progress by various developing countries in the 1970s, there were still some 800 million illiterates around the world over the age of 15 at the beginning of the 1980s.³¹⁹ Countries acknowledged for efforts to fight illiteracy included nations like Togo, Argentina, India, and many others in the postcolonial world, showing a vast swath of the world struggling with these issues. As of 1994, the global scale of the problem remained largely unchanged; some 49% of the populations across the Arab World was still estimated to be illiterate, and across the world, women made up more than two out of every three illiterates.³²⁰ Even in industrialized countries with compulsory primary education, illiteracy remained a problem as these programs did not completely address the issue.³²¹ As the ongoing issues and the disproportionate number of illiterates among

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Sameer K. al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq: A Critical Analysis* unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia. 1982, 388, see footnote 9.

see also: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO_Nadezhda_K._Krupskaya_literacy_prize

³¹⁸ Malumud Ata Alla, *Arab Struggle for Economic Independence: Problems of the Third World*. (Moscow: Progress, 1974), 225.

³¹⁹ H.S. Bhola *Campaigning for Literacy*, 11-12.

³²⁰ Ludo Verhoeven, "Modeling and Promoting Functional Literacy" in *Functional Literacy: Theoretical Issues and Educational Implications* edited by Ludo Verhoeven (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), 4.

³²¹ Ibid.

women show, Iraq was not unique in the scale nor the dynamics of illiteracy the country experienced.

The ebbs and flows of different governments in Iraq and their shifting priorities throughout the 20th century did not successfully address illiteracy in society. Iraq began making efforts in the 1920s to spread education and address illiteracy. These efforts continued with measures of success through the subsequent decades, but a lack of compulsory education left many young Iraqis under-schooled, adding new illiterates to Iraqi society and undoing gains that had been achieved. A law was passed in 1940 making it obligatory for children to be in school, but the political will to enforce it was lacking and the law made little difference.³²² Much of the ability to fight illiteracy under the Iraqi Ba‘th and throughout the twentieth century more broadly came down to enforcement of compulsory education as well as child labor laws. Child labor laws, when effectively enforced, prevented families from putting their children to work, mandating that they be sent to school instead. Birmani does not directly address compulsory education as he focused on adult education instead, but his analysis of this period likewise argues that superficial efforts at addressing literacy and improving education in Iraq were not well implemented.

In 1947, Iraq had one of the largest problems with illiteracy in the Middle East. Some 76% of men and 97% of women were measured to be illiterate at that time.³²³ Concordantly, the Ba‘th party’s first manifesto in 1947 acknowledged illiteracy as an issue facing the region.³²⁴ Census records from Iraq in 1957 and 1965 indicate that the total number of illiterate citizens grew in this period, from just under 3.3 million in 1957 to 4.35 million in 1965.³²⁵ This was an institutional

³²² Sameer K. al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 195.

³²³ Ibrahim Maroun. *L’Economie Pétrolière pour l’économie de guerre permanente* (Beirut : L’Université Libanaise, section des études économiques, 1986), XIII.

³²⁴ Alya Sousa “The Eradication of Illiteracy in Iraq” in *Iraq: The Contemporary State* edited by Tim Niblock (London/ New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 102.

³²⁵ Supreme Council for the Comprehensive National Campaign for Compulsive Literacy, *The Battle of Letters in Iraq* Baghdad, 1980, 7, cited in al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 195.

failure. Khadduri cites Iraqi planning reports indicating that institutions struggled to keep up with the growth in the number of students attending public schools in the early 1960s, affecting education throughout the elementary to university spectrum.³²⁶ It was common in the Qasim era for Iraqis to submit architectural sketches as part of their applications for state housing, often put together by what Omar Dewachi calls an “*ardhahalchi*” or a “literate entrepreneur” who would fill out paperwork for fee.³²⁷ A popular television show in Iraq named *al-Artha Aalchi* (The Petition Writer) reflected the reality of this illiteracy in Iraqi society. The show reportedly centered on a person who wrote petitions for illiterate peasants and workers who wanted to bring court cases.³²⁸ The series ran through the 1960s and apparently was popular in syndication in the 1970s.³²⁹ Figures from the Iraqi Ministry of Planning published in 1970 put illiteracy at 69% for the nation as a whole, showing why such a petition writer would be needed for many.³³⁰ Illiteracy, as shown from these statistics and cultural representations, was all too common in Iraq in the Mandate period and into Iraq’s postcolonial Republican period post 1958.

The Iraqi Ba‘th seizure power in July of 1968 brought many changes but also continuities, notably for our purposes in lingering problems with illiteracy. In 1972, some 27% of public employees (386,000) in various ministries were illiterate, and by 1976 the number had grown by some 200,000 individuals but the percentage this represented had dropped to 24%.³³¹ Archival records from northern Iraq in 1974 noted that illiteracy was a major problem there among citizens

³²⁶ Majid Khadduri, *Socialist Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics since 1968* (Washington D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1978), 139-140.

³²⁷ Omar Dewachi, *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2017), 123. An Iraqi contact informs me that these informal bureaucrats are still common, and that their expertise in negotiating bureaucracy is often a key part of their service.

³²⁸ Jabbar Audah Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq: Socio Political and Cultural Study, 1946-1980* (University of Michigan, Dissertation, 1983), 121. The transliteration and translation of the title are both from Allawi.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ No Author. *al-Iṭar al-tafṣili al-mabda’i li-khiṭṭat al-tanmiyya al-qawmiyya, 1970-1974*. (Baghdad: Wizarat al-Takḥṭiṭ, 1970), 45.

³³¹ Maroun, *L’Economie Petroliere pour l’economie de guerre permanente*, XIII.

but especially among party members.³³² In 1977, illiteracy among those older than 10 was estimated at 44.5% in cities and 77% in rural areas.³³³ The problem of data quality in regards to literacy data is not easily solved; the general consistency between public sources and state archives helps solidify the conclusion that illiteracy was certainly a problem, even if we struggle to have exact data.

Regional Initiatives to Battle Illiteracy in the Arab World

In these early stages, Iraq worked through international organizations and conferences in its attempts to raise literacy rates. As early as 1964, UNESCO partnered with various Arab countries including Iraq to begin to addressing education issues across the Arab World.³³⁴ A year later the Arab League Educational and Cultural Association was created, which partnered with the already existing ARLO (Arab Literacy and Adult Education Organization). ARLO convened a conference in Alexandria (1971) to address literacy campaigns in Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, and Kuwait.³³⁵ An ARLO survey from 1975 of Arab nations (Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt, Tunisia and Libya) showed that 58% of their combined populations was illiterate.³³⁶ The ARLO study found that failure to enroll all children in schools was a primary driver of the growth of illiteracy across these nations.³³⁷ It is also noteworthy that conferences tied to women's development in Mexico in 1975 and various meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement (see chapter 1) addressed educational and literacy issues as they related to women's liberation and issues of the

³³² BRCC 01-3821-0000-0160.

³³³ Christine Moss Helms, *Iraq: Eastern Flank of the Arab World* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1984), 96-97. This urban/rural split in literacy levels parallels the problems the party had spreading its influence outside of urban areas more broadly.

³³⁴ al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 7.

³³⁵ *ibid*, 8.

³³⁶ *ibid*, 5.

³³⁷ *ibid*, 6.

postcolonial world. These regional initiatives proved opportune for the Iraqi Ba‘th to promote its vision on an international stage as well as to coordinate with other countries in planning and development.

Issues of illiteracy across Arab nations came together in 1976 when Baghdad hosted a regional conference under the joint auspices of ARLO, ALESCO (Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization) and ASFEC (UNESCO’s regional center for functional literacy).³³⁸ Baghdad’s streets were covered in promotional materials for the conference, the central slogan of which was “culture for the masses.”³³⁹ The Iraqi delegation presented an outline for dealing with illiteracy emphasizing political, social, economic, and health objectives in addition to the basic education goals.³⁴⁰ The inclusion of political goals at this relatively early stage before Saddam Hussein seized full power and before the Mass Literacy Campaign began shows us that the campaign did not get politicized part-way through as a result of another event; it was at least partially political from the outset. The conference identified numerous approaches to illiteracy considered to be inadequate and passed the three-year plan to be implemented from that point forward to eradicate illiteracy in Iraq. A subsequent ARLO/ASFEC conference in Alexandria, Egypt, is characterized by al-Nima as running with the torch lit by the Iraqi Ba‘th at the Baghdad conference.³⁴¹ A final planning conference took place in Baghdad again in December 1976, in which a template plan for addressing illiteracy across the Arab world was drawn up with heavy influence from Iraq’s approach. The Iraqi Ba‘thists considered this adoption of their proposals to be emblematic of their leadership in the Arab world.³⁴² Once the campaign was already underway,

³³⁸ *ibid.*, 9. No full explanation of the meaning of ASFEC is present in this source text nor can I find one online.

³³⁹ *ibid.*, 227.

³⁴⁰ Birmani, *The Impact of the Adult Educational Program*, 11.

³⁴¹ al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 229.

³⁴² *ibid.*, 238.

a seminar was held in Baghdad on November 24th and 25th of 1979 where progress and goals were discussed. This November 1979 seminar emphasized numeracy alongside literacy, as well as the goal that progress in adult education should help the learner develop her/his social, cultural, and economic life, while also helping them gain better values, habits, and attitudes.³⁴³ Whether or not they used the term, the Iraqi Ba‘th was emphasizing functional literacy in its approach.

Large-Scale Social Transformation begins with Literacy

The broad range of reforms implemented by the Iraqi Ba‘th post-1968 intended to reshape society and avoid the pitfalls that hamstrung the first Iraqi Ba‘th experience in power earlier in the decade. On a rhetorical level, the Iraqi Ba‘th sought economic independence, emphasized the scourge of imperialism, and a social transformation to put party ideology into practice. From the party’s origins, the Iraqi Ba‘th referred to themselves as a transformative movement (*haraka inqilabiyya*).³⁴⁴ *Inqilab* was a central part of party ideology at this time expounded in texts by Michel ‘Aflaq, Ilyas Farah and other top Ba‘thist intellectuals. The party envisioned itself in a seemingly Leninist fashion as the vanguard (*al-Talia’*) which had a special role in the realization of the *inqilab*. Among this elite group in the Party, *inqilab* was understood as being in a dialectical relationship with Arab Unity.³⁴⁵ A major facet of the desired transformation was industrialization. Iraq needed a skilled workforce to support this goal, which was intended to bolster the nation against imperialist pressure from outside.³⁴⁶ In their 1974 Political Report, the Iraqi Ba‘th called for a “great expansion in human and material investment to ensure speedy and balanced

³⁴³ Birmani, *The Impact of the Adult Educational Program*, 14.

³⁴⁴ I use “transformative” here as a translation for *inqilabiyya*, which literally means “coup-like” but is intended to reference overthrowing existing power structures and transforming society. There is an Arabic word for revolutionary, *thawriyya*, which the party does not use here, so I do not translate this as “revolutionary”.

³⁴⁵ *ibid*, 94.

³⁴⁶ Arab Ba‘th Socialist Party . *Revolutionary Iraq, 1968-1973: The Political Report Adopted by the Eighth Regional Congress of the Arab Ba‘th Socialist Party-Iraq, January 1974*. (Baghdad: al-Hizb, 1974), 67.

development in economic and cultural fields”.³⁴⁷ “The new generation,” stated the 1974 report, “must be immunized against all trends of thought that are not in harmony with the ambition of our Arab nation and its basic aims: Unity, Freedom, Socialism.”³⁴⁸ This transformation was viewed as a fundamental part of economic development Iraq shared with other postcolonial nations. In a 1975 speech delivered to the Inaugural meeting of the Union of Research Councils, Saddam Hussein described how an invigorated search for knowledge was the most positive result of the *Naksa* of 1967.³⁴⁹ Present but not entirely clear across these publications and speeches were two key ideas that Saddam Hussein later implemented with force. One was the desire to develop Iraq economically to compete on an international scale, the other was the desire of the Iraqi Ba‘th to win an intellectual battle against its competitors. The former is central to this chapter and the question of literacy, while the latter is at the center of the dissertation as a whole.

Illiteracy was a central barrier to bringing about the industrialization and broader social transformation the Iraqi Ba‘th desired. From the end of the British Mandate in Iraq, the Iraqi Ba‘th viewed the monarchical and republican periods before their seizure of power as one period in terms of political development.³⁵⁰ The second phase began after its 1968 seizure of power, while the third was the phase of socialist transformation, beginning in 1974, highlighted by radical social change and development programs as well as the issuance of the 1974 Political Report.³⁵¹ “(Iraq)”, the Ba‘th stated in their 1974 report on the first five years in power, “...had to carry out new tasks required by the new phase of revolutionary development and ensure all possible prerequisites of

³⁴⁷ Ibid, 154.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 256-257.

³⁴⁹ Saddam Hussein, “*al-itar al stratiji li-hajat al-umma ila al-‘ilm*” in *al-Thawra wa al-Tarbiyya al Wataniyya*, (first edition, July 1977- the publishing house info was obscured in the binding process),42-43.

³⁵⁰ al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 210. “Political development” is al-Nima’s choice of words in the original.

³⁵¹ Ibid, 210.

socialist transformation...”³⁵² Later in the 1974 report, Iraqi Ba‘thist goals were alternately elaborated as “...[T]o achieve a truly democratic, socialist, and integrated state which could be the model for the other states in the Arab World and the Third World.”³⁵³ At the end of May of 1978, the Iraqi state put law 92 into effect, setting up the coming Mass Literacy Campaign.³⁵⁴ In July of 1978, an article celebrating “the Revolution in its tenth year” was published in *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, and while its title was vague, the feature explicitly took up the issue of illiteracy in Iraqi society. In this public facing discussion of the topic, no mention was made of illiteracy in Party ranks, instead it began by emphasizing the “backwardness and division” that resulted from the policies of those who preceded the Iraqi Ba‘th in ruling the country.³⁵⁵ The piece built on this claim, arguing that the forces of colonialism needed people to be ignorant for its success, and that raising literacy levels was a means to get all citizens to be more aware of their surroundings. Raising the level of people’s education was likened to lifting that which blocked their vision, so they could take an active role in defining and shaping their future.³⁵⁶ In closing the article accentuated the role of the Iraqi Ba‘th in developing education after 1968, giving recognition to the BRCC, Ahmad Hasan al Bakr, and Saddam Hussein before signing off in the name of *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*.³⁵⁷ As this was July 1978, at the outset of the Mass Literacy Campaign, the Iraqi Ba‘th could only speak about what it planned to do.

Even once the campaign had already started, the rhetoric deployed by the Iraqi Ba‘th did not change significantly. An Iraqi Ba‘thist book chosen by the state for translation into English

³⁵² Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Political Report Adopted by the Eighth Regional Congress of the Arab Ba‘th Socialist Party-Iraq, January 1974*, 14-15.

³⁵³ *Ibid*, 14-15.

³⁵⁴ *Al-Jumhuriya al-Iraqiyya, Qaida al-Tashri‘at al-Iraqiyya no. 92 of 1978* [online] Available at: <http://www.iraqld.iq/LoadLawBook.aspx?page=1&SC=&BookID=23112>

³⁵⁵ Editorial Board, “*al-Thawra fi ‘Amiha al-‘Ashir*” *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*. Vol 3, no.11 (1978): 2-3.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid*. A circular logo above the text of the feature had the headshots of Bakr and Hussein pictured side by side.

from 1981 highlighted illiteracy, unemployment, and underutilization of manpower as constraints facing Iraq and other Third World nations seeking to develop economically.³⁵⁸ For the Iraqi Ba‘th, education was seen as a tool not merely to enhance the economic contributions of citizens, but a means to raise political awareness and consciousness among the populace, leading to a better understanding of socialist principles and issues.³⁵⁹ The report of the 1982 Ninth Regional Congress did not devote significant space to fighting illiteracy; in this regard illiteracy was overshadowed by issues of war against Iran, international relations, and others. Illiteracy was merely a subheading of the section on “social and cultural transformation” but the language used insisted that “(I)n our country, eradicating illiteracy is an important national task closely linked to the Party-led process of construction and freedom...it is even one of its essential pillars.”³⁶⁰

Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts at industrialization fit into a larger puzzle in which Iraq could not solely rely on oil revenues for economic development but would need to cultivate Iraqi society to develop on its own terms, not by following a western script. One can find elite and esoteric variants of these discourses in Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production, which featured multiple pieces theorizing about technology and modernity.³⁶¹ In parallel to questions of heritage discussed in the previous chapter, the Iraqi Ba‘th was wary of merely adopting western values and principles in its attempts to industrialize and develop economically. Saddam Hussein likened technology to a Trojan horse in the postcolonial period, an idea he supported by laying out a series of stages he saw in world history.³⁶² In this sense, technology would arrive from outside, seemingly as a gift which Iraq

³⁵⁸ ‘Isam Rashid Huwaish, *The Strategy of National Development in Iraq* (Baghdad: Dar al-Ma’mun for Translation and Publishing, 1981), 18.

³⁵⁹ al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 178.

³⁶⁰ Ḥizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress*, 156-157.

³⁶¹ See for example “

³⁶² Amir Iskander, *Saddam Hussein: The Fighter, the Thinker, and the Man* (Paris: Hachette Realities, 1980), 217. This is a political biography written in close cooperation with Saddam Hussein. There is even an in-depth interview the author conducted with Hussein at the end of the text. As such, its contents are taken to be more representative of Hussein’s views given his cooperation with the project. There is enough material here for an entire chapter looking

could accept without cost, when in fact technology brought changes and influences from the outside.

The first stage in Hussein's understanding of recent world history was characterized by "world imperialist capitalism" establishing a relationship with colonized countries in which the latter possessed no industry and were purely agricultural.³⁶³ A transformation marked the second stage in which a "secondary capitalism" was possible among the colonized countries to engage in limited manufacturing, "provided that they only produced consumer goods and did not set up independent means of production."³⁶⁴ The third stage saw imperialism *partially* transform itself into "international monopoly capitalism" on the back of the third scientific revolution based around technology. Productivity in the developed West leans on technological superiority while other states (in the postcolony) can only build some heavy industry but remain a step behind.³⁶⁵ Hussein's view of addressing this imbalance stressed that a developing nation must "prepare itself to co-operate with science and technology and master them thoroughly." Similarly, adoption of existing technologies developed in the West could not slip into emulation; those technologies needed to be modified considering Iraq's political, social, and economic circumstances.³⁶⁶ In a different biography written about Saddam by Fuad Matar, one chapter is entitled *The Style of the Abbasids in an Age of Technology*, encompassing the historical authenticity Hussein sought to balance with existing in the modern world.³⁶⁷ Yet for all of Saddam Hussein's rhetoric and

at how Ba'athist intellectual production dealt with this topic. For brevity, Saddam Hussein's views will be the central focus here.

³⁶³ Iskander, *Saddam Hussein: The Fighter, the Thinker, and the Man*, 218.

³⁶⁴ *ibid*, 218.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 218.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 222.

³⁶⁷ Fuad Matar, *Saddam Hussein: The Man, The Cause, and The Future*, (London: Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, 1981), 151-197. Like Iskandar's work, Matar clearly had close access to Saddam Hussein and the work includes a long transcript of an interview with Hussein, said to have been seventeen hours total over several meetings.

theorizing, no such step toward mastering technology and science could be possible without first tackling illiteracy. Seen with historical distance, one can say that no step toward tackling illiteracy could take place without a significant expansion of state capacity and infrastructure; such was Iraq's conundrum.

The program to fight illiteracy developed by the Iraqi Ba'th consisted of two main elements: the campaign to address adult illiteracy as well as the push for compulsory elementary education. From 1968-71, the state began a period of educational reform, focusing on compulsory education and on promoting literacy. The interim constitution of 1970 outlined illiteracy as an issue to be addressed.³⁶⁸ Multiple later works referenced point 27 of the interim constitution, which stipulated that the Iraqi state must fight illiteracy.³⁶⁹ Two five-year development plans were laid out in 1971 and 1976 which delineated a two-stage plan. The first phase should target the youth and the second should aim to eradicate illiteracy among the general population. To this end, Literacy Law 153 of 1971 provided for the establishment of the Supreme Literacy Board.³⁷⁰ The next year on May 23, 1972, the board itself was established under the Iraqi Ministry of Education.³⁷¹ The board formed local committees and supposedly selected skilled personnel to handle implementation of literacy campaigns.³⁷² In May 1976, the Supreme Council for the Eradication of Illiteracy was created, drawing its members from various ministries and popular organizations like Planning, Education, Health, Defense, and others.³⁷³ Tariq Aziz was named the president of the Supreme Council; the all-inclusive nature of the Council represented the attempt

³⁶⁸ al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 200; Turki Khabbaz Birmani

³⁶⁹ al-Basri, *al-Siyasiyya al-Thaqafiyya*, 11 and Birmani, *The Impact of the Adult Educational Program*, 8.

³⁷⁰ Khadduri, *Socialist Iraq*, 140.

³⁷¹ al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 201.

³⁷² Ibid, 201.

³⁷³ Sousa, "The Eradication of Illiteracy in Iraq", 103.

to bring all ministries and institutions into the process of mass mobilization.³⁷⁴ The repeated creation of new councils was indicative of a tendency in the Iraqi Ba‘th to at least partially approach problems in a bureaucratic manner.

The Iraqi Ba‘th carried out a complete overhaul of the nation’s educational infrastructure to support its aims in tackling illiteracy and developing the nation. From 1968 until 1980, the number of kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools more than doubled. Representative of this rapid growth, Iraqi state education capacity expanded from just over 15,000 students enrolled in kindergartens in 1968 to 70,418 students in kindergarten by 1980.³⁷⁵ As one can imagine, the need for teachers grew remarkably in this same period, going up six-fold for kindergarten teachers alone.³⁷⁶ New textbooks emphasizing Arab nationalist themes were introduced in 1971.³⁷⁷ Tuition was done away with at all educational institutions.³⁷⁸ New universities were built in Mosul, Basra, Kufa, and Sulaymaniyya to make higher education facilities available outside of Baghdad.³⁷⁹ Iraq had six universities nationwide, tied with Saudi Arabia and only behind Egypt’s eleven universities in the Arab World.³⁸⁰ The Iraqi Ba‘th saw educational institutions fitting into a larger cultural apparatus including radio, press, television, libraries, museums, youth organizations, student organizations, and women’s organizations. All of these institutions shared responsibility in the eyes of the Iraqi Ba‘th to educate the people.³⁸¹

³⁷⁴ *Al-Jumhuriya al-Iraqiyya, Qaida al-Tashri'at al-Iraqiyya no. 92 of 1978* [online] Available at: <http://www.iraqlid.iq/LoadLawBook.aspx?page=1&SC=&BookID=23112>

³⁷⁵ Kadhim Hussain Bakir, *Arabization of Higher Education in Iraq* (University of Bath PhD dissertation, 1984), 173.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 164.

³⁷⁸ Majid Khadduri, *Socialist Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics since 1968* (Washington DC: Middle East Institute, 1978), 140.

³⁷⁹ al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 160-161.

³⁸⁰ Bakir, *Arabization of Higher Education in Iraq*, 99.

³⁸¹ al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 184.

The 1974 Political Report from the Eighth Regional Ba‘th Congress, already cited multiple times in this chapter, was a key document from this period in which the party summarized its most salient political programs and positions. This report began as political rhetoric but Law no. 142 of 1974 gave the political report of the Eighth Regional Congress the status of law.³⁸² As Sameer al-Nima, himself a Ba‘thist pointed out, this decision made all agencies, departments, and mass organizations follow the Iraqi Ba‘th party’s ideological frame of reference as well as explicitly politicizing the question of literacy.³⁸³ Following the report’s establishment as law, reliable data was needed as a base for the literacy program, so a census was carried out by the Iraqi state in 1977.³⁸⁴ In contrast to proposals which envisioned decade-long timelines for battling illiteracy, the final plan was set to last 3 years. The Iraqi Ba‘th was confident this plan could meet its goals and eliminate illiteracy between those aged 15-45 by the early 1980s. The onset of war between Iran and Iraq complicated what was already a very ambitious program with arguably unrealistic goals. This became a repetitive theme: the Iraqi Ba‘th bit off more than it could chew.

Rhetoric and results related to promoting literacy did not line up well for the Iraqi Ba‘th despite having adequate funding to begin the program. Some, but not enough, industrialization had already taken place under the monarchy and after. Oil revenues were an important factor in Iraq’s development but the concession for Iraq’s oil was split with outside forces until 1972. The nationalization of oil in 1972 and the price spikes in 1973 and 1979 produced significant revenue for Iraq.³⁸⁵ The act of nationalization followed shortly on the heels of a fifteen-year “Friendship Agreement” struck between Iraq and the USSR, which also paved the way for a temporary

³⁸² Ibid, 214.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Sousa, “The Eradication of Illiteracy in Iraq”, 103.

³⁸⁵ Phebe Marr *The Modern History of Iraq*. 3rd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 26. Khafaji (1986) is sharp to point out that the jump in 1952 when the Iraqi government first began to receive half of oil revenues from the IPC was larger than the jump from the spike in oil prices in 1973 <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer142/state-incubation-iraqi-capitalism>.

rapprochement between the Iraqi Ba‘th and the Iraqi Communist Party.³⁸⁶ There was an eightfold increase in oil revenues from the time of nationalization until the end of 1975, at which point revenues had reached approximately \$8 billion a year.³⁸⁷ The Iraqi Ba‘th had struggled with popular legitimacy in the years immediately after coming to power again in 1968, and nationalizing Iraq’s oil gave it more popular support than any other single act.³⁸⁸ 1973 also marks the point from which Iraq became increasingly enmeshed into the world market, the culmination of a process that had started several decades earlier.³⁸⁹

Oil wealth went into providing education and other public services that brought Iraq to a climax in its material economic development.³⁹⁰ GDP per capita, while an imperfect measure, jumped from just under \$400 to over \$2,700 between 1972 and 1979.³⁹¹ This paralleled the peak of Iraqi oil exports in 1979.³⁹² While these increased revenues changed Iraq significantly, it was not entirely for the better. Significant state spending brought about by this rise in revenues changed the nature of the Iraqi economy significantly, and played a role in stimulating inflation in the 1970s. Inflation from developmental spending by the state was not unique to Iraq, other postcolonial states attempting to develop faced similar issues. There were significant amounts of government oil money going after (what was at the time) limited resources and few contractors to implement construction projects. On top of this, the Iraqi Ba‘th actively pushed back against any attempts to

³⁸⁶ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), 147-148.

³⁸⁷ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 214.

³⁸⁸ Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958*, 148.

³⁸⁹ Hanna Batatu, *The Egyptian, Syrian, and Iraqi Revolutions: some observations on their underlying causes and social character* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1984). This process of integration into the world market is also elaborated on in-depth by Joel Migdal (1988) in his work “Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World”. Faleh Jabbar also supports this idea outlined by Batatu, claiming that “(T)he 1958 revolution turned state structures, social configurations, and the relation between them upside down.” See Jabbar (2003) “The Movement of the Iraqi Shi‘a” in chapter one.

³⁹⁰ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*. 3rd ed., 26; Sluglett and Farouk-Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958*, 194; Tripp *A History of Iraq*, 214.

³⁹¹ Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 219.

³⁹² Anthony Cordesman and Ahmed Hashim, *Iraq: Sanctions and Beyond* (City: Westview Press, 1996), 161.

develop other industries than oil, which it viewed as a way to keep the population dependent on the state. By the time the war began with Iran, a staggering 60% of Iraq's GDP came from oil.³⁹³ There is not complete agreement among scholars about the Iraqi Ba'athist approach to industrialization; Rohde argues that the Iraqi Ba'ath did indeed try to develop other industries. Those policies ultimately did not reach their goals because they were poorly implemented and the Iraqi economy lacked absorptive capacity, something Rohde argues is typical of developing states.³⁹⁴ This transformation of state and society remained unfinished, largely interrupted by the Iran-Iraq War. Education remained at the center of development planning, necessitating attempts to battle illiteracy, especially in rural areas. These attempts rode on the back of the surge in oil revenues and fit into a context of the Iraqi Ba'ath attempting a large-scale transformation of state capacity.

On the Social and Spatial Margins of Iraqi Society

Policies to eradicate illiteracy were meant to address the whole of Iraqi society, though the Iraqi state claimed the policies had an especially marked impact on women's education and status. The outcome of the 1977 census showed that women made up a larger number of illiterates in the census than men (1,535,937 women vs 676,693 men) and estimated that almost 49% of the rural population was illiterate.³⁹⁵ This nexus came from factors that shaped larger dynamics in Iraq: entrenched patriarchy which expected women to stay at home combined with state difficulty in developing infrastructure to serve rural areas. In the school year beginning in 1970, there were

³⁹³ 'Isam al Khafaji, "A Few Days After: State and Society in a post-Saddam Iraq" in *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change* (City: The Adelphi Papers, 2003), 80.

³⁹⁴ Achim Rohde, *State-society Relations in Ba'athist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), 24.

³⁹⁵ Sousa, "The Eradication of Illiteracy in Iraq", 103.

318,524 girls in Iraqi primary schools.³⁹⁶ By 1979, that number had more than tripled to 1,165,856.³⁹⁷ Enrolling young girls into schools as part of compulsory education clearly made an impact but the growth continued at higher levels in the educational spectrum as well. In 1979, girls filled 278,485 spots in Iraqi secondary schools whereas they only filled 88,595 at the beginning of the decade.³⁹⁸ At the highest level, 28,647 women held spots at Iraqi universities in 1979, compared to only 9,212 in 1970.³⁹⁹ The Iraqi Ba‘th successfully drew more female teachers (47,149) into the campaign than men (41,975).⁴⁰⁰ This trend was reversed in campaign supervisors, as men (858) outnumbered women (319).⁴⁰¹ The campaign against illiteracy likewise took special measures to address women’s needs. As they made up a larger percentage of illiterates, Iraqi women were made to enroll in four stages as opposed to two stages for men.⁴⁰² The Iraqi Ba‘th Party built special facilities including nurseries in literacy centers to ensure that women could attend courses.⁴⁰³ Hussein emphasized the importance of women’s education and roles in the workforce in a speech given to the GFIW in 1971. “Thousands of girls are entering schools every year and thousands of women go to work in factories, schools, hospitals, and state establishments,” he beamed, “apart from the great productive role performed by women in the rural areas.”⁴⁰⁴ As these numbers representing growth in literacy among women indicate, educational growth and

³⁹⁶ Amal al-Sharqi, “The Emancipation of Iraqi Women” in *Iraq: The Contemporary State* edited by Tim Niblock (London: New York: Croom Helm; St. Martin's Press, 1983), 80.

³⁹⁷ al-Sharqi, “The Emancipation of Iraqi Women”, 80.

³⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 81.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ see appendix E at the end of this chapter.

⁴⁰¹ see appendix F at the end of this chapter.

⁴⁰² Sousa, “The Eradication of Illiteracy in Iraq”, 104. Note Sousa does not expand on why this difference existed. Was it assumed that men were closer to the level the party wanted and women had more work to do?

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ Khalid Kishtainy, Saddam Hussein, “Women- One half of Our Society” in *Social and Foreign Affairs in Iraq*. (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 14.

reforms implemented by the Ba‘th were not merely window dressing, or rhetoric in one of Hussein’s speeches; substantial gains were made in the 1970s across all educational sectors.

The General Federation for Iraqi Women was a key institution at the center of plans for women controlled by the Iraqi Ba‘th. In the same 1971 speech to the GFIW, highlight the party’s Saddam Hussein laid out the party’s position on women in society: “The complete emancipation of women from the ties that held them back in the past during the ages of despotism and ignorance is a basic aim of the Party and the Revolution.”⁴⁰⁵ Hussein’s message was much the same several years later when he spoke at a Non-Aligned Movement conference about women in development. “For if women do not participate in an effective way,” then Vice President Hussein intoned, “enormous resources of energy will remain untapped and will not be usefully exploited in the process of production which is the cornerstone of development planning in the developing countries.”⁴⁰⁶ The 1975 speech also emphasized that Iraq had met desired goals for development laid out in Mexico in 1975 at the World Conference on Women.⁴⁰⁷ Undermining these strong words was the Vice President’s absence; Hussein’s speech was delivered by Minister of Trade Ali Hassan despite taking place in Baghdad. Growth in opportunities for women was not merely in educational institutions, but in vocational fields as well. Appendix 4 shows the variety of industries in which women had established strong bases by 1979, including chemical engineering, medicine, and others. Sharqi attributes this growth primarily to the free tuition offered by the state, a rise in individual income, and wider employment opportunities for women.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid*, 14.

⁴⁰⁶ "Dedication." In *Final Report: Conference on the Role of Women in Development of Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries: Baghdad, 6-13 May, 1979*. (Baghdad: General Federation of Iraqi Women, 1979).

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid*.

⁴⁰⁸ al-Sharqi, “The Emancipation of Iraqi Women”, 82.

In parallel, the Iraqi state had to expand its reach into rural areas and repurpose institutions like farms, factories, plants and schools.⁴⁰⁹ Viewed on an abstract level, the campaign to eliminate illiteracy had to strengthen state institutions and expanding state reach into rural areas where the state had little to no influence. The gap between rural infrastructure and that of urban areas could not be erased easily, yet was an essential prerequisite for the program's success. Schools had to be built in many areas that previously lacked them. The General Organization for Peasant Edification and Guidance (*al-Mu'assasa al-'Ama lil-Tathqeef wa al Irshad al-Falahi*) was founded in 1975 by Law 152, following up on the 1972 law beginning agricultural reform (no.50).⁴¹⁰ It shared the same goals as many other Iraqi Ba'athist institutions in this period, namely building a *qawmi* and socialist consciousness to further the "Revolution" started by the Party. On top of this, it aimed to develop skills and knowledge in the agricultural sector among rural Iraqis. To reach these goals, it was tasked with establishing peasant cultural centers in rural areas to hold events and lectures, as well as publishing.⁴¹¹ The president of the organization was a member of the Supreme Council for Eradicating Illiteracy, tying the organization to the Mass Literacy Campaign.⁴¹² Its charter does not explicitly address women, with the same implicit masculinity found in many other parts of the state.

A different state institution, the General Federation for Iraqi Women (GFIW), took up activities to address the needs of rural Iraqi women. The GFIW helped run rural centers for women

⁴⁰⁹ Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 260-261.

⁴¹⁰ *Al-Jumhuriya al-Iraqiyya, Qaida al-Tashri'at al-Iraqiyya no. 152 of 1975* [online] Available at: <http://www.iraqlid.iq/LoadLawBook.aspx?page=2&SC=050120065341021&BookID=15738>. This sub-branch of the Iraqi state managed to escape my attention through almost the entire dissertation research process. I suspect this is because its publications and actions were almost exclusively carried out in rural areas and it seems that few of its materials made it abroad to foreign universities. I have never located one of its publications. Rather, this mention of the Institution was found in reference to its position on the Supreme Council for Eradicating Illiteracy.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² *Al-Jumhuriyya al-Iraqiyya, Qaida al-Tashri'at al-Iraqiyya no. 92 of 1978* [online] Available at: <http://www.iraqlid.iq/LoadLawBook.aspx?page=1&SC=&BookID=23112>

to learn skills like reading and sewing.⁴¹³ Those centers faced continuous issues with entrenched patriarchy, meaning that women would be prevented from going to the centers by their husbands. Volunteers affiliated with the centers would, from time to time, make house visits to encourage husbands to allow their wives to leave the home and learn literacy and sewing at the centers.⁴¹⁴ In response to a call from Saddam Hussein in 1983 to address domestic labor shortages, the GFIW presented a plan for more than one million newly literate Iraqi women to fill spaces in the Iraqi workforce.⁴¹⁵ When it came time to implement this, such plans proved significantly over-optimistic; the GFIW indeed succeeded in placing 6,566 women in vacant positions but another 9,080 unemployed women who had finished the literacy courses were not placed in positions.⁴¹⁶ A 1981 dissertation by Turki Khabbaz Birmani evaluating the impact of the literacy campaign on the socio-economic development of rural areas in Iraq concurred with these less than stellar outcomes for all Iraqis. Seven months of participation in either the beginning or advanced stages were not enough for the participants to notice significant gains in job prospects or family income, but other positive, qualitative impacts were documented.⁴¹⁷ After three years of the Mass Literacy Campaign, the Iraqi Ba'ath conscripted the GFIW to help with a new mass development program, this time aimed at reducing child mortality.⁴¹⁸ The campaign focused on efforts to spread vaccinations and to increase access to treatments for diarrhea, one of the most common causes of child mortality in Iraq at the time.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹³ Amal Rassam, "Political Ideology and Women in Iraq: Legislation and Cultural Constraints" *Journal of Developing Societies*, vol.8 (1992): 85-86.

⁴¹⁴ Rassam, "Political Ideology and Women in Iraq", 86

⁴¹⁵ Noga Efrati, "Productive or Reproductive? The Roles of Iraqi Women During the Iran-Iraq War" *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.35, no.2 (1999): 28.

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ Turki Khabbaz Birmani, *The Impact of the Adult Educational Program on Socio-Economic Development in Rural Areas of Iraq as Perceived by Citizens Who Participated in the Program* (University of Northern Colorado Dissertation in Education, 1981).

⁴¹⁸ Dewachi, *Ungovernable Life*, 24.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Although the Land Reform law of 1970 helped facilitate an expansion of agricultural infrastructure, many issues remained. Rural areas of Iraq already had undergone marked change from Iraqi Ba‘thist land reforms and a broader crisis of Iraqi agriculture.⁴²⁰ This period saw a shortage of skilled labor, stagnant agriculture, and an increasing dependence on imports, most notably of food.⁴²¹ Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett document the enervation of agriculture during this period.⁴²² In 1974, Iraq was dependent on food imports as well as cotton imports to spur industry.⁴²³ Iraqi agricultural output increased markedly from reforms through the 1970s, but remained insufficient for the country’s growing urban population. Iraq was still dependent on food imports in 1980 to the tune of \$1.4 billion.⁴²⁴ The Iraqi state, swelled with cash from oil, attempted to realize large scale change in rural agriculture, but was largely unsuccessful in reaching its goals. While “failure” may be too strong of a word, not capturing the success actually realized by the Iraqi states, Iraq nonetheless parallels other postcolonial nations like Tanzania, where a government project to build *Ujamaa* villages, move residents to them, and in turn revitalize agriculture to realize economic development through self-sufficiency was not successful. A more well-known example was Mao’s Great Leap Forward, which not only failed, but resulted in mass famine. China cannot easily be lumped together with postcolonial nations like Tanzania and Iraq, but it certainly tackled large scale economic development like they did. These examples show large-scale reform attempts in Iraq were not alone in falling short of their goals.

⁴²⁰ Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq*, 25.

⁴²¹ Paul Rivlin, *Arab Economies in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 145.

⁴²² Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958*, 173.

⁴²³ Robin Theobald and Sa‘ad Jawad, “Problems of Rural Development in an Oil-Rich Economy 1958-1975” in *Iraq: The Contemporary State* edited by Tim Niblock (London: New York: Croom Helm; St. Martin's Press, 1983), 206.

⁴²⁴ Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq*, 25.

Implementation of the Iraqi Ba‘thist Literacy Campaign

Subpar results in agricultural development did not make the Iraqi Ba‘th abandon other reform programs. This failure did not bode well for the prospects of an intensive literacy campaign which would need to mobilize all facets of the state to achieve its goals. In the early 1970s, the beginning foundations for the Mass Literacy Campaign were set down by the state, focusing on building local level structures. In 1972, local literacy committees were to be established, with the responsibility of determining who was illiterate in the village and who was not. The next year, in 1973, these local committees were given the responsibility of opening literacy centers; by the end of the year, there were 1666 centers for men and 946 for women.⁴²⁵ The literacy campaign was planned to run from December 1978 for the next three years and its stated goal was to eliminate illiteracy by late 1981. The total cost of the program was set to be 66,000,000 Iraqi Dinars at the outset (\$204,600,000) to be spread over the three years, loaded into years one and two to get the program off the ground.⁴²⁶ An additional influx of cash to the tune of 26,915,000 Iraqi Dinars was given to the Mass Literacy Campaign in 1979; yet by the end of September of 1979, only 29,000,000 Iraqi Dinars had been spent.⁴²⁷ Such inconsistency in the budget and spending indicates difficulty with the scale of the campaign, as if the Iraqi Ba‘th threw money at the program to attempt to smooth over issues of large-scale implementation.

Similarly, the three-year span of the campaign was controversial and ignored multiple estimates drawn up for the campaign. For example, a report generated by the Iraqi government in 1965 estimated that eradication of illiteracy could be accomplished, but that it would take ten to

⁴²⁵ Birmani, *The Impact of the Adult Educational Program*, 9. Birmani cites an RCC publication from 1977; no elaboration is given on the seeming gender segregation of the literacy centers. All other sources I found emphasized gender dimensions, but none explicitly addressed the rationale for this separation, if indeed it was implemented as this data implies.

⁴²⁶ Ibid, 17. From the text- 1978: 16,950,000 Iraqi Dinars/ 1979: 25,000,000 Iraqi Dinars/ 1980: 13,665,000 Iraqi Dinars.

⁴²⁷ Ibid, 18.

fifteen years.⁴²⁸ A different estimate, drawn up in 1973, dismissed by al-Nima as “overly cautious,” estimated seventeen years as the time needed to eradicate illiteracy in Iraq.⁴²⁹ Al-Nima argued the plan was weak because it doubted the state’s ability to compel participation, “undermined the political process in mobilizing the masses,” and underestimated the state’s ability to finance a large scale literacy campaign.⁴³⁰ The Iraqi Ba‘th harshly criticized the seventeen-year timetable, saying it failed to realize that time was of the essence. Al-Nima outlines how various proposals after the 1973 Eighth Ba‘th Regional Congress all aimed to meet the government’s demand for shorter programs, with five, seven, and nine year programs that were eventually whittled down to three years.⁴³¹ Instead of adopting a longer timeline suggested in multiple detailed reports, the Iraqi Ba‘th insisted on a condensed three-year program to reach full literacy in the country. Why was this done? “The issue had become politically significant,” al-Nima asserts, “because literacy had become the vehicle for the party’s program to build a new society.” While important for understanding what came to pass in Iraq, such politicization was not unique among literacy programs. Indeed, literacy was consistently understood as a developmental strategy for liberation.⁴³²

Early implementation of the Literacy Campaign met various roadblocks. The first phase got off to a rough start and problems with implementation were attributed to the lack of skilled personnel in 1976.⁴³³ Perhaps reflecting these initial failures, the 1974 political report from the Iraqi Ba‘th Party acknowledged that gains in literacy during the first five years of Iraqi Ba‘thist rule had been “grossly inadequate.” Iraqi Ba‘thist government reports found in the BRCC Archives

⁴²⁸ Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 198.

⁴²⁹ *ibid.*, 202.

⁴³⁰ *ibid.*, 203-204.

⁴³¹ *ibid.*, 204-205.

⁴³² Bhola, *Campaigning for Literacy*, 12.

⁴³³ Abdul al-Rubaiy and Khawla al-Zubaidy, “Knowledge Within Reach: Iraq’s response to the illiteracy dilemma” *Educational Research Quarterly* vol.12, no.4 (1990): 56.

held at the Hoover Institute help illuminate new angles in evaluating the success of the Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to eradicate illiteracy in Iraq. As part of their efforts to get party members to volunteer to help the campaign, the Iraqi Ba‘th decided to offer volunteers the reward of moving up one level in the party hierarchy in March 1979.⁴³⁴ The offer apparently generated a flood of eager volunteers, far more than necessary, and a decision subsequently was made on March 20, 1979 to only move them up one degree of employment rather than in party status.⁴³⁵ This was seemingly settled in August of 1980, when the Party decided to count service in the Mass Literacy Campaign *double* toward promotion or retirement.⁴³⁶ In 1979, the Minister of Education who was also listed as the President of the Supreme Council for the Campaign to Fight Illiteracy wrote to the Revolutionary Command Council about a number of issues tied to the campaign.⁴³⁷ His memo addressed adequately staffing the campaign and also raised issues the state faced with infrastructure and a lack of transportation options to move party members and participants in rural areas.⁴³⁸ The Iraqi Ba‘th needed to develop other facets of infrastructure just to be in a position to attempt to address literacy.

No effort by the Iraqi state short of mass mobilization, i.e. engaging most of society, could hope to reach full literacy for the nation. In the interest of mass mobilization, the Iraqi state needed a mix of re-purposing existing infrastructure as well as building new structures where necessary. Where existing infrastructure was lacking, a strategy of mass mobilization pushed those in the Ba‘th Party involved in the campaign to “post signs, slogans, banners and cards phrased in patriotic and religious rhetoric in public places.”⁴³⁹ As there were only so many existing public buildings

⁴³⁴ BRCC 003-1-1-0348.

⁴³⁵ BRCC 003-1-1-0326. In the original document, the distinction is between *darija hizbiya* and *darija wathifiya*.

⁴³⁶ BRCC 003-1-1-0323.

⁴³⁷ BRCC 003-1-1-0349.

⁴³⁸ BRCC 003-1-1-0349.

⁴³⁹ Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, p. 261.

like schools, meetings with the masses (adult learners) were to take place in mosques, churches, and coffee shops.⁴⁴⁰ The Ministry of Education and others worked directly with Iraqi television to write engaging programs to teach reading and writing to the Iraqi masses.⁴⁴¹ Programs geared toward literacy were played daily in the evenings on Iraqi television.⁴⁴² Every evening after new programming, an hour of literacy programming was aired. In the late 1970s, many Iraqis had no television sets, especially those living in rural areas, where the state still worked to spread electricity connections to all.⁴⁴³ The state used oil largesse to distribute televisions to many such poor Iraqis, as exemplified in an anecdote recounted by Marion Farouk Sluglett and Peter Sluglett about Hussein himself showing up in villages in Southern Iraq and Madinat al-Thawra in Baghdad to distribute television sets.⁴⁴⁴ The state also opened television viewing centers around the country in villages, facilitating citizens' ability to watch television programming about the literacy campaign.⁴⁴⁵ Such programs consisted of a teacher in front of a blackboard, recreating a classroom experience, sometimes with guest students.⁴⁴⁶ Birmani's surveys of rural Iraqis found the impact of the literacy campaign to be decidedly mixed on participants' consumption of television and radio. Of three hundred respondents, barely 38% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the literacy campaign had encouraged them to give attention to those mediums: 28.7% were uncertain, 21% disagreed, and 12% strongly disagreed.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁰ *ibid*, 261.

⁴⁴¹ Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 155-156.

⁴⁴² al-Sharqi, "The Emancipation of Iraqi Women", 104.

⁴⁴³ Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History*, 220.

⁴⁴⁴ Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, 200.

⁴⁴⁵ Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 156.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

⁴⁴⁷ Birmani, *The Impact of the Adult Educational Program*, 75. These data are especially noteworthy as the vast majority (281/300) respondents were completely illiterate before beginning the program, and yet they were not by and large engaging with the TV programs meant to supplement the literacy campaign.

Because of the mass mobilization attempts, citizens would encounter messages for the Literacy Campaign just about everywhere they went in the public sphere. The state used already co-opted organizations like labor unions, farmers' leagues, students, youth, and women's groups in its mass mobilization attempts. If members of these organizations did not agree with the content or means of the Literacy Campaign, they were compelled to participate by messages that came from the organizations themselves at the behest of the Iraqi Ba'ath. Members saw the leaders of these popular organizations give public speeches as part of the mobilization drive for the campaign.⁴⁴⁸ The implementation of the Literacy Campaign was complex and drained resources from the state, testing its ability to impose its power outside of urban centers, especially Baghdad.

Mass mobilization attempted to expand state reach into rural areas alongside the attempts at agricultural reform mentioned above. The students' union organized a corps of volunteers specifically meant to go into rural areas and interact with Bedouin.⁴⁴⁹ The *rawwad*, or "pioneers," were university students, often Ba'athists, who took up outreach duties to Bedouin in the summer.⁴⁵⁰ In the process, the Iraqi state attempted to exert control over Bedouin communities, an issue that various states in the region dealt with in the 20th century, similar to the Ottoman Empire's attempts to settle Bedouins before that. This outreach by the state seems to have met some violent resistance: a report from the BRCC about the progress of the Literacy Campaign contained a cryptic passage about what to do if campaign volunteers incur bodily harm, they were to be compensated and relieved of duty. The family of a *ra'id* who died in the process of working for the campaign would be compensated just as the family of a martyr.⁴⁵¹ This meant the state would support the martyr's

⁴⁴⁸ Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 265.

⁴⁴⁹ BRCC 003-1-1-0349 ; Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 267.

⁴⁵⁰ Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 268.

⁴⁵¹ BRCC 003-1-1-0349. The incomplete nature of the BRCC archives is glaring here. Either clarifying reports were not among the seized documents or I have been unable to find them given the limitations of the tag system of the program which organizes the BRCC records.

family financially to make up for their loved one's loss. The aims of the program were arguably not benign for Bedouins, a group that had resisted state control and tried to keep its autonomy for generations. In his brief treatment of this facet of the Literacy Campaign, al-Nima explicitly regarded the *rawwad* as a "politically significant operation intended to indoctrinate the Bedouins."⁴⁵² The same internal report determined that attempts to integrate Bedouin into Iraqi settled society, and thus schooling, were mixed.⁴⁵³

Despite these complex difficulties, the Literacy Campaign gained momentum in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Mass mobilization might not guarantee the success of the campaign, but it certainly gave it a strong push. Appendix A shows how enrollment picked up significantly in late 1978 and all of 1979 and was supported by corresponding increases in the number of teachers and literacy centers. As noted above, Iraq was recognized by UNESCO in 1979 with the Krupskaya Prize for its efforts in fighting illiteracy.⁴⁵⁴ In 1982, Iraq returned the favor and established the "Iraq Literacy Prize" in addition to funding UNESCO's efforts to acknowledge literacy programs around the world, continuing until 1991.⁴⁵⁵ Founding such a prize seems to show the Iraqi government's confidence in this regard despite not yet meeting its own goals. Christopher J. Lucas, the American scholar who supervised Samir al-Nima's dissertation, praised the program for staying on track despite the war and continuing to fund the campaign's budget. By his calculation, the government had spent some \$236 million from the beginning of the campaign until 1982 when he published his article.⁴⁵⁶ Kanan Makiya, in his influential *Republic of Fear*, described how "...by

⁴⁵² Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 268.

⁴⁵³ BRCC 003-1-1-0349.

⁴⁵⁴ Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The inside Story of Saddam's Iraq*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 86.

⁴⁵⁵ Note that Iran under Reza Shah Pahlavi also sponsored such a prize from 1967-1978, see "History | Education | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization" 2017 available at:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/literacy/literacy-prizes/history/>

⁴⁵⁶ Christopher J. Lucas "Mass Mobilization for Illiteracy Eradication in Iraq" in *Convergence: A journal of International Adult Education*, vol. 15, no.3 (1982): 25. Lucas was a scholar of education and al-Nima's dissertation supervisor.

1981 around 2 million people had passed through a designated program either in one of Iraq's 1,779 anti-illiteracy centers or one of 21,853 People's Schools established throughout the country.⁴⁵⁷ One source claims that UNESCO declared Iraq free of illiteracy in 1985.⁴⁵⁸ Other sources, however, claim that even in 1987 literacy, while vastly improved, remained at 80%.⁴⁵⁹ Nadjé al-Ali cited statistics in her research on Iraqi women that illiteracy started climbing again between 1985-1995, going from 5% to 45%.⁴⁶⁰ 80% literacy, or as al-Ali's statistics imply, 95% literacy reached in the mid 1980s, represented remarkable levels of educational advancement in Iraq. Exact figures are not available but all sources agree that literacy rates rose significantly due to state development policy.

The Literacy Campaign's success was trumpeted in public, clashing with reports behind the scenes. Public claims by the state and institutions like UNESCO declared Iraq free of illiteracy while Iraqi Ba'athist bureaucratic reports from throughout this period lament it as an ongoing problem. Reports from party branches show a broad range of issues faced in mobilizing support. Some "comrades" struggled with what the reports called a "weak cultural level" while others were reported to be illiterate (*ummiyoon*).⁴⁶¹ The report does not state statistics but rather that "a high percentage" of party members were illiterate, and differentiates between their ranks in the party, implying this problem stretched across multiple layers of the party. Dozens of illiterates are noted to have entered party ranks after being rewarded for their service in the Popular Army (*al-jaish al*

⁴⁵⁷ Makiya, *Republic of Fear*, 86.

⁴⁵⁸ Jinan Hatem Issa and Hazri Jamil, "Overview of the Education System in Contemporary Iraq" *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 14, no.3 (2010): 361.

⁴⁵⁹ Agustín Velloso De Santisteban, "Sanctions, War, Occupation and the De-Development of Education in Iraq" *International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue Internationale De L'Education*, vo.51, no.1 (2005): 65.

⁴⁶⁰ Nadjé al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation" *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.26, no.4-5, (2005): 747.

⁴⁶¹ BRCC 01-3454-0000-0058. "Cultural level" is my translation of *mustawa thaqafti*- which did not contain the adjective "party."

sha 'bi).⁴⁶² As is to be expected, illiterate members were concentrated in lower ranks of the party, but higher ranks in the party were not free of the problem. An internal cultural report for the year 1984 described specifically how illiteracy remained a barrier to the effectiveness of Ba‘thist cultural messages.⁴⁶³ The party produced an internal newspaper distributed to party members but the same report noted that some did not benefit from the readings.⁴⁶⁴ The problem was not merely inside the party but in society more broadly. Another 1984 document, a directive sent to all regional Ba‘th party offices, instructs party leaders at this level that illiterate members should have their party membership suspended for one year and the party member must be made to enroll in intensive courses immediately.⁴⁶⁵ The “weak cultural level” designation implies that even some who would not show up in the statistics as illiterate still experienced issues. A memo on the issue from the Southern Bureau described illiteracy as the source of embarrassment for party members in meetings and a barrier to completing duties on time.⁴⁶⁶ The *Maktab al Askari*, or “Military Bureau” was a key part of the Iraqi Ba‘th Party apparatus; it was measured to have more than 6,000 illiterates in 1990 by its own count.⁴⁶⁷

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the party again circulated a series of memos agonizing over the problem of illiteracy. After years of draconian measures against members for various infractions and crimes, the Iraqi Ba‘th began to ease up. This paralleled a broader opening in Iraqi society after the prolonged war against Iran in which the Iraqi government allowed more space for society.⁴⁶⁸ The state struggled with reintegrating soldiers returning from the frontlines; men

⁴⁶² BRCC 01-3048-0001-0537.

⁴⁶³ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0537.

⁴⁶⁴ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0537.

⁴⁶⁵ BRCC 01-2799-0002-0373.

⁴⁶⁶ BRCC 01-3175-0002-0210. Southern Bureau is my translation of *Maktab al Janub*.

⁴⁶⁷ BRCC 01-3175-0002-0151.

⁴⁶⁸ Achim Rohde, “Echoes from Below? Talking Democracy in Ba‘thist Iraq” *Middle Eastern Studies* vol.53, no. 4 (2017): 3.

who were praised in Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse were struggling to find work and clashed with Egyptian laborers who had come in during the war to fill jobs.⁴⁶⁹ Archival documents from this period show a party member being recommended for reinstatement after having his party membership revoked because of his illiteracy.⁴⁷⁰ Other documents show that Iraqi government asked various party offices around the country to conduct their own counts of how many illiterates they had in their ranks.⁴⁷¹ Appendix C shows the first tally counted over 100,000 illiterate party members across the country, with more than half of those counted in northern Iraq alone.⁴⁷² A study produced by the Party cited “conditions in the area before its stabilization” as a factor making illiteracy hard to eradicate.⁴⁷³ It is known that the party expanded significantly and one needed to be a party member to hold many public offices like teaching positions, obliging many to join or stay when they would not have done so otherwise. Memos that circulated discussed starting a new round of classes for illiterate party members, but received some pushback from a BRCC member who thought it was “useless” at this point to try more classes.⁴⁷⁴ He pointed out that the state had already implemented a wide campaign earlier in the decade and saw little chance that old party members who had never been literate would finally learn.⁴⁷⁵ Despite this objection, new classes were implemented, and similar problems arose. Illiterate members complained they lived too far from the school where they were ordered to take literacy classes.⁴⁷⁶ Illiteracy among aged party

⁴⁶⁹ Kim Murphy, “Fatal Iraqi-Egypt Clash in Baghdad confirmed” *Los Angeles Times* Nov 20, 1989. http://articles.latimes.com/1989-11-20/news/mn-67_1_iraq-egypt-baghdad

⁴⁷⁰ BRCC 01-2129-0004-0005.

⁴⁷¹ BRCC 01-3175-0002-0151.

⁴⁷² It remains unclear if this only refers to literacy in Arabic, as many are native Kurdish speakers, but even allowing for this to be true, this would not explain still high counts of illiterate party members in other parts of the country. See appendix C for a table with the tally of illiterate party members as found in the BRCC.

⁴⁷³ BRCC 01-3175-0002-0195.

⁴⁷⁴ BRCC 01-3175-0002-0064. The RCC was the “Revolutionary Command Council,” an elite Ba‘thist committee charged with high-level decision making.

⁴⁷⁵ BRCC 01-3175-0002-0064.

⁴⁷⁶ BRCC 01-3175-0002-0100.

members proved particularly difficult to eradicate. The authoritarian Iraqi Ba‘th Party had a basic problem with how to punish tiny infractions when it was already using mass state violence for those who challenged the legitimacy of the state. How strongly, exactly, should it punish the failure to attend literacy courses it made mandatory? Party members found, for some time, that they could refuse party dictates and that at least in the short term, the party had bigger problems to worry about.

The Iraqi Ba‘th returned to the issue of illiteracy in its ranks in early 1990 and further consequences were laid out in a directive sent to party regional offices. The “sick, disabled, and those who refused to complete party work” were to be expelled from the party.⁴⁷⁷ Offices were to efficiently allocate human resources according to competency, implying this was not already the case. As before, the party took measures, including suspension of party retirement benefits for members who did not make the requisite effort. The party went a step further for those who did not go to the assigned classes and “did not have party culture,” revoking party membership completely.⁴⁷⁸ The distinction between the two levels of punishment, either suspension for some or complete membership revocation for those lacking “party culture” points to the key worry among the Iraqi Ba‘th: it was frustrating that illiterate party members could not perform many of the tasks the party needed them to, hindering administrative efficiency, but more threatening was the idea that their illiteracy meant they never absorbed and embraced party values. This conclusion is supported by the aforementioned study from 1990, which listed “party culture” as the biggest concern, stating that illiterate members needed to be tested for knowledge of party values in

⁴⁷⁷ BRCC 01-2799-0002-0014.

⁴⁷⁸ BRCC 01-2799-0002-0014.

interviews.⁴⁷⁹ The party was afraid these members were smiling and nodding but did not actually share party values and could be coopted.

Politicization of the Literacy Campaign

The Iraqi Ba‘th sought to not only develop “functional” literacy but also full “cultural” literacy for revolutionary and social consciousness.⁴⁸⁰ At the 1976 conference of Arab states on illiteracy mentioned above, Iraq presented plans that included clear political dimensions for the Mass Literacy Campaign. Political goals were outlined as helping citizens understand the value of national unity, to help citizens understand the aims of the party, and finally to develop a *qawmi* and socialist appreciation for Iraqi Ba‘thist goals of Freedom, Unity, and Socialism.⁴⁸¹ The media narrative about the Mass Literacy Campaign was drawn up at a conference held in Baghdad in August 1978, and was widely distributed to all media outlets, “stated in the form of instructions.”⁴⁸² Drawing on these themes, literacy activities were directed at the formation of new political subjectivities for men and women in Iraq.⁴⁸³ Research conducted on the ground during the campaign found materials that learners read often had strong political messages the Ba‘th Party hoped to impart on citizens:

One eighteen-year-old, interviewed at the local literacy center in the remote village of al-Salal, deep in the marshlands of southern Iraq, spoke of her feelings of pride in her newly-acquired ability to read the Koran, newspapers, and magazines. A companion reported satisfaction in having learned to distinguish her friends from her enemies. Pressed to explain further, she replied quickly and with conviction, ‘My enemies are racist Persians and the Zionists of occupied Palestine.’⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁹ BRCC 01-3175-0002-0200.

⁴⁸⁰ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *Revolutionary Iraq, 1968-1973*, 81.

⁴⁸¹ Birmani, *The Impact of the Adult Educational Program*, 11.

⁴⁸² Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 273.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid*, 212.

⁴⁸⁴ Lucas “Mass Mobilization for Illiteracy Eradication in Iraq”, 23-24.

The ending sentence clearly shows how the Iraqi Ba‘th used materials in the Literacy Campaign to shape citizens with a view of the region. Zionists in Israel were to be challenged and their position in Palestine was not to be accepted. Similarly, Iran to the east was not to be trusted, and had been labeled with the term “racist” to throw the blame for the conflict on them. This racist discourse about Persians was not present in Iraq from the Algiers Agreement in 1975 until Iraq invaded Iran, and as such must have been added into literacy materials after the beginning of the campaign. If the Iraqi Ba‘th was worried about rising sectarianism in this time, they seemed more content to blame Iran rather than try to squelch it. More broadly, the campaign was, from this example, clearly trying to shape a version of “us”, or the Iraqi nation, by defining it negatively against its enemies.

The slogans used in the campaign illuminate a different facet of its discursive appeals. Several slogans were quotes directly from the Quran to show where Allah emphasized reading and knowledge. One well-known quote tied to the campaign was: “Read in the name of the Lord and cherisher/ who created/ created humanity from a clot of congealed blood/ read! And thy lord is most bountiful/ he who taught (the use of) the pen/ taught man that which he knew not”⁴⁸⁵ Other slogans came from the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, again emphasizing knowledge. These slogans from Muhammad included “seek learning from birth until death” and “cultivate knowledge whenever it may be found, even as far as China.”⁴⁸⁶ Finally, proverbs from what al-Nima termed “Arab heritage” included “a good book is the best companion” and “the world is between the two covers of a book.”⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ *Surat al ‘Alaq* cited in Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 281.

⁴⁸⁶ Interviews with Iraqi educators cited by Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 282.

⁴⁸⁷ Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 282.

Military metaphors were an important facet of the Literacy Campaign, seeping in from increasingly violent and divisive Iraqi Ba‘thist rhetoric. In a public speech on September 9, 1980, Hussein explained the military meaning of the literacy campaign, saying that “[T]he term campaign was derived from the idea of a struggle against an enemy, and illiteracy is regarded as an enemy.”⁴⁸⁸ “We may not talk about a successful revolution in its deepest and most comprehensive sense,” Hussein continued later in the speech, “without first having won the war to make it possible for a people to be able to read and write.”⁴⁸⁹ Dominant themes of mass mobilization, revolutionary fervor, and combat shaped the overall messages and had strong parallels to those of Cuba’s campaign.⁴⁹⁰ The theme of combat, moreover, implies an enemy. It arguably fits larger schemes by the Iraqi Ba‘th. The party waged war on all fronts: internationally against Israel, “reactionary” Arab states, imperialism in the economic sphere, and domestically against multiple political opposition groups. In Iraq in this period, war engulfed social and international relations and became a mode of governance, as shown by Dina Rizk Khoury in her book *Iraq in Wartime*.⁴⁹¹ These politicized facets arguably were inevitable outgrowths of mass mobilization.⁴⁹² The Iraqi state could not meet its goals without such large-scale mobilization of various sectors of society, and it could not justify such a redistribution of existing resources without

⁴⁸⁸ Lucas “Mass Mobilization for Illiteracy Eradication in Iraq”, 22.

⁴⁸⁹ *ibid*, 22.

⁴⁹⁰ Cuba predated them both with a large campaign after the Cuban Revolution (1959), aiming to ameliorate a literacy rate that hovered above 50%. These efforts were paired with agricultural reform to make a substantive difference in rural areas. A statement by Fidel Castro shows striking similarities in rhetoric to Saddam Hussein’s quotes above:

“The battle to be won against ignorance will give our country more glory than the military battles already fought or still to be fought... While imperialism wants to destroy us and our revolution, we are going to destroy imperialism with our example, with our success.”

See Aviva Chomsky, Barry Carr, and Pamela María Smorkaloff, *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Latin America Readers (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 386.

⁴⁹¹ Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

⁴⁹² al-Nima argues as much, stating that mass mobilization was a fundamental mechanism for political control. See Al-Nima, *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq*, 283.

a political rationale. Yet for all the attempts the party made to address literacy, the Iraqi Ba‘th continued to produce large quantities of cultural production (books, magazines, newspapers, journals) throughout the 1970s, even accelerating in the late 1980s.

Conclusion

Despite the illiteracy in Iraq post-WWII, Iraq’s literacy issues overall were not unique, nor were the politicized attempts to address illiteracy by the Iraqi Ba‘th. Iran, which battled illiteracy and implemented large scale literacy programs before and after the Islamic Revolution; Iraq did so for largely the same reasons as Iraq, seeking to develop economically and shape political subjectivities. “While the formal education system is held responsible for creating the New Muslim Person among the school-age population,” averred Golnar Mehran writing about post-revolutionary Iran, “literacy is charged with the task of Islamizing and politicizing the adult generation.”⁴⁹³ Indeed Iran’s program slipped political readings into the curriculum just as Iraq’s did.⁴⁹⁴ From a different angle, Paulo Freire acted from below to push literacy and education for political consciousness in Brazil as a means of challenging the country’s military dictatorship. In Cuba, a literacy campaign carried out immediately after that country’s revolution had among its goals the preparation of citizens to enable them to participate in socialism, as well as developing their “Marxist-Leninist” conception of the world.⁴⁹⁵ State officials rarely pass on such an opportunity to shape the consciousness of their citizens.

Haste was certainly part of what doomed the larger attempts to eradicate illiteracy in Iraq. It must be reiterated that illiteracy in Iraq is a question of state capacity and education, *not* of any

⁴⁹³ Mehran “Social Implications of Literacy in Iran”, 196.

⁴⁹⁴ *ibid*, 194.

⁴⁹⁵ Bhola, *Campaigning for Literacy*, 103.

innate or cultural differences in humans in Iraq. The state lacked adequate infrastructure in rural areas and effectively had to expand the reach of the state to carry out the Mass Literacy Campaign. This was a development trap often fallen into by outside economists looking at postcolonial nations: the failure to expand state capacity stemmed from not having devoted enough effort, not larger and more complex issues of postcolonial development. Postcolonial countries consistently struggled with the systematic strengthening of the state, often ending up with bloated yet inefficient bureaucracies and strong armies which regularly overwhelmed civilian institutions. The Iraqi Ba‘th was seemingly convinced that devotion to the issue would bring eventual success. Where multiple reports estimated that 10-15 years were needed to eradicate illiteracy (some more), the Iraqi Ba‘th Party did not have the patience for such a slow process. They wanted to bring about revolutionary change and were not in a mood to take things slow. Yet for a three-year condensed timetable to eradicate illiteracy in a country with statistics like those in Iraq, state capacity would already have to be fully developed. The state could not plan to develop this capacity and implement the program in such a short period of time, but that is exactly what the Iraqi Ba‘th did. Appendix B shows how infrastructure was lacking and makeshift areas were used for Literacy Campaign purposes. As the campaign rushed into areas still lacking basic infrastructure, it was forced to hold literacy classes in tents and mud huts.

The onset of war against Iran shifted Iraq’s economic fortunes completely, diverting resources to the war and necessitating large-scale borrowing to keep the war going. The catastrophic failure of the invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent imposition of crippling sanctions in the 1990s only exacerbated the country’s downward trend. Saddam Hussein interrupted the already-rushed plans for battling illiteracy with ten years of war. This was not a recipe for success, and as this chapter showed, the Iraqi government continued to struggle with significant numbers

of illiterate party members in the late 1980s. Literacy in 1987, while vastly improved, was estimated at 80%.⁴⁹⁶ By 1995, however, illiteracy had apparently surged back to 42% due to collapsing infrastructure under sanctions.⁴⁹⁷ The Iraqi government estimated that illiteracy increased by about 5% every year under sanctions, a mind-boggling statistic if correct.⁴⁹⁸ Available statistics for literacy in this period are inexact and need to be addressed. If the statistics available are to be believed, Iraq either eradicated illiteracy in the late 1980s or reached approximately 80% literacy before a calamitous plunge caused by sanctions. The death rate was not high enough to cause this level of change, so other issues must be at play. Either many new Iraqis were being born and not incorporated into compulsory education or the statistics from the late 1980s themselves trumpeting the peak of literacy at that time were exaggerated. It is possible that both these issues contribute to the marked change in literacy rates from the late 1980s into the early 1990s, but the exact answer remains unclear. Instead, the Literacy Campaign becomes an interesting case through which we can study Iraqi state rule under the Iraqi Ba‘th to critically assess its capacities. With regard to Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production, the evidence and arguments presented here point to the Iraqi Ba‘th trying to do too many things at once, but for our purposes, preparing society for full cultural literacy and pushing complex ideas for the state’s ongoing battle for legitimacy against opposition groups. Illiteracy meant that certain communication channels like radio and television become the primary means through which some citizens engaged with larger debates and conceptions of community. From the top on down, the Iraqi Ba‘th Party faced these issues from a different angle. The Iraqi Ba‘th wanted to expand state capacity, develop literacy, and push state cultural production on the population to “raise consciousness” among citizens. It could not do all

⁴⁹⁶ De Santisteban "Sanctions, War, Occupation and the De-Development of Education in Iraq" ,65.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ *ibid.*

three at once, and from the evidence available it did not meet its goals in expanding state capacity or developing full literacy. How successful could its cultural production be if these other goals remained half-met? This finding calls into question other works which deeply engaged with questions of intellectual history and historical memory in Iraq. Chapter Three studies the cultural infrastructure developed by the Iraq Ba'ath.

CHAPTER THREE: THAQAFI/ CULTURE

In April of 1978, *Afaq 'Arabiyya* published a six-page article by Iraqi Ba'athist intellectual Ilyas Farah.⁴⁹⁹ Its title was direct and declarative: “The Ba'ath is a Cultural Revolution” (*al-Ba'ath Thawra Thaqafiyya*). The Party's aspirations and goals in the cultural realm could not be better summed up in one Arabic sentence. Aware of the loaded nature of the term he just used, Farah argued that in too many cases, the idea of a “cultural revolution” meant “protecting the revolution” in practice, or rather protecting whomever was carrying out the ‘revolution.’ Instead, Farah argued with different historical examples that a cultural revolution was a process of civilizational maturation. Arabs had matured to get where they were, and the process would continue; a cultural revolution was destined, not an accident. To the extent that a cultural revolution necessitated thought and education, it ultimately was a revolution in the minds and consciousness of the people. According to Farah, the terms “culture” and “revolution” had a tangible relationship: revolution uses culture as a tool of resurgence and mobilization of society, not the other way around.⁵⁰⁰ Complementing its publication in *Afaq 'Arabiyya*, the text was likewise published in book form in 1978, listed as the first of a series of lectures in the *mawsim al thaqafi* or “season of culture”. Culture- and by extension- cultural infrastructure was made into a tool for reshaping Iraqi society in the manner chosen by the Iraqi Ba'ath. Publications from the Ministry of Culture and media as well as BRCC archives from the Iraqi state inform this chapter to shed more light on questions of culture. As highlighted in each major party report, the Iraqi Ba'ath made culture central in its rhetoric. In this formulation, culture needed to serve dual and reinforcing goals: “modernizing”

⁴⁹⁹ Ilyas Farah, “*al-Ba'ath Thawra Thaqafiyya*” *Afaq 'Arabiyya*, vol.3, no.9 (1978): 24.

⁵⁰⁰ The Party's understanding of a revolution came from the Arab *Nahda*, a period of cultural growth in the late 19th century. The figures central to this era are explored in depth in Albert Hourani's *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Iraqi state and society, while also countering any and all groups opposing the Iraqi Ba‘th. The Party built an extensive cultural infrastructure to shape society and inculcate its ideas.

Thaqafa, or culture, had a sufficiently broad meaning in Iraq under Ba‘thist rule to encompass foreign policy, intellectual activity, identity, the educational sphere, and political opposition. One could easily include issues of history, heritage, literacy, Pan-Arabism, Mesopotamian discourse, war rhetoric, and Iraqi Ba‘thist thought under the umbrella of culture. Yet to do so would miss important sub-facets of culture, namely its presentation, production, and reproduction through key institutions in Ba‘thist Iraq. Not only was culture institutionally enshrined under the Ministry of Culture and Media, but the term referenced a central part of Iraqi Ba‘thist knowledge production in its attempts to legitimate itself and push Iraq forward. As such, *thaqafa* and its associated noun, *tathqeef* (edification, tutelage) were constantly subjects of interest to the Iraqi Ba‘th Party and appeared in publications of all types. The party developed dozens of publications and augmented already existing ones to present a mix of popular and intellectual content. Multiple wings of Ba‘thist bureaucracy actively sought to shape party members culturally through meetings, readings, discussions, lectures, and other cultural events including the Ba‘thist Military Bureau, the Cultural Bureau, the Ministry of Media and Culture, and Directorate of Political Guidance. The Iraqi Ba‘th Party flooded the Iraqi public sphere with cultural content, almost all of which had the implicit or explicit message of reaffirming party legitimacy and superiority. How clearly could the message come through with the fever-pitch state cultural production seemingly creating cacophony in the public sphere? Cultural production mixing Pan-Arabism and Mesopotamian themes arguably became so voluminous that these publications lost their ability to truly shape the views of the Iraqi masses, rather than achieving intellectual hegemony. Indeed, at the end of the Gulf War, Iraq abandoned the discourses it championed in the

1980s and embraced neo-tribalism and the Islamic Faith campaign.⁵⁰¹ The multiple facets of culture explored in this chapter collectively demonstrate that Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural programs sought not only to “modernize” the nation, or even “modernize” with a third-worldist tinge, but also from its inception to repress opponents of the state. The Intifada of 1991 laid bare the extent to which Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to use culture for counterinsurgency purposes did not meet their goals and the state resorted to brute force to preserve itself.

Iraqi Ba‘thist Theorizations of Culture and Media

Media was a holistic tool for the Iraqi Ba‘th, serving multiple important goals. In addition to the publications themselves, including books, magazines, journals and newspapers, which can be studied qualitatively, the Iraqi Ba‘th published tactical and theoretical texts of various lengths about media and how it was to be used. A section in the Party’s November, 1971 *Mithaq al ‘Aml al-Watani* (Charter of National Action) introduced media, culture, and the arts as among the best fruits of humanity, having a profound impact on society.⁵⁰² As these fruits came from a dialectical relationship with the society that produced them, the Charter argued the “Revolution” would surely usher in its own culture and arts. In language that presages chapter four on heritage, the Party insisted that culture needed an active grasp of the present that balanced with the deep heritage of Arab history.⁵⁰³ Media for the “Revolution” needed to defend against ideas that spurred sectarianism, racism, chauvinism, *shu‘ubiyya*, and defeatism, as these would come from the bourgeois and feudalist classes.⁵⁰⁴ Media was to do its part to preserve Arab heritage, discovering

⁵⁰¹ While the 1990s are not part of the temporal focus of this dissertation, the change is noted here to show that the discourses under study came to an end.

⁵⁰² Hizb al Ba‘th, *Mithaq al-‘Aml al-Watani* (Mosul, Muassasat Dar al-Kutub lil Dirasat wal Nashr, 1971), 54-55.

⁵⁰³ Ibid, 55.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid, 56.

all the progressive and humanist meanings it contained. This emphasis on *turath* in Ba‘thist media needed to cover all ethnic groups inside the country.⁵⁰⁵ Aside from being one of the earliest mentions of *shu‘ubiyya* I have found in state cultural production, the Iraqi Ba‘th was already delineating the counterinsurgency role of media and cultural production that would continue throughout the period this dissertation covers and beyond.

In the 1978 book *al-I‘lam wa al-I‘lam al-Mudhad* (*Media and Counter Media*), Sahib Hussein lays out the Iraqi Ba‘thist conceptual approach to media in a text that was part of a “small encyclopedia series” published by the Party.⁵⁰⁶ Sahib Hussein portrays capitalism and reactionaries as the primary beneficiaries of large media who use it to shape views and convictions of the people.⁵⁰⁷ Yet in regard to the Iraqi Ba‘th, Sahib Hussein argues that media serves to confront opposition currents as well as to raise awareness of all dimensions of society.⁵⁰⁸ Yet Sahib Hussein’s prose conveys a glaring indeterminacy. If the writer, and by extension the Ba‘thist government of Iraq he was writing for, place themselves as defending the Iraqi nation against large international capitalist media, how long would the Iraqi Ba‘th remain in this “opposition” position? Indeed, Sahib Hussein described internal media (*i‘lam al-dakhli*) as having a conservative purpose, if conservative is meant to preserve the government in power. External media (*al-i‘lam al-khariji*) was presented by warning that the effects of capitalist media do not stop at borders. After briefly discussing the transnational impact, and the coming changes anticipated from television, the author continues framing external media as a capitalist threat to the Iraqi Ba‘th, named as “the Revolution” here. *Al-i‘lam al-khariji* was allegedly the way capitalist and imperialist powers

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid, 57.

⁵⁰⁶ The “small encyclopedia series” included dozens of texts released bi-monthly that were closer to pamphlets in length and complexity. While he shares a family name with Saddam Hussein, there is no indication that the two are in fact related.

⁵⁰⁷ Sahib Hussein, *al-I‘lam wa al-I‘lam al-Mudhad*, (Baghdad: Dar al-Huriyya, 1978), 6.

⁵⁰⁸ Hussein, *al-I‘lam wa al-I‘lam al-Mudhad*, 5.

impose on postcolonial societies, yet those very labels were placed on sub-directorates of the Ministry of Culture and Media by Law 93 of 1981 on the Ministry of Culture and Media.⁵⁰⁹ In practice, the external media directorate of the Iraqi state was largely used to present positive images of Iraq abroad in Arabic.⁵¹⁰ In a world of power relations, the Iraqi Ba‘th sought to push back rather than merely be pushed.

To further develop the theme that Western imperialism has sought to control and shape culture, another work is instructive of the way Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production sought to situate the Iraqi Ba‘th relative to the rest of the world. Malik Mansour focused on missionaries and proselytizing, exploring the use of culture by “imperialists” from a different angle. His work, *Imperialist Means of Sabotaging Culture*, traced colonial ties to Christian missionaries and built ties into the present investigating how the US influenced societies in the Third World while seeking to forestall Communism and feed its “aggressive imperial war machine.”⁵¹¹ Such rhetoric, while tangential to most of what the Party published, fit into other discourses disseminated by the Iraqi Ba‘th, most notably the idea that divisions in the Iraqi nation and sectarianism were being deliberately exacerbated by foreign intelligence agencies to weaken “the Revolution.”⁵¹² Here, shown in Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production more broadly, media and culture had to function as counterinsurgency.

The 1983 Report from the Ninth Ba‘th Congress began its section on “information and culture” with how the Iraqi Ba‘th, and Saddam Hussein in particular, had both paid great attention

⁵⁰⁹ Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-'Iraqiyya*, 179; *al-jumhuriyya al-Iraqiyya Qaida al-Tashri'at al-'Iraqiyya no. 93 of 1981*. (URL) Accessed 27 May 2018.

⁵¹⁰ It stands to reason that some of the production of this branch would be translated into foreign languages as well, but I have not located any such texts. Instead, those seem to come from *Dar al Ma'mun*, but the texts I have located in foreign languages coming from *Dar al Ma'mun* do not have a “*dairat al-i'lam al-khariji*” label.

⁵¹¹ Malik Mansour, *Wasa'il Imbiriyya fi Takhrif al Thaqafi* (Baghdad, Dar al Thawra lil-Sahafa wa al-Nashr, 1977), 49.

⁵¹² The term *ta'ifiyya* was used explicitly here, I am not reinterpreting this to be about sectarianism.

to culture and shown continuous interest in improving it.⁵¹³ This report mirrored the details about the use of media against opposition groups from the 1971 Charter of National Action outlined above. Again, culture and media were to serve to push back against ‘Shu‘ubite (anti-Arab) trends and values.”⁵¹⁴ The difference between the two reports, as shown in my chapter situating Iraq in the Third World, was the Iraqi Ba‘th had amplified its use of *shu‘ubiyya* discourse against Iraqi Communists in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.⁵¹⁵ The Party also used its media to confront imperialism and Zionism, both of which are credited with having advanced methods and resources in their media institutions. Only with strong cultural programs and media, the Party’s reason went, would it “become possible to confront the effect of counter-propaganda and *foreign cultural invasion*, fortify(ing) the individual against all attempts to aimed at undermining his personal firmness and commitment to his homeland and nation.”⁵¹⁶

Saddam Hussein’s speech “Culture and the Duty of Struggle” delivered to a Ba‘th Party division in 1987, highlights another dimension of Iraqi Ba‘thist rhetoric about culture.⁵¹⁷ Hussein’s speech took *thaqafa* in a different direction, centered around the behavior inside the Party itself. Proper culture among members inside the Party could prevent deviation from the Party’s best interests. Hussein laid out how Party hierarchy needed to correspond to the “cultural level” of party members, asking if it made sense that a member at a low level (party branch or party division) was more “cultured” than a member of the BRCC?⁵¹⁸ As explored in the previous chapter, Hussein also emphasized the importance of reading and writing for Party members, insisting on the ability

⁵¹³ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Congress*, 147. Note they use the word “information” as a translation of *i‘lam* here but I have translated it as “media” consistently in this dissertation.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid, 148. Emphasis mine. This was not the only area where the 1983 report plagiarized previous Iraqi Ba‘thist publications.

⁵¹⁵ I use the word “amplified” because I have found one use of *shu‘ubiyya* in state discourse before this, it was not completely absent.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Saddam Hussein “*Al-Thaqafa Wajib Nidhali*” *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, vol.12 no.11 (1987): 4-8.

⁵¹⁸ “Cultured” is used in the broadest sense here, referring to level of education and knowledge.

of Party members to convince others of ideas as necessary. While the state made large gains in literacy with its Mass Literacy Campaign, illiteracy remained inside the Party and in society more broadly. Hussein envisioned the Iraqi Ba‘th Party not merely exerting power over society, but leading it intellectually, or as he would have insisted, “culturally.” Notably, Hussein did not speak of the Iraqi Ba‘th here in any sense as a vanguard, though he came strikingly close to it conceptually. Party theorizations of culture were present from 1968 through 1991 and beyond. While the Party did not state it as such, the consistent theme of Iraqi Ba‘thist theorizations of culture was that culture was a weapon the party needed to seize, lest it be used by Western imperialists and/or domestic opposition groups against the Iraqi Ba‘th.

The Ministry of Culture and Media: Iraqi Government Production of Culture

The primary driver and producer of cultural content and publications was the Iraqi Ministry for Culture and Media. The overall structure of the Ministry of Culture and Media changed in a series of steps, beginning the early 1970s. At the outset of the decade, the Directorate of Arts and Popular Culture was under the Directorate of Media and Newspapers. The Directorate of Arts and Popular Culture was later broken into two distinct branches which separated the arts from media in 1972, forming both the General Directorate of Arts and the General Directorate of Media.⁵¹⁹ The publication house *Dar al-Jahiz* was founded in 1977, at that time exclusively for the production of magazines like *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi*. *Dar al Jahiz* took its name from a famous Arab writer who lived in Basra in the 8th and 9th centuries AD. Around the same time, the General Directorate of Media was broken up into the Department of Cultural Affairs (*da‘irat al-shu‘un al-*

⁵¹⁹ Hiyam N. Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-‘Iraqiyya: dirasa maydaniyya lil kutb al manshura wa al nashireen lil fatra 1975-1994* (Baghdad: Dar al Shu‘un al Thaqafa al ‘Ama, 2000), 164.

thaqafiyya) and *Dar al-Rashid* for Publishing.⁵²⁰ A BRCC directive from December 1985 brought the Department of Cultural Affairs together with *Dar Afaq 'Arabiyya*, forming *Dar al Shu'un al Thaqafiyya al-'Ama*. The changes do not immediately line up with other shifts in power or events; the larger rationale behind these repeated reorganizations remains unclear.

The Ministry of Culture and Media focused on mass culture through a series of administrative divisions. Under its aegis, one would have found the directorate of radio and television, theater and cinema, as well as multiple publishing houses like *Dar al-Huriyya* for books and magazines as well as *Dar al-Jamahir* for newspapers like *al-Jumhuriyya* and *al-Thawra*.⁵²¹ The list did not stop there; it included *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* (the magazine of popular heritage discussed in the heritage chapter), the General Directorate for Antiquities, *Dar al-Jahiz* for scientific publications, interior and exterior media directorates, the National Center for Documentation, a children's publishing outfit, and others.⁵²² As al-Basri emphasized, some of these branches relied on the Ministry's guidance to a high degree while some were more independent. Al-Basri's book itself was published by a state publishing house the author does not even mention, *Dar al-Rashid*.⁵²³ It would be easy to assume that *Dar al-Rashid* was marginal but my research found it published many works of importance. The Iraqi state clearly invested in a robust infrastructure to shape culture in Iraq.

The Ministry of Culture and Media targeted children with versions of the same themes found in cultural production for adults. Publications for children were impacted by many of the same shifts described above in the infrastructure of the Iraqi state responsible for cultural

⁵²⁰ Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-'Iraqiyya*, 165.

⁵²¹ Abd al Jabbar Dawuud al-Basri, *al-Siyasiyya al-Thaqafiyya fi al-'Iraq* (Baghdad: Dar al Rashid, 1983), 20.

⁵²² al-Basri, *al-Siyasiyya al-Thaqafiyya...*, 20.

⁵²³ My hypothesis is that starting new branches of publishing was less about specialization as it was tied to patronage, a way to give different figures domains in the cultural sphere they could exert control over.

production. According to Dawwaf's study, the overarching goal throughout this period was to educate children in matters of both Iraq and the Arab World.⁵²⁴ In the early 1970s, *Dar al-Thaqafa lil-Atfal* (Culture Publishing House for Kids) was part of the *Mudiriyya al-Thaqafa al-'Ama* General Directorate for Culture, though it was later reclassified as a department under the General Directorate of Culture and Arts in 1981.⁵²⁵ Quantitatively, publication trends for children largely mirror those of Iraqi state cultural production more broadly. From 1975-1979, *Dar Thaqafa lil-Atfal* published 110 books, growing to 324 in the last half of the 1980s to peak in that period like other state publications did in terms of quantity.⁵²⁶ The state boasted of its efforts in this area in the 1983 Report, namely two new lines of books, "Children's Library" and "Our Library" it claimed had been launched and received well by Iraqi children.⁵²⁷

Changes in the volume of state cultural production are key to understanding the larger picture across the 1970s and 1980s. From 1975 to 1979, the years for which figures are available, the Iraqi Ba'th government published 5,279 books on various topics, all but 84 of which were published in Iraq.⁵²⁸ These numbers fluctuated from year to year but the next five-year period from 1980-1984 had almost the same total, with 5837 books published.⁵²⁹ This growth is paralleled in the state's measure of its total publication circulation from 1974-1981. The 1983 Ninth Ba'th Congress Report claimed that total publications grew from 25 million in 1974 to 240 million in 1981.⁵³⁰ The period from 1985-1989 was one of even more growth as Iraq's economy began to

⁵²⁴ Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-'Iraqiyya*, 173-174.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid*, 172.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid*, 173.

⁵²⁷ Hizb al-Ba'th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Congress*, 149.

⁵²⁸ Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-'Iraqiyya*, 75.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid*, 79.

⁵³⁰ Hizb al-Ba'th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Congress*, 149. There is no clarification in the report about whether publications included books, magazines, journals, pamphlets, some mix of the above, or all of them.

pick up again, with 7309 total books published by the Iraqi state.⁵³¹ 1990 was similarly bursting with publications, with 1875 books published that year alone, more than any single year since 1975. In this booming period before the embargo of sanctions was put in place after the first Gulf War, the Iraqi Ba‘th exported 1,500,000 Iraqi Dinars worth of books and another 500,000 Iraqi Dinars worth of newspapers were shipped to markets outside of Iraq. The Iraqi government also participated in dozens of international books fairs, pushing its mix of novels, poetry, politics, and history.⁵³² Yet before sanctions were imposed, one dissident’s report claims that more than half the daily copies of Iraqi Ba‘thist newspapers (*al-Thawra*, *al-Qadisiyya*, *al-Jumhuriyya*) went unread and were returned to the publisher each day. He also claimed that a majority of the remaining 40% were given away to members of the Iraqi armed forces, members of the party, and Iraqi Ba‘thist student organizations.⁵³³ Those readers who consumed state newspapers, Al-Hakim further argued, did so because they faced loyalty tests, not because they enjoyed the reading. As someone who outlines how dozens of members of his family were killed by the Ba‘th, there is reason to be suspicious of al-Hakim’s claims, as he clearly had reason to be angry. However, it is also possible to see from low literacy rates and the ongoing opposition efforts that many Iraqis did not or could not engage positively with state cultural production after years of state repression. Notably, the output of cultural production dropped precipitously in 1991 due to the catastrophe of war and imposition of sanctions.⁵³⁴ Riyadh Hamid al-Dabbagh claims in his work on the subject

⁵³¹ Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-‘Iraqiyya* , 81.

⁵³² Davis, *Memories of State*, 240.

⁵³³ A. Al-Hakim “The endless terror of Ba‘ath rule: My family’s fate” *Index on Censorship*, vol. 19, no.10, (1990): 15. doi: [10.1080/03064229008534979](https://doi.org/10.1080/03064229008534979)

⁵³⁴ Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-‘Iraqiyya* , 83. The early 1990s were years of significantly reduced cultural output, dropping to 749 in 1991, 648 in 1992, 487 in 1993, and 420 in 1994.

that more than 315 publishing houses, printing presses, and affiliated businesses closed due to the embargo.⁵³⁵

The translation of works from Arabic into foreign languages and vice versa was undertaken by the Iraqi state to contribute to the “complete civilizational revival” taking place in Iraq.⁵³⁶ Books were published in at least seven different languages between 1975-1989. The primary language of publication was certainly Arabic, with Kurdish and Turkoman as the other languages produced for readers inside Iraq. English, French and German books were also published, with French and German being the smallest of the three, registering less than 1% of total books each five-year period. English, on the other hand, constituted several hundred books per year.⁵³⁷ In 1975, Law 197 was issued covering *Dar al-Shu'un al-Thaqafiyya*, setting a quota that 10% of the total books published needed to be translations.⁵³⁸ The establishment of *Dar al Ma'mun* six years later in 1981 by Law 64 buttressed the production of translations, as it was the first publisher under the aegis of the Iraqi Ba'ath to specialize in translated works.⁵³⁹ *Dar al-Mamun's* work seems to have focused on translating works from Arabic into foreign languages (557), noticeably more than the foreign language books translated into Arabic (60) between 1975-1989.⁵⁴⁰ In support of translation as a tool of cultural development, *Dar al Ma'mun* sought to hold trainings and conferences for translators in Iraq. *Dar al Ma'mun* had the goal of publishing original periodicals in foreign languages, rather than merely translating foreign works in Arabic. Overall, some 2334 books were translated into Arabic between 1975-1989, with the largest percentage (40.4%) of that

⁵³⁵ Riyadh Hamid al-Dabbagh quoted in Davis, *Memories of State*, 240-241.

⁵³⁶ Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-'Iraqiyya*, 175.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid*, 107.

⁵³⁸ *ibid*, 123.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid*, 80. It took its name al-Ma'mun from the seventh Abbasid Caliph, Al-Ma'mun, known among other things for his intellectual pursuits.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 178.

total coming from 1985-1989. While clear data was not tabulated, Dawwaf says that the majority of these translations were originally English and French works.⁵⁴¹ Books were certainly important in state cultural production, but magazines had larger readership, and as such Davis argues that magazines published by the Iraqi Ba‘th were subject to greater scrutiny.⁵⁴² In this vein, periodicals from *Dar al Ma‘mun* ultimately had to promote the themes decided by the Ministry of Culture and Media.⁵⁴³ Prominent Iraqi novels as well as speeches and political tracts from Saddam Hussein were to be translated for foreign audiences, in runs of between five thousand and ten thousand copies per book at the height of cultural production in the late 1980s.⁵⁴⁴

It might seem as though the emphasis on translation undermines the idea that Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production was meant to serve as cultural counterinsurgency inside Iraq. Yet just as was shown in the chapter about Iraq in the Third World, in which Cold War influences from far outside Iraq’s border impacted its reality, international appeals and dissemination of the Iraqi state’s narrative was key on the international level. As the chapter in the political opposition to the Iraqi Ba‘th will show, relationships between sub-state actors and supranational powers frustrated Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to be sovereign over Iraq’s territory. Spreading its message internationally and bolstering its image as doing great things for Iraq’s people was key to pushing back internationally against various claims from either the USSR, Iran, Syria, or the US that opposition groups needed support to overthrow a tyrannical Iraqi Ba‘th Party.

Nearly all other Iraqi ministries had their own research and publication divisions. For example, the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues had a sub-branch called the “Foundation for

⁵⁴¹ Ibid, 132.

⁵⁴² Davis, *Memories of State*, 202.

⁵⁴³ Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-‘iraqiyya*, 176.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid, 177. Sanctions caused output to drop to 2,000 copies or less per book published.

Workers' Culture" which held training sessions and published its own works.⁵⁴⁵ This branch apparently was founded right after the 1968 Revolution, and by 1983 it claimed to have held more than 300 events to develop culture among worker leadership and another 1923 events for general worker culture.⁵⁴⁶ These events supposedly reached more than 51,000 workers, and almost certainly would have worked alongside the corporatized trade unions swallowed and run by the Iraqi Ba'ath.⁵⁴⁷ Al-Basri also points out that the ministries of Justice, Health, Agriculture, Oil, and *Awqaf* (endowments) all had research centers which published on behalf of each ministry. The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs is explicitly listed here and taking up the revival of Arab and Islamic heritage in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), history, and other matters. The Ministry of Health had dozens of cultural cadres it sent out to interface with the public about culture and health. A series of dance teams represented Iraq at international expositions as well as traveling to perform domestically. These dance troupes included one in Basra and another in Erbil, which performed Kurdish folkloric dances.⁵⁴⁸

Perhaps most importantly, the Ba'ath Party had its hands in all of these institutions through the Ba'ath Regional Command Council (BRCC). The BRCC came to rest on top of the Iraqi government almost like an octopus, with its tentacles in everything while the Military Bureau (*Maktab al-'Askari*) inside the Iraqi Ba'ath Party itself had much of the authority to shape cultural policy. As such, the BRCC was the highest cultural administration in Iraq and interfaced with all international organizations in the realm of culture like UNESCO, the Arab League and others.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁵ This is my inexact translation of *mua'ssassat al-thaqafiyya al-'amaliyya*

⁵⁴⁶ *ibid*, 21. There is no way to corroborate these claims but the book is clearly published by a writer with familiarity with government and party structures and through a government printing press.

⁵⁴⁷ al-Basri, *al-siyasiyya al-thaqafiyya fi al-'Iraq*, 21.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 30.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 22.

The stolen BRCC archives held at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University thus are invaluable to understanding some elements of cultural policy inside the Iraqi Ba‘th Party itself.

Files in the BRCC illuminate several other institutional issues inside the Ministry of Culture. First, files in the BRCC show a steady flow of employees being transferred in and out of various ministries and positions. The Ministry of Culture grew frustrated with its employees regularly being transferred and sent a letter up the chain demanding that their employees stop being transferred out of the Ministry of Culture.⁵⁵⁰ In respect to different, more powerful positions in the state, such transfers can be understood as a coup-proofing technique, in which the state moves people it is suspicious of out of positions of power. In this case, the volume of transfers and the seemingly mundane nature of many of those moved do not seem to fit this explanation. Additionally, a 1986 letter from then-Director of the *Maktab al Thaqafa wa al-I‘lam* reported budgetary issues in the ministry, complaining that his budget was not sufficient to meet the demands that had been placed on it.⁵⁵¹ Some light is shed on this budgetary shortfall by the volume of publications in the late 1980s, the largest quantity of any period since 1968. In fact, the output of publications from the Ministry of Culture and Media grew markedly, from 720 (1975-1979) to 1528 (1980-1984) to 2020 (1985-1989). While many different ministries of the Iraqi government produced their own publications, the Ministry of Culture and Media was by far the most prolific with almost 40% of total government publications from 1975-1989.⁵⁵² Only the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education came close, with 33% and 18% respectively.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ BRCC 01-2140-0003-0272.

⁵⁵¹ BRCC 01-3792-0003-0280.

⁵⁵² Dawwaf, *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-‘Iraqiyya*, 159. The clear majority (>90%) of the books I cite in this dissertation published by the Iraqi government came from the Ministry of Culture and Media.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid*, 159. These figures represent the 1975-1994 period. The Ministry of Culture and Media took a nosedive in the early 1990s, so including those years in the total makes the percentages look closer than they were overall during the period this dissertation investigates.

Addressing issues with the Iraqi opposition seems to have been central to this increase, with fluctuating oil revenues likely played a role as well.

Cultural Dimensions inside the Iraqi Ba‘th Party

Cultural reports produced by Iraqi Ba‘thist bureaucracy opened new windows into how the party managed cultural affairs. Joseph Sassoon covered a number of these issues in his 2012 work on the Iraqi Ba‘th Party using BRCC archives, but many of his examples for the cultural realm come from the 1990s or the early 2000s.⁵⁵⁴ A journal article Sassoon penned in 2014 goes into much more detail about the party’s preparatory courses.⁵⁵⁵ Sassoon explores the *Madrasat al-I‘dad al-Hizbi* using BRCC files, illuminating the type of education given to members and the ways Sassoon characterizes the content as a type of political indoctrination. Only about 10% of members attended the school, as the Party apparently only chose those members who it planned to promote upon completion.⁵⁵⁶ Even this function seems to have largely waned by the late 1980s, as loyalty came to outweigh the qualification of having completed the party preparatory school for advancement, something Sassoon argues was paralleled in the Iraqi military.⁵⁵⁷ My own digging located a number of valuable BRCC reports and files from the 1980s. A 1984 Cultural Plan from the *Maktab al-‘Askari* (Military Bureau) in the Ba‘th Party was broad in scope and filled with important details about what the Party envisioned. Its high-level provenance also meant it had what seem to be direct acknowledgements of issues the Party faced in the cultural sphere, including

⁵⁵⁴ Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein’s Ba‘th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁵⁵⁵ Joseph Sassoon, “The Iraqi Ba‘th Party Preparatory School and the ‘Cultural’ Courses of the Branches” *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.50, no.24 (2014): 27-42.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 30.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid*. Sassoon bases his claim about the school losing its importance on an interview with a former member of the BRCC, whom he does not identify.

illiteracy, trouble reaching rural areas, and party members not complying with orders, for example. Among the goals of the 1984 plan was elaborating the historical and political positions present in state cultural production. One goal was “the certainty of politico-cultural issues that include the Arab-Persian struggle and the Iranian ambitions toward the Arab *Umma* and the connections of that to Imperialist/Zionist designs on the region.”⁵⁵⁸ Another goal was reminiscent of the heritage chapter, outlining how party members needed to be familiar with “authentic Arab heritage.”⁵⁵⁹ A meeting took place between members of the BRCC and the Organizational Offices of the Ba‘th Party on September 23, 1985. The collected officials studied the 1984 Cultural Plan from the *Maktab al-Askari* and offered changes and comments. They recommended expanding the goals of the report in terms of the cultural topics which should be covered. More than a dozen new texts were added, as well as themes of heroism in Arab history in the first *Qadisiyya* against the Persians, the leading historical role of Saddam Hussein in *Qadisiyya Saddam*, and finally a study about the horizons of revolutionary struggle in the current period embodied in the battle against the “racist Persian enemy.”⁵⁶⁰ These themes were intricately tied to larger issues of heritage and state racializing discourse, explored in chapters four and five.

Other records in the North Iraq Dataset (NIDS) contained a very different perspective of reports written by low-level party cadres for their superiors higher in the party. Cultural activities considering the “cultural reality” in the party were outlined in a quarterly administrative report from 1987.⁵⁶¹ Tellingly, these activities heavily overlapped with those of the “political guidance” directorate, explored below. All these reports sought to reshape party members in the interest of making them more cultured. First, the party aimed to “deepen their awareness” of the dangers

⁵⁵⁸ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0533.

⁵⁵⁹ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0533. *Al-turath al-arabi al-aseel*.

⁵⁶⁰ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0302.

⁵⁶¹ BRCC 01-3454-0000-0044

posed by the “racist alliance of Khomeini and Zionism” against Iraq.⁵⁶² This equation of Khomeini with Zionism became a consistent slander employed by the Iraqi Ba‘th against Iran.⁵⁶³ The party secondarily sought to raise the cultural capabilities of party members so they would be able to accurately and eloquently express positions based on party doctrine and culture. Thirdly, the party needed to create a “Ba‘thist personality,” meaning members needed to acculturate to the values and understandings of party ideas. Finally, party members needed to develop “complete love and loyalty” to Saddam Hussein and his ideas and goals.⁵⁶⁴ The elaboration of such goals years into a long and bloody war against Iran points to a perception among Ba‘thist officials that these issues remained unresolved, despite significant efforts for years to address them. In documents about Iraqi army personnel captured and held hostage, the Party worried significantly about these men upon their return as they had apparently been subjected to significant attempts at brainwashing by Iranian forces while held captive. One report about these returning Iraqi POWs complained that men from rural areas of a low cultural level were shaped by these Iranian measures.⁵⁶⁵

Other documents outline how the party evaluated members in the realm of culture for internal advancement and promotion. BRCC files contained forms for evaluating party members; they included metrics such as:

- How effectively could the party member absorb party thought?
- How well can the member convey ideas of party thought to the rest of the party apparatus and the masses? In both regards, the form asks the evaluator to give the member a ranking of weak/ medium/ good/ excellent.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶² BRCC 01-3454-0000-0044

⁵⁶³ Arguably, conspiracy theories today that ISIS is a Zionist creation have at least some of their roots in such messages from the Iran-Iraq war.

⁵⁶⁴ BRCC 01-3454-0000-0044.

⁵⁶⁵ BRCC 01-3665-0001-0616. “Low cultural level” is my translation of “*qalili al-thaqafa*”

⁵⁶⁶ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0075.

- How did the courses and lectures go that the party member participated in? List any courses or lectures the member led for cultural rehabilitation purposes of those led for prospective members.
- List the works or intellectual contributions in writing/ authorship of the member
- List three periodicals/ publications that the member can discuss intelligently in cultural seminars.
- Pick the fields the member is weak in ability to discuss: administration/ intellectual/ political/ economy/ history/ society
- How is the member's ability to converse and participate in party cultural seminars? What about the member's leadership of party cultural seminars for supporters (*ansar*). In both regards, the form asks the evaluator to give the member a ranking of weak/ medium/ good/ excellent.⁵⁶⁷

Such questionnaires help illuminate the importance of culture in the party from a different angle— not merely members struggling to keep up culturally but also the way the party sought to filter candidates for advancement with questions and cultural criteria. This emphasis on cultural qualifications echoes Saddam Hussein's speech about *thaqafa* in the Iraqi Ba'th Party covered above.

Quarterly cultural reports reveal how the party viewed culture inside its cells and branches. These reports found in the NIDS documents contain sections monitoring the political activity of Iraqi opposition groups as well as measures of party cultural training.⁵⁶⁸ Issues with illiteracy were found in every cultural report I located, laid bare in classified documents while the state trumpeted

⁵⁶⁷ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0076.

⁵⁶⁸ I located several of these reports from different governorates, including Qadisiyya (southern Iraq) and Sulemaniyya (north eastern Iraq).

its successes in public. A section of one such report detailed the activities of the Political Guidance branch of the Armed Forces, alongside issues of cultural meetings, fighting illiteracy, and monitoring opposition groups. Other quarterly reports from different governorates discussed social, political, and cultural trends, as well as many of the cultural dimensions also mentioned in cultural reports about the state more broadly. The General Federation for Trade Unions was one vehicle for organizing events the Iraqi Ba‘th Party understood as raising the cultural level of party members.⁵⁶⁹ Their activities were to place the speeches of Saddam Hussein at the center of cultural trainings and courses put on by the Party. Courses centered on the Ninth Regional Congress Report (1983), cited throughout this dissertation, as it outlined Iraqi Ba‘thist positions on a wide variety of issues.⁵⁷⁰ Similarly, the publication *Wa‘yi al-‘Amal* (consciousness of the workers) was to play an important role in meeting party goals in the realm of culture, as it had co-opted unions and incorporated all of them under the aegis of the state, representing the corporatism of Iraqi Ba‘thist policy. Incorporated in the cultural plans for the General Federation for Trade Unions was the gravity of the Mass Literacy Campaign and its implementation through popular schools.⁵⁷¹

Documents from the BRCC highlight perceived successes of Iraqi Ba‘thist media abroad. A 1989 memo detailed efforts to confront Kurdish opposition parties in Europe. It referred to the genocidal *Anfal al-Khalida* (the eternal Anfal campaign) as a success for the party and urged continued activities to influence the cultural sphere. One step proposed was to invite European professors and intellectuals to visit Iraq and specifically to take them to northern Iraq to show them the stable conditions there.⁵⁷² Another proposal was to have Kurdish literary figures and poets

⁵⁶⁹ BRCC 01-2140-0003-0281.

⁵⁷⁰ The Ninth Regional Congress took place in late 1982, but the publication of the report was published early in 1983.

⁵⁷¹ BRCC 01-2140-0003-0281.

⁵⁷² BRCC 01-3868-0003-0319.

from the “cooperating forces” give lectures in European capitals in conjunction with Iraqi cultural centers there.⁵⁷³ A different document from 1986 highlighted the perceived effectiveness of Iraqi media abroad, in that Egyptian intellectuals in both the ruling and opposition parties there had taken up the positions of the Iraqi Ba‘th in regards to the Iran-Iraq war.⁵⁷⁴ These glimpses of plans and results for Iraqi state media abroad, while incomplete, are illustrative of the fundamental connection between the cultural sphere and opposition groups in the eyes of the Iraqi Ba‘th.

Television and Radio under the Iraqi Ba‘th

Television was a pivotal tool for reaching the Iraqi populace that grew in popularity and availability from the 1960s on. When the Iraqi Ba‘th assumed power in 1968, the number of television sets in the country had increased well beyond one hundred thousand, by some estimates eclipsing two hundred thousand. In 1974, there were four television broadcasting stations, located in Baghdad, Nineveh, Basra and Ta‘mim; by 1981 there were fourteen.⁵⁷⁵ Broadcasting time remained relatively limited. Strict Iraqi government control of television meant that even in the 1980s, there was only about eight hours a day of programming, on one channel. Two news bulletins were broadcast live from Baghdad, one at 6pm and the other at 10pm.⁵⁷⁶ Such broadcasts were reportedly disliked by many Iraqis, who found the images of the news stale and expressed a preference for radio.⁵⁷⁷ Additionally, children’s television programming included a program analogous to Sesame Street from the US; *Ifteh Ya Simsim* was produced in Saudi Arabia but

⁵⁷³ BRCC 01-3868-0003-0319. I have not yet found any evidence that this proposal was implemented.

⁵⁷⁴ BRCC 01-2191-0000-0241. Note “perceived” here; I am not making an objective judgment that this was indeed the case that Iraqi state propaganda had achieved these goals, merely that the documents show the Iraqi Ba‘th assessed the situation as such.

⁵⁷⁵ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Congress*, 149.

⁵⁷⁶ Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 125.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

broadcast around the Gulf region and Iraq.⁵⁷⁸ Expansion of cultural production in print was paralleled in increased radio broadcast by the Iraqi state. Radio transmitters were established in Baghdad and Nineveh by the Iraqi Ba‘th in the late 1970s, carrying *al-Huriyya* FM and other stations to all corners of Iraq.⁵⁷⁹ Before the upgrade, radio broadcasts could not reach many peripheral areas, but afterward the state could simultaneously broadcast two programs across the country. Cinema and theatre grew proportionally in the late 1970s, matching the growth of radio and television. The state produced films for entertainment (18), documentaries (247), and some military films of operations (54).⁵⁸⁰ Audio and visual media clearly were not ignored at the expense of written publications, but the sheer volume of writing seems to have been the largest component of state cultural production.

Gender and Culture under the Iraqi Ba‘th

Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production trumpeted women’s equality from a socialist point of view while struggling to implement development programs to realize the equality in practice. In this regard, gender issues in Iraqi cultural production tie closely to the question of “modernization” rather than attempts at counterinsurgency. Thinking about Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production from the standpoint of gender helps frame the ways it was shaped by existing social power relations both in terms of *what* was produced but also in terms of *who* produced it. Gender in Iraq was linked to many of the issues at the center of Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse, the most prominent of which was

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Congress*, 149.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid, 150.

women.⁵⁸¹ Gender was rarely the subject of intellectual production, but rather was part of cultural policies more broadly.⁵⁸²

The General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW) published its own journal, *al-Mar'a* (the woman), in which members regularly wrote about women's issues, though the Iraqi Ba'ath largely cordoned women's issues off into this publication. Amal al-Sharqi, one of Iraq's most prominent female intellectuals, was the editor of *al-Mara'* as well as the director of *dairat thaqafat al-tifl* in the GFIW.⁵⁸³ She got her start as the editor of the Baghdad Observer in 1963, and later took a job editing *al-Jumhuriyya* in 1967.⁵⁸⁴ The GFIW was a member of the Women's International Democratic Foundation, and likewise the Arab Women's League. Styling itself as a leader among other Arab groups, the GFIW was responsible for training other cadres from the Arab Women's League, and took the opportunity to host a conference of the League in Baghdad.

In 1977, the Iraqi Ba'ath released a large bibliography of party works entitled *Sources of Arab Socialist Ba'ath Heritage*. The list of authors showed not one female author. The list did include works written under the name of the party, lacking clear authorship, but if these works were written by women, they were not given clear credit. One woman, Rajiha al-Qudsi, was credited in the work on sources of party heritage: she designed the cover.⁵⁸⁵ *Afaq 'Arabiyya* was measurably better in incorporating the voices of female intellectuals, but this was still limited to on average one or two articles by women per publication, many of which were limited to women's

⁵⁸¹ Achim Rohde, *State-Society Relations in Ba'athist Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2010), 75.

⁵⁸² Amal Rassam analyzes a speech I have been unable to find: "The Woman in the Ideology and Struggles of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party", given by Ilyas Farah, *one of the men* at the center of Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production.

⁵⁸³ Badri, *al-Mara' al-'Iraqiyya*, 37.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ Harbi Musa Hussein and Fouad Yusuf Qazanji, *Masadir Turath al Hizb al Ba'ath al Arabi al Ishtiraki* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1977).

issues.⁵⁸⁶ *Al-Istishraq* followed these masculine patterns in five dense issues, which seem to be the entirety of the publication before it was cancelled. After having no female presence in the first two issues, Shafi'a al-Daghestani was added to the magazine's editorial board starting in issue three and she was published in issue four from February of 1990, writing about famous German orientalist Annemarie Schimmel.⁵⁸⁷

The striking gender disparity in authorship of Iraqi Ba'athist publications imbued cultural production with subtle, other times not-so-subtle themes of masculinity. This was consistent with other areas of Iraqi politics, rather than an exception. Openly gay, lesbian, queer or trans Iraqis were similarly silenced in Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production from 1968-1991. The marginalization of women as authors and intellectuals was matched in the workforce for the nation as a whole. As of 1978, women made up only 19% (763 out of 4040) of employees in the Ministry of Culture and the Arts and just 20% of the Ministry of Media (732 out of 3630).⁵⁸⁸ Images of Iraqi women working or in public without a veil from this period often appear in social media today, nostalgically yearning for a seemingly better, more egalitarian past for women. The statistics reveal a different picture.

In other countries, political debates between nationalists and Islamists, broadly defined, were played out on the bodies of the nation's women- the clothes they could wear, the independence they could or could not enjoy, etc. While much of Iraqi Ba'athist discourse about heritage and religion did not go down this path, leaning instead toward historiographical arguments, Iraq was still no exception, targeting Iran in the late 1980s for what Saddam Hussein

⁵⁸⁶ Based on the author's survey of dozens of such magazines from 1975 when it was first published until 1991. It is not problematic for women to speak about women's issues, on the contrary- but it was rare indeed to see a woman writing in the prominent first twenty pages about the hot political issues of the day.

⁵⁸⁷ Shafi'a al-Daghestani, "*al-Mustashriqa al-Alemaniya Ana Mari Shameel*", *Al-Istishraq*, no.4, (1990): 220.

⁵⁸⁸ Hala al-Badri, *al-Mara' al-'Iraqiyya*, (Beirut, Dar al-Afaq, 1980), 221.

labeled as Iran's regressive policies toward women while Iraq let women join its Popular Army.⁵⁸⁹ Hussein and other party members instead championed women's rights in line with their professed commitments to socialism, a form of state feminism. As discussed in the literacy chapter, girls and women were the primary beneficiaries of the Mass Literacy Campaign undertaken in 1978 after years of planning. Seeking to close the education gap between men and women was a facet of socialist rhetoric undertaken by the Iraqi Ba'ath, also loaded with themes of Third-Worldism. This Third-Worldism in the 1970s aligned the Iraqi Ba'ath with other socialist governments trying to modernize, sharing the ideal of the equality of men and women in society. The Iraqi Ba'ath strongly pushed ideas of Arab heritage tied to its *qawmiyya* in the 1980s, presenting this as its unique position of Third World nationalism which did not merely emulate either Capitalism or Communism while remaining connected to Arab-Islamic heritage. Amal Rassam argued that these two goals- being a "progressive" party which sought to overhaul society and the Iraqi Ba'athist fealty to Arab-Islamic heritage were at odds.⁵⁹⁰ From a different angle, the party's Arab nationalism was the framework for casting suspicion on Iraqis married to foreign women. In 1971, the BRCC decided that Iraqi men married to foreign women could not run ministries, could not be appointed to positions representing Iraq abroad, and could not be made officers in the Iraqi Army.⁵⁹¹ Arab women who were not Iraqi were not seen as a problem in the eyes of the Iraqi Ba'ath and were exempted from the law.⁵⁹²

Yet not all Ba'athist cultural production was so dominantly masculine: Achim Rohde investigated gender in state-society relations by drawing heavily on *Alif-Ba*, finding articles by

⁵⁸⁹ Alissa Walter, *The Ba'ath Party in Baghdad: State-Society Relations Through Wars, Sanctions, and Authoritarian Rule, 1950-2003*, (Georgetown University PhD Dissertation, 2018), 105.

⁵⁹⁰ Rassam, "Political Ideology and Women in Iraq", 82.

⁵⁹¹ Hasan Mohammad Tawalbeh, *al-muwatinun al-'arab wa tashri'at al thawra* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1980), 28.

⁵⁹² Tawalbeh, *al-muwatinun al-'arab*, 28.

women and discussion of issues of sexuality and women's liberation.⁵⁹³ Rohde's work discusses heated debates about women's bodies and clothing representative of urban Iraq in the late 1960s and 1970s, in that women could dress with few reservations, but others remained vehemently opposed to such dress.⁵⁹⁴ A female author in *Alif Ba*, identified only as Salima, argued that such dress only made women sex symbols without changing social conditions tied to labor.⁵⁹⁵ Representative of this modernist push was a Syrian all-women's musical group called "Six Stars" who were overtly feminist and played shows in Baghdad in the early 1970s.⁵⁹⁶ Similarly, television dramas addressed women's issues and sometimes softened such discussions with humor. One example was a play called "Waheda" by Mohammad al-Oassi that aired on television, depicting the predicament of a young orphaned woman whose family expects her to marry her closest male cousin, while she had fallen in love with a worker employed by her uncle. The show's theme and tone clearly supported her choice to pursue love outside the boundaries of tradition.⁵⁹⁷ Hala al-Badri's 1980 publication *al-Mara' al-'Iraqiyya* directly addressed women's roles in the cultural realm while blurring the lines between official and semiofficial cultural production.⁵⁹⁸ The book was published in Beirut with the cooperation of the GFIW.

Women's roles in Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production and Iraq's cultural sphere are not easily summarized. The intellectual class shaped by the state, those authorized to think and advance the Iraqi nation in terms of thought leadership were predominantly men, overwhelmingly older and with no indications of being anything other than heterosexual. The volume of cultural production was so vast that a content analysis alone could be the topic of this dissertation as a whole. Across

⁵⁹³ Rohde, *State-Society Relations*, 76-80.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 76-77.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 79.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 77.

⁵⁹⁷ Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq*, 129.

⁵⁹⁸ Hala al-Badri, *al-Mara' al-'Iraqiyya* (Beirut, Dar al-Afaq, 1980), 32-33, 37-44.

the primary sources for this dissertation, namely several hundred books from the state, as well as *al-turath al -Sha‘bi*, *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, and *al-Istishraq*, women’s roles in leading the party in thought or writing were severely constrained. Similarly, Ba‘thist syllabi of sorts from inside the Party as well as things they published contained few to no women nor did they contain the few bits of cultural production about the Iraqi Ba‘thist approach to women’s issues.⁵⁹⁹ Finally, if gains were indeed made in the 1970s and 1980s in overall literacy rates for women and some limited gains were achieved in workforce participation, the decision by the Iraqi Ba‘th to decriminalize honor killings in 1990 undid these gains and set women back tremendously.⁶⁰⁰ Women’s freedoms and their thought only seemed to be taken seriously to the extent they could score points in larger political battles against the political foes of the Iraqi Ba‘th.

Official and Semi-Official Iraqi Ba‘thist Magazines and Journals

Afaq ‘Arabiyya was a consistent and stable vehicle for Iraqi Ba‘thist intellectual and cultural production from its beginnings in 1975. The magazine’s motto, emblazoned above its table of contents each month, was “*majalla fikriyya shahriyya ‘ama*” or general intellectual monthly. In 1975, Law 197 was issued establishing *Dar Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, founding it independently in terms of administration and budget.⁶⁰¹ *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* was envisioned in Law 197 as a publication to “deepen and publish progressive Arab culture in accordance with the period Iraq found itself in.”⁶⁰² The magazine began under the leadership of Shafiq al-Kamali, an intellectual affiliated with the Iraqi Ba‘th. Unlike *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* detailed in the heritage chapter, *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* was never

⁵⁹⁹ BRCC 01-2147-0001-0259 is one such syllabus.

⁶⁰⁰ Human Rights Watch, “Human Rights Watch World Report 1990- Iraq and Occupied Kuwait” *UNHCR Refworld*. Published 1 Jan 1991, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/467fca3cc.html>

⁶⁰¹ *Al-Jumhuriya al-Iraqiya, Qaida al-Tashri‘at al-Iraqiya no. 197 of 1975* [online] Available at: <http://www.iraqlid.iq/LoadLawBook.aspx?page=1&SC=060120064343739&BookID=15889> [Accessed 26 May 2018].

⁶⁰² Ibid.

privately owned and its employees were all government employees with government pensions. At its inception, the magazine had a generous budget of 250,000 Iraqi Dinars per year, but this was amended later under Law 23 of 1989 to make its budget an eye-popping 5,000,000 Iraqi Dinars.⁶⁰³ Officially, Iraq never readjusted the peg of its currency to the dollar after several major adjustments in that currency, and by the late 1980s market rates for Iraqi dinars were much lower than the official rate. The magazine was set up for success from the beginning with large quantity of resources at its disposal.

Different articles and small sections in Ba‘thist publications acted as a window into material relations behind the scenes. A glimpse of some of the material relations of the magazine came in a 1987 piece commemorating the twelfth anniversary of the magazine which boasted of its cultural and intellectual bonafides. The magazine was credited as having a key role in Iraqi culture as well as Arab culture more broadly. A series of Iraqi ministry officials and Iraqi Ba‘th Party members were acknowledged for sending flowers and cards of congratulations, a rare inclusion in the magazine’s pages. Of course, the most prominent such gifts were listed at the top, those being from Ba‘th Party founder Michel ‘Aflaq and then-Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.⁶⁰⁴

From its beginnings, *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* aimed for a high level of design. In its pages, art movements of all kinds were discussed, most centrally those connected to Iraqi heritage, as that was broadly understood at the time. Abstract art mixed with Arabic calligraphy took many different forms and layouts, with mixed results aesthetically. The magazine utilized four columns of text running parallel to each other, with images interspersed along with flairs of design. Every issue varied but generally was 150+ pages in length, each with more than a dozen original articles.

⁶⁰³ *Al-Jumhuriya al-Iraqiya, Qaida al-Tashri'at al-'Iraqiya no 23 of 1989* [online] Available at: <http://www.iraqld.iq/LoadArticle.aspx?SC=280920079462439>

⁶⁰⁴ No author, “*al-Eid al-Thani ‘Ashir*” *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, vol.13, no.10 (1987): 4-5.

Throughout the rest of the 70s and the 1980s, the magazine consistently opened with original editorials by the editorial team or copies of speeches by Iraqi Ba‘thist leadership. These first two-three articles often covered current events or Iraqi Ba‘thist ideology. The magazine’s layouts and images took a pronounced turn toward a cult of personality in constantly depicting Saddam Hussein in the 1980s. From time to time, the magazine would publish translations of articles first published abroad, but this was not the primary focus. Other articles covered intellectual or historical topics of a broad range, making up most of the publication. Articles that seem to be part of the Project for Rewriting History were commonly found in these next hundred pages, rarely longer than 10 pages each, but addressing ancient and modern historical topics.⁶⁰⁵ Other original articles addressed famous thinkers and writers including Arnold Toynbee, Michel Foucault, Kafka, and many more. Famous scholar of the Arab World Jacques Berque was featured in an interview discussing historiography.⁶⁰⁶ Poetry, short stories, and theoretical pieces were frequent in this middle hundred pages as well. *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* published archival documents relating to modern Iraqi history. Archives covering the 1948 *Wathba* (the name given to a popular uprising against the Hashemite Monarchy), the 1958 Revolution, the 1920 Revolution, the 1936 Bakr Sidqi Coup, the assassination of King Ghazi in the 1930s, and the 1941 Rashid Ali Coup were all published regularly, with most all of those events covered repeatedly over the 1970s and 1980s. At the end of most publications, a short section about *turath* featured book reviews, short pieces on theatre, conferences, and other events in the cultural realm.

From 1975 through at least 1980 there were often letters to the editor in this closing section that responded and or challenged pieces published in previous months, providing a space for

⁶⁰⁵ Unlike other facets of its media production, my research uncovered no clear markers or labels on works indicating they were part of the project for rewriting history.

⁶⁰⁶ Hasab Allah Yahya, “*Hiwar: Jak Berk, al-jadal fi kitabat al tarikh*”, *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, vol.9, no.10, (1984): 114-117.

figures from Iraqi society to engage with and critique pieces published in this magazine published by the Iraqi state. These letters differed in length but were signed with a variety of names, some of which seem like the citizen's full name and others used their kunya only.⁶⁰⁷ One lengthy letter from Muzaffar Amin cited numerous British archival documents in his response to a piece about Iraqi history under the Hashemite Monarchy.⁶⁰⁸ Others came from citizens seeking to set the record straight about something they disagreed with. In the early 1980s, it was no longer consistent that each magazine had a space for letters to the editor, and some issues only ran one, long letter in place of several. After some time with no letters to the editor, about a dozen such letters were all published in October, 1985 on the topic of the history of the 1958 Revolution, responding to a series *Afaq 'Arabiyya* ran on the subject. This space was significantly less open in parallel with tightening state control over society more broadly. It is not clear how many of the letters genuinely came in to the magazine unsolicited. To the extent they disagreed with interpretations over history, such letters avoided direct criticism of the Iraqi state.

Afaq 'Arabiyya was subject to tensions inside the Iraqi Ba'th Party. The period under study for this dissertation saw two different editors-in-chief at *Afaq 'Arabiyya*, the aforementioned Shafiq al-Kamali, a known poet and intellectual, from the magazine's beginning and Iraqi intellectual Muhsin Jasim al-Musawi who took over in late 1983 or early 1984. The August 1983 issue still had al-Kamali's name as the editor but by September, al-Kamali's name was gone and no mention was made of who edited the publication. I could find no announcement nor explanation

⁶⁰⁷ "Kunya" is a term referring to the individual's name relative to their children. Saddam Hussein al-Takriti would likely be known to those close to him as *Abu Uday* or "father of Uday", the name of his oldest male son. On a daily basis, it is very common for people in the Arab world to use these names for people they know, male and female alike. In this case, as the names are so indistinct, the Kunya acts to anonymize the author.

⁶⁰⁸ Muzaffar Amin, "*Hawl Nizam al Hukm al Malaki fi al-Iraq*" *Afaq 'Arabiyya*, vol.4, no.12 (1979): no page number, *adwa wa afaq* section. Amin is listed as being at Durham University; indeed he defended his PhD on the Ahali Group in Iraqi Politics, 1932-1946 a year later.

for the switch, other than finding al-Musawi's name in place of al-Kamali's from January 1984 forward. In July 1983, a page that seems to mark al-Kamali's life was included at the end of the issue, with three candles and al-Kamali's name with the year 1983 written under it.⁶⁰⁹ Al-Kamali had been a party member since the 1950s and found a place on the Ba'athist Revolutionary Command Council in the early 1970s, but conflicts with other members apparently led to his dismissal from the council.⁶¹⁰ Michel 'Aflaq reportedly helped al-Kamali get back in a position of power as deputy chair of the Arab Writers Union and around the same time he was appointed Editor-in-Chief of the nascent *Afaq 'Arabiyya*.⁶¹¹ A slight trace of this episode appeared in the BRCC documents, a cryptic memo about removing al-Kamali from the *Maktab Thaqaifi* which did not explain why or give any more information.⁶¹² Sherko Kirmanj reasoned that al-Kamali's assassination was necessary for Hussein to seize complete control of the media apparatus.⁶¹³ If Kirmanj's interpretation were correct, it would mean that al-Kamali's replacement would have to be a staunch party loyalist for this to even yield the desired result of having al-Kamali killed. However, Muhsin Jasim al-Musawi and his brother Aziz Sayid al Jasim were far from Iraqi Ba'ath Party loyalists, as detailed above. Aziz Sayid al-Jasim had his party membership revoked in 1978; such a clash with the state by one's close family member was more than enough to get one banned from positions of power, and yet Hussein chose Mushin Jasim al-Musawi anyway, casting doubt on Kirmanj's interpretation. If the quality and sustained intellectual output of *Afaq 'Arabiyya and al-Istishraq* from 1984-1991 under al-Musawi is any measure, Hussein chose well.

⁶⁰⁹ See *Afaq 'Arabiyya*, July 1983. The image was located at the very back of the issue. The collection at the Library of Congress had gaps; I was not able to locate the November or December 1983 issues. Eric Davis lists al-Kamali as being executed by the Iraqi Ba'ath but does not give a date. See *Davis, Memories of State*, 256.

⁶¹⁰ Beth K. Dougherty, and Edmund K. Ghareeb "Kamali, Shafiq Al- (1929-1984)" *Historical Dictionary of Iraq*, 2nd edition (Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, 2013), P.357.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹² BRCC 0024-1-1-0080.

⁶¹³ Sherko Kirmanj, *Identity and Nation in Iraq* (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013), 138.

While *Afaq 'Arabiyya* was a stable and successful intellectual monthly, its editor Muhsin Jasim al-Musawi undertook something different. In 1987, under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture's *Dar al-Shu'un al-Thaqafiyya al-'Ama*, a new magazine called *Al-Istishraq* was launched as part of a series called "comparative culture." Al-Musawi wrote of the direction towards studying orientalism in the first issue, centering Anwar Abdel Malek's 1963 article "Orientalism in Crisis." He moves to the 1973 29th Conference of Orientalists in Paris, and its debates around the "death of orientalism" and the perceived solution in moving toward *al-'ulum al-insaniyya*, which translates closer "the humanities" more than "social sciences" as used in English-speaking academia. Later, in a footnote, al-Musawi acknowledges Edward Said's *Orientalism* as one of the key works in the burgeoning field but he argues that Abdel Malek's work was more important, representative of Arab thought in the early 1960s that "carried a seed of clash with other forms of knowledge."⁶¹⁴ Said, at least as al-Musawi argues, only pushed many non-Arab writers to engage with orientalism later, generally agreeing or disagreeing with him, and did not adequately engage with the existing work of Arab intellectuals on the topic of orientalism.⁶¹⁵ In sum, al-Musawi had a bone to pick with the idea that Said was the originator of discourse critical of orientalism, and he sought to show that others predated Said. This direction and emphasis for Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production makes sense if we take a cue from one of the articles published in the first issue, "Orientalism from a Contemporary Arab Philosophical Perspective," namely that foreign orientalists were studying Arab *turath* and that Iraqi state cultural production should not ignore this.⁶¹⁶ The content of later issues bore this out. In the second issue, a variety of articles engaged with French, German, Finnish, Yugoslav, Polish, Soviet, Danish, and other views on orientalism.

⁶¹⁴ Muhsin al-Musawi, "*mudakhil al muthaqafin al-'arab lil-Istishraq: nuqta al tahawwul*" *Al-Istishraq* vol.1, no.1 (1987): 7.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid*, 8-10.

⁶¹⁶ 'Abdul Ameer al-A'sim, "al-Istishraq min Manthur Falsafi 'Arabi Mu'asir" *Al-Istishraq* vol1. No.1, (1987): 14.

Despite al-Musawi's introductory article, or indeed not limited because of it, several of these articles were framed as responses and interpretations of Edward Said's orientalism.

While some articles in *Afaq 'Arabiyya* took up postmodernism by focusing on different intellectuals, such as Michel Foucault for example, *al-Istishraq* is one of the few Iraqi Ba'athist publications I have found that also took up postmodernism in a more substantial way. If there was an effect of state censorship or Iraqi Ba'athist attempts to shape the content of *al-Istishraq*, it was not immediately obvious to this author. There is no indication that the Party itself had interest in postmodernism; rather it seems the intellectuals running *Afaq 'Arabiyya* were allowed to write about other cultural and intellectual topics as long as they did not present any challenge to the state. *al-Istishraq* did not have the hallmarks of other state cultural production, namely pieces about party ideology, reproductions of Saddam Hussein's speeches, nor did it even have the trappings of the personality cult around Saddam Hussein that developed so strongly from the 1980s on. In this regard, *al-Istishraq* stands apart from all other Iraqi state publications from the late 1980s.

Al-Mu'arikh al 'Arabi (the Arab Historian) began as a partially state-sponsored publication in 1974, based in Baghdad, featuring articles on a variety of historical topics. In the journal's first issue, it graciously thanked the Iraqi Ba'ath Party for a twenty-thousand Iraqi Dinars that enabled the magazine to get off the ground.⁶¹⁷ In the same piece, the Qatari state was likewise acknowledged and thanked for its financial support.⁶¹⁸ The Union of Arab Historians had an office in Baghdad but worked with multiple other Arab states and held conferences around the Arab World, sometimes in conjunction with UNESCO or the Arab League. The editorial board of *Al-Mu'arikh al 'Arabi* reflected this diversity of national origin, with figures (all male) from

⁶¹⁷ Hussein Ameen, "Akhbar al Itihad al-Mu'arrikin", *al-Mu'arrikh al-'Arabi*, vol.1, (1975): 5.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

universities in Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, Algeria, and others. While there was diversity of Arab nations represented, I have yet to locate any articles in the eight issues I was able to access written by women. The fourth issue apologizes for a delay in its publication, but offered no explanation. Notably, this is the first and only issue listed as being published by the University of Baghdad. Issue five thanks the Government of Kuwait for taking up the printing of the publication, though the secretariat for the Union was still listed as being in Baghdad. Issue six and issue seven thank the Moroccan government and the Libyan government respectively for their financial support, with issue seven printed by Qar Yunis University in Libya. Issue eight was once again printed in Baghdad, but is listed as having been printed by the Ministry of Culture and Media, not the University of Baghdad like issue four.⁶¹⁹

In October of 1977, the Union of Arab Historians collaborated with the Iraqi Ba‘th to host a conference in Baghdad centered around the work of British historian Arnold Toynbee.⁶²⁰ Papers developed for this conference appeared not only in *al-Mu‘arikh al ‘Arabi* but also in *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, constituting a sizable output of articles interrogating Toynbee’s understanding of history. The Iraqi government also worked with the Union to publish several historical works, notably including a work about Arab Iraqi textiles fitting into Iraqi Ba‘thist emphasis on folklore and heritage. The Union of Arab Historians thus received financial help from the Iraqi Ba‘th, worked in conjunction with it, but was not solely under the aegis of the Iraqi state or the Ba‘th Party.

The Iraqi state manipulated cultural infrastructure of Iraq toward its own ends, rather than reflecting the pluralism of Iraqi society. State cultural publications in the 1970s varied in the degree to which they were controlled by the Iraqi Ba‘th Party. The Party’s constitution, written in the late

⁶¹⁹ The reasons for the changes are not clear from any information I can discern from the publications themselves.

⁶²⁰ No author “*Akhbar ‘ilmiyya*” *al-Mu‘arikh al-‘Arabi*, vol. 6, (1978): 179-180.

1940s, insisted that “intellectual work is one of the most sacred kinds. It is the state’s concern to protect and encourage intellectuals and scientists.”⁶²¹ It also insisted that “every freedom will be given for the foundation of clubs, associations, parties, youth groupings, and tourist organizations, as well as for obtaining profit from the cinema, radio, television and all the other facilities of modern civilization...” But even then, this passage was prefaced with “within the limits of the Arab national idea.”⁶²² This ambiguity in the founding document contrasted the Party’s willingness to present liberal values with crippling caveats foreshadowing the party’s actions in power in Iraq from 1968 forward.

Al-Turath al-Sha‘bi, a cultural journal that came under the control of the state, was one such publication that began by publishing articles about unique facets of culture and heritage by members of Iraqi society. From early 1980 forward, there is strong evidence that the Iraqi Ba‘th exerted more control over the publication, inserting content that parroted the cultural production and messages of the Iraqi Ba‘th, most notably in relation to the war against Iran.⁶²³ Iraqi Ba‘thist control over culture and intellectuals, however, was never complete. Iraqi intellectuals and citizens more broadly found ways to say what they wanted, though they often faced strong consequences for doing so. Critical discourse pushed by some writers willing to challenge the Iraqi Ba‘th existed alongside state violence to repress such critical discourse.⁶²⁴

⁶²¹ Sylvia Haim, *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), 240.

⁶²² Haim, *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, 240.

⁶²³ *Al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* will be covered in depth in the heritage chapter.

⁶²⁴ Muhsin al-Musawi wrote an appendix about his brother ‘Aziz al-Sayyid Jasim, describing his life as an opposition intellectual in Iraq. Jasim was detested by both the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the Iraqi Ba‘th Party, and the latter took strong measures to stifle any posthumous publication about Jasim and his writings in Iraq. Jasim wrote numerous articles in *al-Iraq* and *Qadisiyya* dailies criticizing the state for environmental damage during the war against Iran, both before and after he was imprisoned briefly in 1988. Jasim had been an honorary party member earlier in the 1970s but his membership was terminated by 1978, and his books banned. Jasim’s transgressions eventually cost him his life in 1991 after he wrote a scathing rebuke to Saddam Hussein’s editorials after the 1991 *intifada*. Al-Musawi details threats directed at him by the Iraqi Ambassador to Tunisia in the 1990s when al-Musawi was teaching at a university in Tunis and published about Jassim’s life through an Egyptian publisher in

Directorate for Political Guidance

Almost all information from scholarly secondary sources on the Directorate for Political Guidance comes from Dina Rizk Khoury's groundbreaking work on the Iran-Iraq War. The Directorate for Political Guidance (*Tawjih Siyasi*) was housed under the Ministry of Defense with a broad mandate which splayed across domestic and international fronts.⁶²⁵ Its primary task was to disseminate information to soldiers and information about the war against Iran for audiences inside Iraq. There was one official television station and two radio stations, all controlled by the Iraqi government with programming shaped by the *Tawjih Siyasi*. The daily newspaper *al-Qadisiyya*, which was named after the term used by the Iraqi Ba'ath for the war against Iran, was also part of this output. Far from unrelenting Ba'athist messages, the programming largely eschewed political indoctrination tied to Ba'athist ideology and instead focused on belittling the enemy while praising the values of Iraqi soldiers. The directorate did not merely disseminate information, it was empowered to punish soldiers as necessary to avert what records called "negative phenomena" i.e. desertion, failing to perform duties, or lack of enthusiasm.⁶²⁶ Many of the problems with morale and commitment, Rizk Khoury found in her research, were ultimately blamed on party commissars who had not diligently reported the problems with morale earlier.⁶²⁷ Such an explanation makes the problem technical, not structural, implying it would not be an issue if it had been dealt with immediately. The Military Bureau functioned as the nucleus of Ba'ath Party control over culture by being closely tied to the Presidency while operating independently from

1997. Al-Musawi also describes how ICP members were banned from writing about Jassim even once they were abroad if they wanted to remain members of the ICP. See Muhsin al-Musawi, *Reading Iraq: Culture and Power in Conflict* (New York: IB Tauris, 2006), appendix 1 (Profile: Aziz al-Sayyid Jasim), 144-146.

⁶²⁵ Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*, 84.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid*, 88.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid*, 93-94.

the Ba‘th Party General Secretariat.⁶²⁸ In its reports evaluating issues with soldiers during the war, the Military Bureau assessed many soldiers as having “firmer ties to his kin, tribe, ethnicity, and class than nation,” which persisted because soldiers did not have sufficient education.⁶²⁹ This problem was confirmed in a 1984 cultural report produced by the Military Bureau, which did not take up the issue of literacy/ culture among soldiers but among party members and citizens. In this report, *Tawjih Siyasi* was acknowledged as playing a prominent role in strengthening the “doctrinal construction” of Iraqi soldiers through spreading Iraqi and *qawmi* consciousness to strengthen the souls of soldiers.⁶³⁰

Tawjih Siyasi complemented these activities inside the armed forces by banning books and seizing them from market shelves in Iraqi society. Documents from the NIDS show that officers from the Political Guidance division would seek out books in the market and remove them, keen to prevent their circulation, sometimes at the instruction of the General Censorship Division of the Ministry of Culture and Media.⁶³¹ Some of the texts were about Shi‘ism, others about politics in the region most broadly.⁶³² Texts by Mohammad Baqir al Sadr, a leading Iraqi Shi‘i religious figure, were to be pulled from shelves as was a book about workers’ struggles.⁶³³ Al-Sadr’s texts reportedly circulated in secret anyway as they had been widely available before being banned.⁶³⁴ It is unclear where some of the banned texts came from, but others are explicitly listed as coming from publishing houses in Lebanon and Iran.⁶³⁵ Songs also fell under censorship, as files in this same box include restrictions on singers like Harry Belafonte or the lifting of restrictions on

⁶²⁸ Ibid, 84.

⁶²⁹ Ibid, 94.

⁶³⁰ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0537.

⁶³¹ NIDS 1346834. My translation of *Dairat al Raqaba al-A‘ma*.

⁶³² See files NIDS 134638/ 1346844/ 1346846 / 1346851.

⁶³³ NIDS 1346904/ 1346917.

⁶³⁴ Al-Musawi, *Reading Iraq*, 81.

⁶³⁵ NIDS 134917 (Beirut/ workers’ struggles) and NIDS 134919 (Iran, magazine from an Islamic publishing house).

Mohammad Abdul Wahhab.⁶³⁶ The above examples come from one relatively small boxfile, in a limited period in 1980. The incomplete nature of the NIDS dataset leaves open the question of when these policies were first implemented or when they changed, if at all. Muhsin al-Musawi describes similar policies in the mid-1970s, namely that books were banned and that public libraries were to burn every book that did not align with a nationalist reading of Islam.⁶³⁷ Moreover, books that were too “leftist” or containing populist ideas were banned as well. The date of the documents is instructive in that these examples of banning books and seizing them from market shelves took place in the middle of the Mass Literacy Campaign detailed in Chapter Two. Though illiteracy was a major problem in Iraq the Ba‘th sought to address, they were still willing to censor books as deemed necessary. This gets at an important paradox- the Iraqi Ba‘th was frustrated at the troubles it had educating party members about its own ideas yet feared opposition groups would not have these difficulties in spreading ideas the state deemed threatening. Underneath this paradox seems to be an implicit lack of confidence in Party positions, a tacit acknowledgment that opposition parties had more success in winning political support with their ideas. Whereas Iraqi Communists and the Iraqi Da‘wa were both putting forward strong ideological positions, Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba‘th selectively used successful parts of the discourse of those parties and incorporated those ideas into existing Ba‘thist positions, mutating them in the process. This phenomenon is demonstrated in Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to rewrite history.

Project for Rewriting History

⁶³⁶ NIDS 1346851 (Belafonte)/ 1346861 (Abdul Wahhab). The files do not clarify why these figures were chosen for censorship.

⁶³⁷ Al-Musawi, *Reading Iraq*, 79.

History and historiography were central elements of a larger campaign by the Iraqi Ba’th to reshape Iraqi national identity. Sometime in the early 1970s after returning to power, the Iraqi state undertook a large program to rewrite the nation’s history. Muhsin al-Musawi dates this to 1973, and centers the push for history with Saddam Hussein.⁶³⁸ The term ‘history’ or *tarikh* circulated in festivals, museums, and archeological sites as well as academic events, overlapping strongly with the issues of *turath* explored in Chapter Four.⁶³⁹ In these speeches, Saddam Hussein laid out a plan for re-writing history, and a committee for rewriting history was established in 1979. Established with Saddam Hussein as its chair, “The Committee for Rewriting History” continued throughout the Iran-Iraq War.⁶⁴⁰ The committee published different texts, including a multi-volume history of Iraq meant to move aside supposedly unreliable historical accounts authored by al-Tabari, al-Mas‘udi, and al-Yaqubi.⁶⁴¹ In June of 1981, the Iraqi state sponsored a four-day conference on writing Arab history in Baghdad. It is useful to explore here as Doctor Muhammad Hussein al-Zubaidi wrote in depth about the program to re-write history in his description of the event published in *Sumer*, the Iraqi state’s publication primarily about archaeology. Al-Zubaidi argues that Arab history as written earlier had numerous flaws and gaps, lacking analysis of the thought of previous authors or the larger connections of history. The result was historical production *that did not meet the increasing needs of today’s age*, and thus the history needed to be rewritten.⁶⁴²

Iraq under Saddam Hussein styled itself as offering something unique and powerful to the rewriting of Arab history. Al-Zubaidi narrates in his *Sumer* article that many individuals sought to

⁶³⁸al-Musawi, *Reading Iraq*, 79.

⁶³⁹ *ibid*, 77.

⁶⁴⁰ *ibid*.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid*.

⁶⁴² Muhammad Hussein al-Zubaidi “*Nadwa Baghdad li-Kitabat al-Tarikh al-‘Arabi*”, *Sumer*. Vol 24, no.1/2, (1981): 260. Emphasis mine.

rewrite Arab history, but their work remained fragmented and uncoordinated. Various states, like Syria, Libya, and Saudi Arabia took an interest in rewriting Arab history, but according to Zubaidi, Iraq's efforts were of a larger scale.⁶⁴³ He praises Iraq for taking the issue seriously at the highest level of leadership, opening the pages of its official newspaper for articles on history, after which the Ministry of Culture and Media disseminated Saddam Hussein's speeches and various articles to expand their reach.⁶⁴⁴

A key series of speeches referenced in Hussein's approach were from 1975 and 1977. One such speech, in September of 1977, was presented to Iraqi Ba'athist media functionaries about the need to rethink Arab history. Saddam intoned to his audience that "[T]he history of the Arab nation does not start with Islam. Rather, it reaches back into the ages of remote antiquity."⁶⁴⁵ The exact quote was reproduced alongside an article in the monthly intellectual magazine *Afaq Arabiya* in July of 1983.⁶⁴⁶ This would not be the last time Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba'ath made the point. In *On The Writing of History*, an introduction written by the publisher, *Dar al Thawra*, reiterates the point about moving prior to Islam in conceptions of Arab history and Saddam's emphasis on it.⁶⁴⁷ In September 1979, after the Islamic Revolution and his seizure of full power, Saddam once again made the point to a gathering of historians. A large edited volume was released in 1979 with multiple guest chapters by Saddam Hussein and an intro by the Ministry of Culture.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴³ al-Zubaidi, "*Nadwa Baghdad...*", 260.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁵ Khalil Osman, *Sectarianism in Iraq: The Making of State and Nation since 1920* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 189.

⁶⁴⁶ Muhammad Jasim Muhammad, "*al-Juthur lil-Wa'i al-Qawmi 'and al-'Arab*", *Afaq 'Arabiyya*, Vol.8 no.11 (1983): 89

⁶⁴⁷ Saddam Hussein, *Hawla Kitabat al-Tarikh* (Baghdad: Dar al Thawra, 1980).

⁶⁴⁸ Davis, *Memories of State*, 171. I have been unsuccessful in locating any copy of this edited volume on writing history.

In a speech delivered to commemorate the thirteenth anniversary of the 17-30 July Revolution that brought the Iraqi Ba‘th to power, Hussein offered a digestible account of centuries of history:

Praise be to the Almighty God for all that has been realized and congratulations to you, great Iraqis, on what you have achieved. You rightly deserve good and glory. You are a people which has offered a lot to life. Thousands of years ago, you offered great civilizations to humanity and lit the torch of science and knowledge. Together with other sons of your great Arab nation, you contributed – with great distinction – to spreading the great heavenly messages. Throughout eras of decline, you, your fathers and grandfathers lived for centuries under oppression, tyranny, backwardness and poverty. Your enemies thought that you had lost your historical opportunity for ever. But- despite all that you suffered during those dark stages of your history- you have proved that you are a living people, that you are sons of a living and vigorous nation, and that you are descendants of those great ancestors, the well-known historical leaders, constructors, originators of civilization and message-bearers.⁶⁴⁹

The most striking facet of the narrative presented above, in what I argue is part of nationalist historiography more broadly, is the sense that the Arab nation’s periods of decline and trouble were the result of oppression and tyranny by others enacted on the nation. A semi-official biography of Saddam Hussein released in 1980 complemented the wave of cultural production, highlighting Hussein’s passion for history in a full chapter.⁶⁵⁰ “History and the renaissance of the Nation” was a sub-section of Amir Iskander’s in depth political biography of Saddam Hussein. The proximity/ access of the author to Hussein himself comes through clearly in the work. In his account, Iskander highlights three key texts he argues outline Saddam’s views on history. Out of these three texts, Iskander finds the entirety of Saddam’s views on history. Iskander’s

⁶⁴⁹ Saddam Hussein, *President Hussein’s Speech on National Day, 1981* (Baghdad: Dar al-Mamun for Translation and Publishing, 1981), 9.

⁶⁵⁰ See Iskandar, *Saddam Hussein*, 147-166.

interpretation can be given weight since he worked in close coordination with Hussein; the same text contains an interview with Hussein after Iskander's chapters.⁶⁵¹

At the outset, Iskander's chapter on Saddam Hussein and history contains no criticisms of his personality or his approach to history. Setting the stage for the book, the preface clearly lionizes the Iraqi Ba'ath and characterizes the Party after the 1968 coup as a group who "...began to strike at the espionage networks and the system of foreign agents... Having consumed the spies and agents it began to threaten their main arsenal- the Iraqi Oil Company, the observation post of political reaction, the operation room of imperialism..."⁶⁵² Such laudatory language is the first red flag. Indeed Iskander was close to Hussein, but this book came out in early 1980. By then, Hussein had already seized full power in Iraq and one could see the writing on the wall. The account of Saddam's view of history similarly lionizes him and does not dare criticize his writings; the book is essentially informed hagiography.⁶⁵³ Iskander blurred the line of Iraqi state cultural production, clearly working with and promoting a favorable view of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi state

⁶⁵¹ The nature of Hussein's views on history and their continuity/ discontinuity throughout the texts produced by the Rewriting History Program is a fascinating subject but one far too large to undertake in this chapter. Moreover, my sweep of the several hundred texts (books, magazine and journal articles) has found no clear labeling indicating any texts were part of this program. This is puzzling given the tendency to label quite extensively about the branches of the Iraqi government and the publishing houses inside all books from the Iraqi state. Liora Lukitz listed the following texts as being part of the program: "Nuri Said and his role in Iraqi Politics (1932-1945)" "Abd al Muhsin Al Saadun and his role in the contemporary history of Iraq" "Rashid Ali al Kaylani's Movement, 1941" "Ja'far al-'Askari and his role in Iraqi politics until 1936" "Mawlud Makhlis al Pachachi and his role in the Great Arab Rebellion and Iraqi History" "Memoirs of Muhammad al Sheikh 'Ali" "Faysal II, his family, his life, and his writings" "King Faysal the First, The British and Iraq's Independence" see Liora Lukitz, *Iraq: The Search for National Identity*. (London: Frank Cass, 1995). The problem is that those texts come from the 1970s and some predate Hussein's speeches on the subject and the establishment of the committee for rewriting history.

⁶⁵² Iskandar, *Saddam Hussein*, 8.

⁶⁵³ "But why Saddam Hussein? Because it is Saddam Hussein who is now in control of the train in the Revolution in Iraq and who has a thorough knowledge of the line and all its twists and turns, and because it is Saddam Hussein whom the passengers have chosen as the engine driver to sit in the driver's cabin, because of his knowledge, pugnacity and loyalty, and because they know that he will not stop half-way or maroon them at a remote station, and because Saddam Hussein has brought a new dawn to all our Arab homeland and it is he who is best qualified to guide us through the perils that await us on the rough road that lies before us, and bring us safely to our desired goal." *Ibid*, 11.

Hussein controlled, but additional details about his relationship to Hussein are not clear. Similarly, other state-sponsored publications had opaque relationships with the Iraqi Ba‘th, and the amount of control exerted over their content is not easily discerned.

The most focused scholarly work to look at issues of rewriting history by the Iraqi Ba‘th is a book chapter by Peter Wien, which explores attempts to rewrite the history of the 1941 Rashid Ali Coup.⁶⁵⁴ The Rashid Ali Coup was a pan-Arabist uprising against British rule through the Hashemite Monarchy. The British Mandate over Iraq had already ended about a decade before, but strong British influence remained through pliant governments and was representative of association used in British colonial approaches used in Africa.⁶⁵⁵ When Arab nationalist figures led by Rashid Ali al-Gailani overthrew the Monarchy and ruled Iraq for a month, it was Iraq’s first taste of national independence, though it was quickly nipped in the bud by British military forces which invaded the country through Basra and re-imposed the Monarchy, arresting or driving the conspirators of the coup abroad. The Iraqi Ba‘th Party did not yet exist when the coup took place and would not for at least another decade. To claim its legacy, the party needed to latch onto symbols and ideas, which it tried to do through historical writing.

Wien’s study situates texts about the 1941 Rashid Ali Coup alongside events with which they were contemporaneous. His work brings several interesting points into focus. First, these elements of national memory shifted over a longer period than the confines of my study will allow. Second, by looking at the 10, 20, 30 and 40-year anniversaries of the events of “Forty-One” (the memories around the event rather than the historical record of events). Wien finds that even in 1971, with the Ba‘th already in power, the 30th anniversary of the 1941 Coup passed with only the

⁶⁵⁴ Peter Wien, “From Forty-One to Qadisiyat Saddam” in *Writing the Modern History of Iraq*, (Singapore: World Scientific, 2012), 110.

⁶⁵⁵ The British in Africa leaned towards associating with local elites, exerting influence through them, whereas the French aimed for assimilation, which sought to reshape colonial subjects in a French mold.

tiest of mentions in *al-Jumhuriyya*.⁶⁵⁶ The anniversary was not completely ignored, but was part of a series of floats at the 1971 Mosul Spring Festival that displayed themes from Iraqi and Mesopotamian history.⁶⁵⁷ This incongruence seems to hint at different arms of the state not being on the same page. Wien identifies the start of war against Iran as also bringing back Iraqi Ba‘thist emphasis on the memory of Forty-One in state cultural production, showing how *Qadisiyya Saddam* rhetoric explored in chapter four and five was tied to the memory of Forty-One.⁶⁵⁸ Whereas “Forty-One” had nothing to do with Iran in earlier historical memory, the Iraqi Ba‘th published some articles in its *al-Jumhuriyya* newspaper mentioning how the protagonists of the 1941 Revolt fled to Iran but that Iran betrayed them by handing them over to the “reactionary forces” in Iraq for execution.

Wien did not explore articles in *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* and instead focused on newspapers, meaning interesting details of the rewriting of Forty-One did not enter his analysis. A May 1977 piece in *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* marked the thirty-sixth anniversary of the events of Forty-One with two documents left to the magazine after the death of Talib Mushtaq, an Iraqi diplomat active in the events.⁶⁵⁹ The first document was an agreement signed between Iraq and Germany agreeing on terms for an independent Arab state that would consist of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and “East Jordan.” The second was a transcript of a discussion between Adolf Hitler and Hajj Amin al-Husseini, which sees Arabs and Germans as partners in a fight against the Jews.⁶⁶⁰ While it has been argued

⁶⁵⁶ Wien, “From Forty-One to Qadisiyat Saddam”, 110-111.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid, 112.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid, 111.

⁶⁵⁹ No author, “*Min Awraq Talib Mushtaq: Wathiqatan Tarikhatan*” *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, vol.2 issue 9 (1977): 28-29.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid. A different discussion concerned with the truth of events in 1941 would interrogate the authenticity of these documents, yet for the purposes of investigating Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to write and rewrite history, the mere presentation of these documents as authentic is enough to merit discussion. Hajj Amin El-Husseini was a central figure in interwar Palestinian politics whose collaboration with Nazis has been a heated topic of disagreement, mostly in terms of how much power he had or how much blame he (and consequently, Palestinians) should have for the Holocaust.

that the Iraqi Ba‘th deliberately tried to avoid the “problematic” aspects of Forty-One by not mentioning Nazi involvement, this article and the two accompanying documents reveal, in fact, tied the Arab protagonists of Forty-One to Nazi Germany and directly to Adolf Hitler. The Iraqi Ba‘th similarly published archival documents about different historic events as well as articles studying the 1948 Wathba (the name given to a popular uprising against the Hashemite Monarchy), the 1958 Revolution, the 1920 Revolution, the 1936 Bakr Sidqi Coup, the assassination of King Ghazi in the 1930s, and the 1941 Rashid Ali Coup mentioned above.

Historical memory and understandings of Iraqi history were key parts of the culture the Iraqi Ba‘th sought to reshape as part of its cultural revolution. As Eric Davis writes, Ba‘thist rewriting of Iraqi history was fundamentally about reshaping the younger generation’s understandings of the past, highlighting how Ba‘thist youth groups coordinated meetings for their members with the Ministry of Culture and Media. History writing, studies of literature and folklore were important fora in which emerging Iraqi intellectuals could be published.⁶⁶¹ Davis offers us an answer to ideological contradictions between pan-Arabism and Iraqist nationalism, arguing that the state shrewdly made vague and highly abstract ideological pronouncements and that the state’s “...new cultural model proffered a subtler means of mobilizing consent and popular support.”⁶⁶² Davis reiterated the point in the conclusion of his work, arguing that societies with sharply drawn regional and ethnic splits will see hegemonic ideologies avoid detailed and overt statements of ideology in favor of greater dependence upon the manipulation of historical memory, and that this was especially true of states controlled by an ethnic minority.⁶⁶³ I address this claim in more detail in chapter five about Iraqi Ba‘thist approaches to its political opposition, arguing that territory and

⁶⁶¹ Davis, *Memories of State*, 161.

⁶⁶² *Ibid*, 159.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid*, 272.

the basic geography of Iraq is as important or more so than the mere presence of ethnic diversity. Muhsin al-Musawi offers his interpretation of Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to rewrite history in his work exploring cultural themes, *Reading Iraq*. Al-Musawi argued that Hussein wanted the shift toward Mesopotamian themes to stake out a position that was not hostile to ethnic diversity in Iraq, and that this took place at the outset of Ba‘thist rule in the first four years from 1968-1972.⁶⁶⁴ He also notes Al-Musawi reasons that Saddam Hussein wanted to glorify history to emphasize the agency of heroes, not institutions or political parties, in preparation for seizing power.⁶⁶⁵ While an interesting answer, this dissertation argues that facets of culture and history in Iraq paralleled those in other parts of the postcolonial world, thus Saddam Hussein’s proclivities might partially explain why history became a central part of Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production, but this argument fails to explain why Iraq aligns with other parts of the postcolonial world. As chapter four on *turath/* heritage will show, such discourses centered on the term *al-turath* in a manner consistent with the rest of the Third World. While I disagree with Davis’ argument above, namely that the state sought to use vague messaging to avoid ideological incoherence, I agree with the observation that Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to rewrite history sought to expunge the Iraqi nationalist influence from Iraq’s political sphere.⁶⁶⁶ My position is that the instrumental goal of neutralizing the political claims of multiple different political opposition groups led to contradictions in state messages, not any calculated strategy to utilize vague ideological statements. Moreover, as this chapter has shown, the quantity of state cultural production boomed from 1975 forward as the state better established its cultural institutions. It makes no sense to markedly increase the volume of state cultural publications while leaving the statements deliberately vague; this approach would not achieve state

⁶⁶⁴ Al-Musawi, *Reading Iraq*, 77.

⁶⁶⁵ *ibid*, 77.

⁶⁶⁶ Davis, *Memories of State*, 161.

goals. Davis' claim about re-writing history, however, is in accordance with my argument about how state discourse was meant to neutralize the political appeal of opposition groups. Al-Musawi comes to the same conclusion from a different angle, describing the project to rewrite history as targeting party members sympathetic to Iraqi Shi'a, especially after the riots in Karbala and Najaf in 1977.⁶⁶⁷ Other facets of historical discourse heralded by the state, namely *shu'ubiyya* discourse explored in the opposition chapter clashed fundamentally with Mesopotamian messages in content and in their intended goals, a point that neither Davis nor al-Musawi gives enough weight. Iraqi Ba'athist messages clashed- one embracing the pre-Islamic history of Mesopotamia to include non-Arab and non-Islamic groups in the Iraqi nation, while the other demonized exactly those groups as interlopers challenging Arab dominance. The first was meant to co-opt successful ideas from the Iraqi Communist Party, while the latter sought to excise them from the Iraqi nation. While I have found no explicit attempt to address this contradiction, the contradictions make sense if one remembers the instrumental goal of Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production and state discourse as a tool of counterinsurgency used against opposition groups. The discursive level is surely important, but developmentalist aspects of culture and its importance in Iraq were often shaped inside Party meetings through regular events and training sessions.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the tangible institutions and their outputs that comprised Iraqi Ba'athist cultural infrastructure. Sources from the Iraqi state itself laid out the way that cultural institutions were formed, split, reorganized, and closed. While certainly incomplete, such an effort is important to establish what is known about the shifting presence and absence of printing presses,

⁶⁶⁷ Al-Musawi, *Reading Iraq*, 79.

government ministries, and party branches that worked together to shape cultural policy in Iraq under the Ba‘th. The reasons for the changes, expansions, or decline of different branches remains unclear without direct interviews with people who worked in them or other primary documents (from the BRCC, for example) that would explain such changes directly.

The Iraqi Ba‘th weaponized culture and cultural infrastructure to support the party’s aims in power, most centrally counterinsurgency. As we saw in the introductory chapter, the Library of Congress and other institutions purchased Iraqi books along with many others as part of PL480 to weaponize US research libraries to win the intellectual Cold War against US enemies. Similarly, Iraqi archives were stolen from Iraq in 2003 with the deliberate aim to weaponize them and demonize the Iraqi state, justifying the US invasion of 2003 *ex post facto*. The US and Iraq both saw much at stake in the cultural/ media sphere, and sought to manipulate information and ultimately public opinion in their favor. Obviously Iraq had a more difficult path, as it needed to meet development objectives in terms of literacy and education, hindering its ability to shape its citizens’ views through cultural production. The Iraqi Ba‘th clearly equated the two, envisioning success in literacy and edification would only bolster mass support for its ideas and policies. Such an assumption is oversimplified. One must not assume that success with eradicating illiteracy would correspondingly indicate success of the state’s attempts to spread its ideas and positions through cultural productions. The Iraqi Ba‘th attempted to improve education and illiteracy during the late 1970s and early 1980s, a crucial step in trying to move Iraqi society forward, irrespective of the ideas it would push on society. The volume of cultural production and the messages it disseminated could not fundamentally alter levels of development and education in Iraq. The Party had clear goals about where it wanted to go, but could not reach the level of development it envisioned, on par with industrialized nations. Displaying leadership in the cultural realm was key

for the approach of the Iraqi Ba‘th to both domestic and international spheres. No state of Iraq’s size, even bursting with oil revenues, could take on such challenges by itself, which helps us understand Saddam Hussein’s desire to build a multifaceted coalition, first of Arab states and with the *I‘lan al-Qawmi*, the Non-Aligned Movement. Iraqi Ba‘thism needed its own internationalism to hope to compete against those it saw as its rivals on a larger stage, namely Imperialism, Zionism, Communism, and Islam.

To Saddam Hussein, this battle of ideas represented in state cultural production was central to politics. Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural programs were directed at winning the war of ideas with all other competing political groups, primarily the Iraqi Communists and Iraqi Shi‘a parties like the Da‘wa, domestically. The Iraqi Ba‘th had an uphill battle to justify their leadership of Iraq as each one of these other groups had at least as much if not more intellectual and cultural bona fides than the Ba‘th did. This uphill battle is most simply represented in the need for the Iraqi Ba‘th to co-opt the ideas of Iraqi Communists and Shi‘i political groups that were popular, rather than those groups acquiescing to Iraqi Ba‘thist positions. The following chapter explores the central discursive node of *turath*, or heritage, showing how it functioned at the center of Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to legitimate itself, to fight the aforementioned battle of ideas, but also that it was part and parcel of a larger phenomenon, spread across the entire Third World, namely a resurgence of tradition and heritage that was part of postcolonial disillusionment with Western standards of modernity.

CHAPTER FOUR: Turath/Heritage

A 1976 speech given by then President Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr inaugurated the Festival of al-Farabi, a famous Arab philosopher. Reproduced in the 1976 volume of *Sumer*, al-Bakr waxed eloquent about heritage, or *al-turath*, underscoring al-Farabi's role in "Arab-Islamic civilization."⁶⁶⁸ He continued, denouncing "imperialistic oppressive elements which usurp the rights of peoples and its (sic) riches attempt to ignore the authentic contribution of most of the peoples in the world in building up human civilization." "From this point of view," Bakr pressed on, "we of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party and the 17th of July Revolution, do not consider heritage an unanimated mass. We do not consider heritage just for showing off, but while we emphasize its historical value we regard it as a great national and revolutionary value in our contemporary life."⁶⁶⁹ Bakr used anti-imperialist rhetoric here to underscore the value of heritage, affirming its role in Iraqi Ba'athist revolutionary consciousness. The text of the speech was immediately followed in the pages of *Sumer* by Dr. Isa Salman, the Director of Antiquities, expanding and commenting on Bakr's speech. Titled "Al-Baath and Heritage," Salman insisted that "since its foundation and till now, the Arab Baath Socialist Party has always evaluated the Arab Islamic heritage objectively and placed it rightly among the factors of progress and development." Towards the end of the text, Salman highlighted Bakr's statement: "this nation finds in her heritage a weapon of struggle for freedom, progress, and unity."⁶⁷⁰ Attempting to balance nationalism, socialism, and Islam together in Iraqi Ba'athist rhetoric was a reaction to changes in Iraqi society and the region around Iraq. It was not merely change imposed by the Iraqi Ba'ath on passive society

⁶⁶⁸ Ahmad Hasan al- Bakr "Speech of the Leader President Ahmad Hassan al Bakr in the Festival of Al-Farabi" *Sumer*. Vol 1-2 (1976): 3-6.

⁶⁶⁹ al-Bakr, "Speech of the Leader President Ahmad Hassan al Bakr in the Festival of Al-Farabi", 3.

⁶⁷⁰ Isa Salman, "Al Baath and Heritage" *Sumer*. Vol 1-2 (1976): 9.

from the top on down. International and domestic pressures from Communist spheres as well as Islamist ones pushed the Iraqi Ba‘th to attempt to marginalize political claims from these groups with new rhetoric incorporating key facets of the discourse of each.

This chapter will explore the discursive significance of the word *al-turath*, or heritage, to the Iraqi Ba‘th during their rule in the 1970s and 1980s. The concept of heritage was not new in this era. Rather, heritage came to have meaning for postcolonial countries in the postwar era for reasons explained by the cultural zeitgeist of the time. Etymologically, the word “heritage” in the English language comes from the old French *heriter*, or to inherit.⁶⁷¹ In Arabic, the term “*turath*,” around which this chapter revolves, comes from the verb stem *ث-ر-و* which likewise has meanings of inheriting something from a previous generation. In both English and Arabic, the roots of the word *heritage/ turath* are centuries old. The linkage between heritage and nationalism is much more recent, forming in the last several centuries since the consolidation of nation-states and the emergence of accompanying nationalisms around the world. Heritage serves a role for nationalism; it is joined to a sense of collective belonging which imagined itself as stretching backwards and forwards in time, is tied to collective memory, and helps form a collective identity by shaping memory and forgetting of the nation’s past. Heritage is thus the cultural legacy handed down through time from generation to generation, broadly construed as the crux of culture and history. For the Iraqi Ba‘th, heritage was umbilically attached to nationalism and it attempts to use both for its political legitimation. Nationalisms were not conceived of as modern by the Iraqi Ba‘th; rather, they were described as primordial groupings in ethnic terms, or *qawmiyyat*.

When read against the experience of other parts of the postcolonial world, one finds strong parallels between Iraq at that time and the experiences of postcolonial nations in parts of Latin

⁶⁷¹ Heritage | Origin and Meaning of Heritage By Online Etymology Dictionary". 2018. *Etymonline.Com*. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/heritage>.

America and Africa. It is not a coincidence that UNESCO issued the “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World’s Cultural and National Heritage” in 1972, at the same time heritage was gaining steam in Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse.⁶⁷² Iraq did not spur the UNESCO convention, rather the Iraqi Ba‘thist use of heritage and the UNESCO convention stem from the same trends in the postcolonial world. Reading changes in Iraq through the prism of heritage realigns common perceptions of political discourse by the Iraqi Ba‘th, relating it to larger postcolonial frameworks and accounting for nuances in the discursive change not captured by previous scholarly works.

Cultural and political change was widespread in the Arab World after the 1967 defeat of Arab powers by Israel (*Naksa*). The shock of the *Naksa* pushed Arab thinkers and the Iraqi Ba‘th to dig deeper into history for the legitimacy that eluded them in the present.⁶⁷³ The Iraqi Ba‘th embraced heritage in this manner at the same time they fought to develop Iraq economically and technologically. The anecdote opening this chapter highlighted how the Iraqi Ba‘th understood heritage, with its gaze at the past, as a key factor to national progress and development. “Filling the void created by the downfall of the left (Nasser),” Gilbert Achcar stated, “Islamic Fundamentalism soon became the main vector of the most intense opposition to Western domination...”⁶⁷⁴ Yet Islamic fundamentalism was only part of what was to come in Iraq, and it did not come immediately. The seeds for a shift of larger regional importance were already present in Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse. Following heritage discursively to its seemingly logical conclusion led the Iraqi Ba‘thists to Islam as the authentic source of Arab heritage. The Iraqi Ba‘th found themselves wedged between competing Communist, Nasserist, and only later, Islamist

⁶⁷² UNESCO “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage” web. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/> accessed 3/6/2018

⁶⁷³ *Naksa* is the term used by Arabs to describe the events at the time- it means “setback” and parallels the Arabic name given to the catastrophe of 1948 in Palestine, the Nakba.

⁶⁷⁴ Gilbert Achcar, *Marxism, Orientalism, Cosmopolitanism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013), 25.

frameworks, with heritage as a key discursive point they sought to win. The political grouping with the best claim to represent the authentic heritage of the people of Iraq would surely win, as we will see in Saddam Hussein's thinking later in this chapter. The initial frame taken up by the Iraqi Ba'ath in emphasizing heritage was one of Iraqi history stretching back to Mesopotamian times. This pre-Islamic focus was manifested in a preoccupation with archeological digs, the history of great Sumerian leaders, and local folklore. Archaeology has a strong connection to nationalism around the globe and is nothing unique to Iraq. Rather, it was the details of Iraq's nationalist discourse based on sponsoring archeological digs that are worth exploring here. Messages and policies tied to Mesopotamian heritage were primarily meant to co-opt an Iraqi nationalist discourse from groups to the left of the Iraqi Ba'ath politically. Historical distance allows us to see that the Iraqi Ba'ath had not given up on Arab nationalism, but instead pushed a subtle mix of both Mesopotamian themes and Arab nationalist ones. Those conditions came after Camp David alienated Egypt from the rest of the Arab World and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, prompting Hussein to seek Arab solidarity to ward off any similar Soviet attempts in Iraq.⁶⁷⁵

Just as Iraqi Ba'athist motivations for emphasizing heritage had transnational dimensions, so did debates about heritage themselves. Debates around the Arab World had featured arguments about the value of tradition and heritage since at least the mid-1950s. These debates set a larger regional context for any Iraqi Ba'athist attempts to use *turath* discursively, and need to be explored in broad outline before moving to specific ways the Iraqi Ba'ath tried to instill a reading of *turath* that supported their claims to rightful rule.

⁶⁷⁵ It is no small irony that Saddam Hussein seems to have feared a Soviet invasion that never came, yet the one that ultimately overthrew him came from the US post-Cold War, seeking to exercise American hegemony over the entire world. See chapter one for more on this topic.

Heritage and Authenticity across the Twentieth Century Arab Middle East

Heritage and authenticity featured prominently in Arab cultural and intellectual spheres after 1967, but not exclusively so. Many different thinkers had argued about these ideas since the late 19th century as part of the rise of Arab nationalism, though patriarchal structures limited these contributions almost exclusively to men. Two regional conferences were fora in which these debates took place and they serve here as microcosms of larger Arab intellectual work on these topics after 1967.

In 1971, a conference convened by a branch of the Arab League addressed “Authenticity and Renewal in Contemporary Arab Culture.”⁶⁷⁶ The papers presented at this conference, encompass clearly the link between heritage and authenticity as it was used in the authors’ works. First, Zaki Najib Mahmud’s paper investigated the question of the essence of Arab culture, arguing that it is to be found in the separation between God and his creations.⁶⁷⁷ Through his analysis, he concluded that Arab culture in modern times had to forego many aspects of modernity devoted to breaking down the separation between God and living beings. Fundamentally, Mahmud understood the issue to be one of inclusion and exclusion of various foreign influences. Muhammad al-Mazali quickly steered the discussion to authenticity (*asala*), arguing that modernity did not negate Arab authenticity.⁶⁷⁸ He, like several others at the conference, insisted that authenticity had to incorporate change and innovation.⁶⁷⁹ Mazali’s concept moves toward a constructivist and historicized understanding of authenticity. One reporter who covered the

⁶⁷⁶ This branch was the ALESCO, the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization, established the year before in 1970. See Suzanne Kassab in chapter three of her *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010)

⁶⁷⁷ Issa J. Boullatta, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990), 13.

⁶⁷⁸ Boullata, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought*, 14.

⁶⁷⁹ *ibid*, 14.

conference argued that authenticity and renewal acquired an additional significance after the Arab Nationalist defeat of 1967 (Naksa).⁶⁸⁰ Shukri ‘Ayyad took his argument about authenticity in a different direction, attempting to show from his literature review that the term authenticity was barely present in literature in the 1920s and 30s, but by his measure appeared more heavily from the mid-1950s on. He found its use at that time to be correlated with individuality, invention, and not being restrained by tradition.⁶⁸¹ ‘Ayyad took authenticity to mean being opposed to imitation, whether that was imitation of Arab sources or foreign ones.⁶⁸² ‘Ayyad found these calls for authenticity tied to the times (post-1967) comparable to calls for renewal (*al-Nahda*) in the first quarter of the 20th century.⁶⁸³

Another such conference took place in early 1974 in Kuwait, barely six months after the October War of 1973. Along with the successful imposition of the oil embargo by Arab Gulf states in connection with the war effort, Arab thinkers and Arab society more broadly rode relatively high into this conference.⁶⁸⁴ One of the statements produced at the end of the conference, “On the Heritage” was quite instructive.⁶⁸⁵ It argued, among other things, that “the attempt to project the past onto the future, besides being doomed to failure, leads to a rupture between the Arab and his present, and between him and his future. The fusion of the idea of authenticity with that of the heritage is a dangerous pitfall.”⁶⁸⁶ Shakir Mustafa contended that history played too large a role for Arabs. “Thus in their (Arabs) modern search for identity,” Mustafa argued, “their concern with

⁶⁸⁰ Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective*, 117.

⁶⁸¹ Boullatta, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought*, 14.

⁶⁸² *ibid*, 14.

⁶⁸³ *ibid*, 15.

⁶⁸⁴ *ibid*, 15-17; Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective*, 121. Names such as Fuad Zakariyya, Mehdi ‘Amel, Adonis, Nicola Ziyadeh, Najib Mahmoud, Anwar Abdel Malek, and others. The Kuwaiti government held a fortieth anniversary conference to revisit the issues from this 1974 meeting

⁶⁸⁵ An English translation can be found in appendix one.

⁶⁸⁶ Quoted in Boullata, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought*, 16

authenticity was often almost overwhelmed by ideas of history and the heritage which outweighed other meanings of authenticity related to innovation and creativity.⁶⁸⁷ Indeed, Mustafa saw heritage was the central facet of the debate that divided Arabs politically into left, right, traditionalists and modernists, reactionaries and progressives.⁶⁸⁸ Finally, Mustafa saw a doubled alienation; on one hand, Arabs were alienated from their heritage because of the static manner in which it was seen, while also being alienated from the modernity because of ignorance of its “basic intellectual principles.”⁶⁸⁹ Most controversially, Adonis, a literary figure from Syria, called for liberation from atavism. He saw old, religious structures shaping Arab thought and society and called for them to left behind, even private religion.⁶⁹⁰ Adonis also argued that heritage (*turath*) was being used as a shield against what he called an “intellectual invasion.”⁶⁹¹ Finally, prominent Marxist theorist Mahdi ‘Amel criticized nearly all others for failing to escape the bourgeois mode of thought that shaped everything they did. Thus, the problem was not one of civilizational development, nor of any kind of Arab mentality.⁶⁹² Instead, ‘Amel saw the local bourgeoisie in the Arab world as one dependent on outside powers but unable to truly remake itself in their image. This could be escaped by changing the fundamental starting point from which their thought came from, and as a Marxist ‘Amel saw this as their class position.⁶⁹³

Other intellectuals continued these debates later in the 1970s and 1980s. In a 1976 book called *Crisis of the Arab Intellectual*, Abdallah Laroui argued in favor of decoupling sociological

⁶⁸⁷ *ibid*, 18.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid*.

⁶⁸⁹ *ibid*, 19.

⁶⁹⁰ *ibid*, 27-30.

⁶⁹¹ Adonis 1983, 19 cited in Driss Habti “Debating Islam, Tradition, and Modernity in Contemporary Arab-Islamic Thought: Perspectives of Hassan Hanafi and Abdallah Laroui” in *Debates on Civilization in the Muslim World, Critical Perspectives on Islam and Modernity*” edited by Lutfi Sunar. (London: Oxford University Press, 2017), 287.

⁶⁹² Boullatta, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought*, 24.

⁶⁹³ *ibid*, 23-24.

analyses of tradition from negativity by labeling tradition as agrarianism, rurality, passivity, and ahistoricity.⁶⁹⁴ Hassan Hanafi studied in the US and upon his return to Egypt, set about writing about heritage and renewal from an Islamic leftist perspective.⁶⁹⁵ His perspective ultimately called for selecting important elements of heritage and pairing them with separately developed concepts. Anouar Abdel Malek, writing in 1983, saw identity as the principal concern of Arab thought.⁶⁹⁶ This range of views is certainly not complete but it can give us a sense of the arguments that contemporary Arab thinkers were having at time, ideas Iraqi Ba‘thists were likely aware of. There was no “victor” or clear consensus in these debates. The positions taken above were done so in abstract and not tied to any one Arab country. The Iraqi Ba‘th ultimately embraced what several of these thinkers pushed back against, namely an understanding of heritage that was very focused on the past, arguably regressive. Examples of Iraq’s historical context and Mesopotamian themes played a role once discussions of *turath* moved out of the abstract and into Iraq’s political realm. The warning in the statement from the 1974 conference in Kuwait that fusing authenticity with heritage was a dangerous pitfall would prove prescient.

To investigate these debates about heritage from a different angle, this chapter will focus on works and speeches by party figures and leaders that addressed the issues in detail. Michel ‘Aflaq, referred to by the Iraqi Ba‘th as “the foundational leader”⁶⁹⁷ and Saddam Hussein, often referred to as “the leader president”⁶⁹⁸ both spoke and wrote in detail about heritage in Ba‘thist Iraq. The speeches cited below are indicative of the views of party leadership because they were prominently and repeatedly published and disseminated for years afterward. One can find articles

⁶⁹⁴ ‘Abd Allah ‘Arawi, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 33.

⁶⁹⁵ Habi, “Debating Islam, Tradition, and Modernity, 289-290.

⁶⁹⁶ Anwar Abdel Malek, *Contemporary Arab Thought* (London, UK.: Zed Books, 1983), 16.

⁶⁹⁷ *Al-qa’id al mu’assiss*

⁶⁹⁸ *Al-ra’is al-qa’id*

written in party journals by people whose relationship to the party is not as strong that contradict the views ‘Aflaq and Saddam expressed. This is especially true in the 1970s before Saddam Hussein seized full power. One should not read the willingness to publish these pieces as calling into question the views expressed by party leadership in prominent speeches. Historian of Iraq Eric Davis argued that ‘Aflaq’s most important texts were not prominently displayed in Baghdad when Davis visited in 1980, speculating that this was because the texts were highly abstract and did not resonate with Iraqis.⁶⁹⁹ Davis included Ilyas Farah and Shibli al-‘Aysami in that claim as well.⁷⁰⁰ Some reason to question Michel ‘Aflaq’s power and prominence in the Iraqi Ba‘th exists, but due to his marginalization, not contradiction by one of the countless articles published in Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production. This marginalization is not strong enough to ignore ‘Aflaq’s later work in the name of the Iraqi Ba‘th, and thus it will be covered briefly. Other scholars have insisted that Ba‘thist cultural production, especially Saddam Hussein’s speeches, cannot be productively analyzed. This chapter grounds these discourses by reading them against other empirics and placing them in transnational context.⁷⁰¹ With these doubts foregrounded, this chapter will explore ‘Aflaq’s writings in brief to show that the seeds of the positions staked by the Iraqi Ba‘th in the late 1970s moving into the 1980s were already present in ‘Aflaq’s writings.

Michel ‘Aflaq on Heritage and the Ba‘th

⁶⁹⁹ Davis, *Memories of State*, 201.

⁷⁰⁰ All three intellectuals (‘Aflaq, Farah, ‘Aysami) had taken refuge in Iraq after the split with the Syrian Ba‘th. There is no reason to doubt Eric Davis’ recollection of the reality in Iraq when he visited, but we can question how strong of proof that is for the claim that their works were not influential.

⁷⁰¹ See, for example, *Saddam’s Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* by Ofra Bengio, review by Tareq Y. Ismael, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1999), 459-461.

Michel ‘Aflaq and Salah al Bitar are unquestionably two of the founding leaders of the Ba‘th Party from its emergence in Syria.⁷⁰² ‘Aflaq was elected the party’s first president at its 1947 congress when the party also issued its first constitution. Many of ‘Aflaq’s writings were gathered and republished multiple times under the title *In the Steps of the Ba‘th (fi sabeel al-ba‘th)*. For the purposes of this chapter, ‘Aflaq’s text “Faith” from 1943 is quite instructive.⁷⁰³ ‘Aflaq began with a powerful, if hyperbolic example: if an Arab state were established but there could be no faith in it, then ‘Aflaq preferred for Arabs to remain divided, colonized, and oppressed.⁷⁰⁴ As these issues of colonialism, division, and oppression were among those which the Ba‘th addressed most fervently at the time, ‘Aflaq’s statement was meant to give faith a central importance. The term *turath* appeared in the text but was not loaded with the meaning it would come to have later. The Ba‘th Party changed markedly between 1943 and the period of the 1970s and 1980s which this chapter takes as its focus, but ‘Aflaq’s emphasis on faith seems to have held constant. *The Ba‘th and Heritage* (July 1976) by ‘Aflaq took his thought and tied it to the concept of heritage, by then clearly established in Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse.⁷⁰⁵ Its title page was emblazoned with a quote from a speech ‘Aflaq gave in January 1976: “the authenticity of the Arab *Umma* is a renewing power.”⁷⁰⁶ In the work, ‘Aflaq addressed a number of issues related to party ideological stances, and was dismissive of Marxism and Communism.⁷⁰⁷ He argued that Islam was the *turath al-ruhi*, or

⁷⁰² The extent to which others, especially Zaki Arsuzi, are among the originators is the subject of scholarly debate.

⁷⁰³ One need not dig up the origins of Ba‘thist thought or the roots of the party here, many other works already cover this.

⁷⁰⁴ Michel ‘Aflaq *‘al-I‘man* (1943) in *fi Sabil al-Ba‘th*. (Beirut: Dar al-Ṭali‘a, 1976), 11-12.

⁷⁰⁵ Michel ‘Aflaq *al-Ba‘th wa al-Turath*. (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1976). Eric Davis has argued that ‘Aflaq was effectively marginalized and that his most important texts were not conspicuously displayed in Baghdad bookstores during the 1980s (Davis *Memories of State*, 201). The citation for the claim merely clarifies the full titles of the works Davis referred to and does not offer further evidence or a source. While ‘Aflaq’s *al-Ba‘th wa al-Turath* is not widely cited from what I can see, it was published by *Dar al-Huriyya*, Baghdad in 1976.

⁷⁰⁶ *Asalat al-umma quwwa nidhaliyya mutajaddida*.

⁷⁰⁷ the same book from footnote 36 contains five chapters, each one based around a different speech given by ‘Aflaq in 1976.

“spiritual heritage” of the Ba‘th party’s nationalism.⁷⁰⁸ ‘Aflaq also highlighted that theirs was not a “religious ideology” but rather that its nationalism encompassed religion as a foundational and organic part.⁷⁰⁹ ‘Aflaq spoke dismissively of the “secularism” that many called for in their nationalism. He argued this secularism was something the colonizer would support because it would impoverish the nationalism’s authenticity and spirit.⁷¹⁰ “For this reason,” ‘Aflaq reiterated, “the first thing our party did was challenge this (secular) nationalism.”⁷¹¹ Placing Islam at the heart of Iraqi Ba‘thist Arab nationalism differentiated it from “western nationalism” of a European type.⁷¹² ‘Aflaq, somewhat surprisingly, took the argument to its extreme conclusion, arguing that to be an Arab nationalist meant being Muslim. ‘Aflaq delimited this to say that Arabism was equal to Islam only in an elevated sense and not in a discriminatory way (marginalizing Arab Christians, Jews, or Shi‘a).⁷¹³ ‘Aflaq arguably was falling into a common nationalist trap, essentializing the past and embracing positions from a slippery slope. Likewise, implicit in ‘Aflaq’s arguments is the position that religion cannot be separated from politics. This was especially true if nationalism was to stir political action; nationalism separated from its religious soul would be impoverished. Samuel Helfont argued similarly, finding in his reading of ‘Aflaq’s writings that ‘Aflaq indeed believed in a strong link between Arab nationalism and Islam. Helfont also understood ‘Aflaq to be differentiating Ba‘thism from Islam and from Marxism.⁷¹⁴

One can see a tension present in ‘Aflaq’s positions outlined above, indeed in Ba‘thist thought at that time. The party embraced religion and nationalism, rejected secularism, all of which

⁷⁰⁸ ‘Aflaq, *al-Ba‘th wa al-Turath*, 21- note nationalism here is *qawmiyya* not *wataniyya*.

⁷⁰⁹ *ibid*, 21.

⁷¹⁰ *ibid*, 27.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid*.

⁷¹² *ibid*, 28. This statement is surprising coming from ‘Aflaq given that he was not Muslim, but rather Christian.

⁷¹³ *Ibid*.

⁷¹⁴ Samuel Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion: The Authoritarian Roots of Saddam Hussein’s Islam* (Princeton University, PhD Dissertation, 2015), 46-51.

pushed the party to the right politically, yet its postcolonial reality and position in the global economy helped push the Iraqi Ba‘th to embrace socialist rhetoric and measures of socialist practice. In parallel, Saddam Hussein addressed the connections between Arabism and Islam while digging for authentic party discourse like ‘Aflaq did. Hussein’s position on secularism, however, did not line up with that of ‘Aflaq, and his output in the 1970s far outpaced that of the party’s founder. ‘Aflaq did much to shape the party’s thought at its roots, but it was Saddam Hussein who took the leading role among Iraqi Ba‘thist intellectuals by the mid 1970s. Indeed, Eric Davis argues that ‘Aflaq was already effectively marginalized by the Iraqi Ba‘th by the late 1970s and that his texts were not important in Iraqi intellectual circles.⁷¹⁵ The problem with this is that ‘Aflaq was not so marginalized in the party’s views on religion. As Helfont shows, the Iraqi Ba‘th Party continued to give ‘Aflaq’s writings on Islam to party members into the 1990s. Hussein continued to frequently cite ‘Aflaq and Helfont argues that “‘Aflaq’s Ba‘thist interpretation of Islam was the official religion of Saddam’s Iraq.”⁷¹⁶ Before addressing Saddam Hussein’s rhetoric about heritage, important cultural production and sponsorship of the antiquities must be highlighted to show how the Iraqi Ba‘th emphasized these facets in the 1970s. Changes in the journal *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* are representative of the changes in Iraqi Ba‘thist rhetoric overall, leading into Saddam Hussein’s rhetoric of the connection between Islam and heritage as a means of dismissing religion from politics.

Heritage, Religion and Authenticity in Ba‘thist Iraq

There is no consensus in the existing literature on Iraqi Ba‘thist discourses about heritage, but several cornerstones of value have already been established. The Iraqi Ba‘th were not the first

⁷¹⁵ Davis, *Memories of State*, 201.

⁷¹⁶ Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion*, 37.

figures in Iraq to emphasize *turath*. Kanan Makiya outlines in his 1991 work *The Monument* how a previous generation of Iraqi artists had been incorporating these elements into their art.⁷¹⁷ A group founded in the early 1950s by Jawad Salim and Shakir Hassan drew on Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Chaldean art.⁷¹⁸ These were the Iraqi Modernists; Makiya quotes Iraqi artist Shakir Hassan, who stated that “by the 1970s, everyone was working in the name of modernity as *turath*.”⁷¹⁹ An Iraqi television show from the mid 1960s called “Discussion About Our Heritage” covered history and traditions of Arabs, Islam, and other groups, showing a public desire and interest in the topics.⁷²⁰ Important institutions built in this period lasted and played central roles in the cultural sphere decades later.

The Ministry of Guidance, initiated by Abdul Karim Qasim after coming to power in the 1958 Revolution, was central in disseminating cultural production about Iraqi heritage. This ministry was the early predecessor of the Ministry of Culture and Media, and included a new Directorate of Folklore.⁷²¹ Eric Davis emphasizes that Qasim was responding to the growth in popularity of *turath* rather than initiating it.⁷²² In his short, five-year rule, Qasim first used the state to push Mesopotamian themes, most notably in the inclusion of the Akkadian sun sign on the Iraqi flag immediately post-revolution. The Mesopotamian discourse and the institutions started by Qasim would be key five years later to the Iraqi Ba‘th when they seized power again in May 1968, after which they co-opted Mesopotamian themes and made them part of Iraqi Ba‘thist rhetoric.

⁷¹⁷Kanan Makiya, *The Monument: Art and Vulgarly in Saddam Hussein's Iraq* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 78-80.

⁷¹⁸Amatzia Baram, *Culture, History, and Ideology in the Formation of Ba‘thist Iraq, 1968-89* (London: St. Antony's/Macmillan 1991), 298.

⁷¹⁹ Makiya, *The Monument*, 78-79.

⁷²⁰ Jabbar Audah Allawi, *Television and Film in Iraq: Socio Political and Cultural Study, 1946-1980* (University of Michigan, PhD Dissertation, 1983), 130.

⁷²¹Davis, *Memories of State*, 110-111.

⁷²² Ibid.

Baram argues there were mixed and complex reasons for the state's new Mesopotamian discourse, namely the need to balance a striking decrease of Shi'ite figures in positions of leadership with a discourse that could appeal to Iraqi Shi'a, as well as intensification of Iraq's rivalry with Syria.⁷²³ Additionally, Baram argues that the campaign began in the "cultural plane," not in a political manner.⁷²⁴ Davis argues strongly that any shift toward Mesopotamian discourse (which he dates to the late 1970s) was still integrated with Pan-Arabism, and never represented replacing the latter with the former, but blending them explicitly. He also argues that trying to minimize the influence of the Iraqi Communists meant moving to present the Iraqi Ba'th as the representative of mass interests, and thus the adoption of the very popular Iraqist line.⁷²⁵ Yet as Baram points out, it was curious that the Iraqi Ba'th began the Mesopotamian campaign but did not address heritage or Mesopotamian themes in their central political report from the 1973 8th Regional Congress.⁷²⁶ Ultimately, Baram sees the campaign as more of a burden than an asset, as it threatened to undermine Iraqi Ba'thist bonafides in pan-Arabist circles, though as noted above, Davis does not agree.⁷²⁷ Heritage was not a central part of either scholar's analysis of this period, only Kanan Makiya made heritage a central facet of his work, which studied art and public architecture. For Makiya, heritage in Iraq under Ba'thist rule was nothing more than kitsch, one large public lie.⁷²⁸ Samuel Helfont explored material with significant overlap with that outlined below by researching in the BRCC archives to find documents about Iraqi Ba'thist policies toward religious scholars

⁷²³ Baram, *Culture, History, and Ideology*, 26.

⁷²⁴ *ibid*, 26-29.

⁷²⁵ Davis *Memories of State*, 150. Davis also does not explicitly address the *l'lan al Qawmi* covered in chapter one.

⁷²⁶ Baram, *Culture, History, and Ideology*, 14-15.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid*, 29.

⁷²⁸ Makiya, *The Monument*, 68-73.

and institutions, yet he does not identify heritage as part of his argument and does not tie those empirics to heritage, merely to questions of religion between state and society.⁷²⁹

The Iraqi Ba‘th government began emphasizing *turath* or heritage after 1968 in multiple ways that were not solely ideas in print. A 1978 piece celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Iraqi Ba‘th coming to power took credit for carrying the burden of the original heritage (*al-turath al-aseel*) when others betrayed this heritage or abandoned it.⁷³⁰ If one statement distilled the broader Iraqi Ba‘thist approach to heritage, and their claims to be the only ones upholding it correctly, this was it. New representations of heritage were propagated through museums, public art, festivals, and the promotion of local crafts and trades. The Directorate of Antiquities oversaw museums in multiple locations around Iraq, including the Iraq Museum in Baghdad, the Mustansiriyya exhibitions, and the Babylon Museum. These first three attracted the most visitors, but multiple smaller museums like Nergal Gate, Suleimaniya and Samarra were also popular.⁷³¹ A museum of folkloric items was established in Kirkuk in 1969, and a similar museum was established to showcase life the history of folklore in Baghdad. The Iraqi Ba‘th moved to preserve and restore historical sites and buildings from Iraq’s modern history as well. For example, the homes of figures like Saadoun al Shawi, Abdul Amir Ubaida, Rashid Ali Gailani, and Badr Shakir al Sayyab were acquired in various neighborhoods of Baghdad, with the aim of restoring them and opening them to the public.⁷³² The Iraqi government sponsored multiple conferences in the 1970s, including one focusing on folklore in 1977.⁷³³ State activities in the realm of heritage and culture were

⁷²⁹ Samuel Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion: The Authoritarian Roots of Saddam Hussein’s Islam*. (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2015). See ch.2-3.

⁷³⁰ Editorial Board, “*al-Thawra fi ‘Amiha al-‘Ashir*”, *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, vol. 3, no.11 (1978): 2.

⁷³¹ Sadiq al-Hasani, “Accomplishments and Projects of the Directorate General of Antiquities”, *Sumer*, vol. 25 no.1/2 (1969).

⁷³² Muayyad Demirji, “Introduction”, *Sumer*, vol. 34, no.1/2 (1981): 7.

⁷³³ Baram, *Ba‘thi Iraq From Secularism to Faith*, 37.

coordinated between the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Culture and Media, and the Center for Reviving Heritage in Iraqi universities.⁷³⁴ A museum of antiquities in Mosul was quite popular, attracting more than thirteen thousand visitors to the museum's library in 1968, in addition to eighteen official delegations.⁷³⁵ Iraqi museums began a series of collaborative projects in 1968 to allow Iraqi researchers as well as others from abroad to come access artifacts and materials. A 1974 introduction to the archaeology journal *Sumer* is consistent with the way the Iraqi Ba'ath presented archaeological digs as honorable heritage in need of protection. "...*Sumer*," Salman wrote in 1975, "...meets an essential and urgent intellectual need necessitated by our modern rise for building up...a great society which stems from the originality of our creative heritage." The statement could be interpreted as hyperbole but the Iraqi Ba'ath backed it up with voluminous finances. According to Salman, the Directorate General of Antiquities had a budget of 1,242,230 Iraqi Dinars and that twelve million dinars were allotted to the reconstruction of Babylon.⁷³⁶ These institutions curated national heritage and became a locus of internationalism for the Iraqi Ba'ath to cultivate legitimacy.

Archaeology, like discourses about *turath*, began before the Iraqi Ba'ath ever held power but the two became linked under Iraqi Ba'athist cultural and historical discourses. The journal *Sumer*, published in Arabic and English, spoke to a broad audience about excavations, artifacts, and heritage. Archaeological digs had consistently been international, with foreign researchers bringing funding to Iraq to dig for artifacts of historical gold. Several foreign teams carried out ongoing excavations inside Iraq in the 1970s, including German, British, Italian, and US researchers.⁷³⁷ Iraq was not merely receptive of researchers from abroad but participated in

⁷³⁴ 'Abd al Jabbar Dawuud al-Basri, *al-Siyasa al-Thaqafiya fi al-'Iraq* (Baghdad: Dar al Rashid, 1983), 28.

⁷³⁵ al-Hasani, "Accomplishments" *Sumer* vol. 25 no.1/2 (1969).

⁷³⁶ Salman, "Foreword," 8.

⁷³⁷ Isa Salman, "Foreword" *Sumer*. Vol 24, no. 1 (1968): 125.

research exchanges with multiple Gulf countries. Iraqi graduate students and researchers took part as well, but the Iraqi Ba‘th faced a problem; digging for Mesopotamian artifacts as a source of authentic heritage was dominated by foreign research teams. These teams were not just any countries- they were former colonizers and a Cold War power, the US.

Early in the 1970s, Iraq’s digging for tangible heritage to support political goals in the present ran into consistent problems with antiquities smuggling and theft, which provoked a frustrated response from the Iraqi Ba‘th in 1974. The state updated Article Sixteen of the Antiquities Law of 1936, stating that any movable antiquities in the possession of individuals either de facto or de jure is prohibited- any antiquities found must be turned over to the Directorate of Antiquities within 30 days.⁷³⁸ Exerting such control was crucial for delineating Iraqi sovereignty. Iraqi diplomats abroad coordinated efforts seeking the repatriation of Iraqi antiquities held in foreign museums, like the Hammurabi Stele in the Louvre in Paris, but were largely unsuccessful.⁷³⁹ Muayad Said Damirji lamented the ongoing problem with loaning antiquities to institutions outside of Iraq for study only for them to never be returned. By Damirji’s count, more than thirty-three thousand such tablets remain abroad. In the same 1977 issue of *Sumer*, Damirji addressed the theft and looting of archaeological sites, blaming museums for purchasing the looted materials.⁷⁴⁰ Various excuses were offered to Damirji, which he rejected out of hand: classifications, trusts, and museum registries were not Iraq’s problems nor were they reasons not to return artifacts, insisted Damirji.⁷⁴¹ On an emotional level, theft of Iraq’s heritage meant that

⁷³⁸ No author “Law no.120 of 1974: The First Amendment to the Law of Antiquities no.59 of 1936” *Sumer*. Vol 30, no.1/2 (1974): q.

⁷³⁹ Amatzia Baram, “A Case of Imported Identity: The Modernizing Secular Ruling Elites of Iraq and the Concept of Mesopotamian-Inspired Territorial Nationalism, 1922-1992” *Poetics Today*, Vol. 15 no.2 (1994): 303.

⁷⁴⁰ Muayad Said Damirji, “Introduction” *Sumer* vol.33, no.1 (1977): 4.

⁷⁴¹ *ibid*, 6-7.

foreign figures were profiting from the sale or display of artifacts while Iraq continued to struggle with economic development. Additionally, the dispersed nature of the artifacts across countries hindered their systematic study and the field more broadly.⁷⁴² Problems with theft of antiquities were not the first or only problem with the Mesopotamian campaign from the Iraqi Ba‘thist perspective. Citizens interfered with archaeological dig sites; “He who removes a mound from his town cuts off the historical roots of his town,” intoned Dr. Damirji.⁷⁴³

Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production deliberately displayed its internationalism to project an image of success and competence at home and abroad. *Sumer* was consistently published in full in both Arabic and English. Readers could open the magazine, read from right to left in Arabic, and reach the center of the publication which was its end. Beginning from the opposite end, reading left to right in English, they could enjoy almost all the same content.⁷⁴⁴ The Iraqi Ba‘th published dozens of translated works in English and French, especially gaining steam in the early 1980s under the *Dar al-Ma‘mun* printing press.⁷⁴⁵ *Al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* opened horizons of its readers by regularly reporting on international festivals and folklore-related news. Whether it was an Arab Islamic heritage conference in Andalusia (1978), an Islamic art festival in Paris (1978), a conference on popular Arab music in Rabat (1977), or an international handicrafts conference in Florence (1972), a section called *akhbar* (news) related these events and many more to readers, highlighting the participation of Iraqis first and foremost, but also Arab

⁷⁴² *ibid*, 5.

⁷⁴³ Muayad Said Damirji, “Introduction” *Sumer*. Vol 34, no 1/2 (1978): 6.

⁷⁴⁴ I have noticed in my readings of *Sumer* that not everything was translated, but I have not been able to discern a pattern of which pieces were or were not translated. Similarly, English summaries of articles were included in many issues of *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* but not all articles at times, again with no clear pattern.

⁷⁴⁵ See for example *The Strategy of National Development in Iraq* (Huwaish, 1981); *Revolution and National Education* (Hussein, 1981) and *The Iraq-Iran Conflict: A reading between the lines* (al-Sammarai, 1982), all of which were English translations of Arabic originals published by *Dar al-Mamun*. Translations as a facet of cultural production are explored in more detail in the chapter on culture.

delegations abroad. That said, these contributions from *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* were not the central focus of the publication. The journal opened a venue for Iraqis in the 1970s to write about nuanced dimensions of local heritage and practices, with content consistently shaped by submissions from the bottom up.

Al-Turath al-Sha'bi

Al-Turath al-Sha'bi was a successful and influential journal which arguably represents the pluralism of Iraqi society throughout the 1970s until being commandeered by the Iraqi Ba'ath to increasingly serve as its mouthpiece from the 1980s forward. In this sense, *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* can be an instructive window into the cultural sphere in Iraq. The contrast in themes and tone from those produced by diverse Iraqi intellectuals and those produced at the whims of the Iraqi Ba'ath is stark. *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* offers us the clearest vision into the many ways members of Iraqi society thought and wrote about heritage.

Al-Turath al-Sha'bi began in the early 1960s as a private venture but received a huge boost from the Iraqi Ba'ath in 1969.⁷⁴⁶ Its early issues in 1969 refer to the publication as a “*majala fulkluriyya*” where they have Arabized the term ‘folklore’ to move past vague meanings of *turath* which was sometimes translated as ‘heritage’ and other times as ‘folklore.’ The journal expanded its production in the next years and came to fill an important place in Iraq’s cultural milieu. Through its pages, the editors aimed to foster greater integration between Iraq’s ancient and more recent Arab heritage.⁷⁴⁷ To meet the need of speaking to broader groups of intellectuals outside of Iraq and the Arab World, *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* was published in Turkish, Farsi, French, English,

⁷⁴⁶ Davis, *Memories of State*, 220.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 220.

and Italian.⁷⁴⁸ Staff from the Qasim era carried over into the early 1970s, namely figures like Lutfi al-Khuri, Ibrahim al-Daquqi, and ‘Abdul Hamid al-‘Alawi.⁷⁴⁹ The journal spoke to a wide Arab audience outside of Iraq, evidenced in the countries it was priced for and distributed to.⁷⁵⁰ In its first years, circulation was claimed to be 2,000 copies per issue but by the end of its fifth year (1974), circulation had reached 8,000 per issue.⁷⁵¹ Content in the journal predominantly represented Iraq, though issues appeared which focused on questions of popular heritage in Algeria and Palestine, hosting articles by authors from those countries. Even outside of the countries to which it was officially distributed, the magazine reached yet more readers. A letter praising the journal came in from the People’s Republic of Yemen, written by an employee of the Culture and Tourism office there. The magazine was, he beamed, among the vanguard of Arab magazines about *al-turath*.⁷⁵²

Al-Turath al-Sha’bi was a government publication but it would be a mistake to see it as a mere party organ. Many of the articles it contained were from Iraqi intellectuals and did not necessarily represent the views of the Iraqi Ba‘th. In going through dozens of issues throughout the 1970s, a rare mention of the Ba‘th Party and its “Revolution” came in a piece celebrating the beginning of the 9th year of its publication.⁷⁵³ Another uncommon topic was regional politics. A 1977 issue opened with an editorial in the name of the magazine, insisting that Palestine was in the hearts of Arabs.⁷⁵⁴ The Palestine editorial stood out in its explicit denunciation of Zionism, a

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁰ No Author, *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*, vol.7 no.4, (1976): Libya, Lebanon, Tunis, Bahrain, Egypt, Sudan, and Kuwait are all listed on the second to the last page with prices for each country.

⁷⁵¹ Lutfi Al-Khuri, “*Ba’d Khamsat ‘Awam.*” *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*, vol.5 no.12, (1974): 6.

⁷⁵² No Author, “*Ma’ al-Qura’a*” *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*, vol.7 no.4 (1976): 175.

⁷⁵³ Editorial board, “*Am Jadeed fi zamn malaim*” *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*, vol. 9 no.1 (1978): 5.

⁷⁵⁴ Editorial board, “*Filistin fi al Qalb*” *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*, vol 8. no.5 (1977): 5.

theme common in other Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural publications but largely absent from *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* in the 1970s.

Short pieces appeared from a wide variety of authors, not a select crop of party intellectuals. Pieces focused on regional and even village-level rituals and heritage in different parts of Iraq. Examples of article topics included popular medicine in Mosul, folkloric songs in Iraq, Ramadan celebrations in Karbala, and Bedouin proverbs. In a late-1970 piece discussing the magazine’s successes over the previous year, Lutfi al-Khuri pointed out that the publication had published more than 80 different authors and that it had fostered a folkloric consciousness between readers, writers, and the general public.⁷⁵⁵ From what can be discerned, a large share of the articles in *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* were submitted in such a popular fashion, not commissioned by an editor.

Periodic announcements and the regular *ma‘ al-qura’a* (with the readers) section of *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* in the 1970s are transparent guides to what are normally behind-the-scenes editorial processes. In 1971, *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* published a rare apology directed to unnamed senior scholars and apologized for the delay in printing their articles.⁷⁵⁶ The magazine explained this delay by saying it had been emphasizing youth, but that it did not mean the pieces being published first were necessarily of a higher quality.⁷⁵⁷ The apology is doubly interesting: its content is not what one would expect but it also shows that Lutfi al-Khuri (or someone close to him) felt the need to apologize to senior scholars. Perhaps most interesting is a section at the end of each issue entitled “*ma‘ al-qura’a*” in which the editors directed messages to various people who had written to the journal.⁷⁵⁸ Without easier means of mass communication, letters to and from the journal had to suffice for the submission process. Submissions were either accepted, or rejected

⁷⁵⁵ Lutfi Al-Khuri, “*Am madha*” *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi*, vol.1 no.12 (1970): 4.

⁷⁵⁶ No Author, “*Itithar min Majallat al-Turath al-Sha‘bi*” *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi*, vol.3 no.3 (1971): 150.

⁷⁵⁷ *ibid*, 150.

⁷⁵⁸ See, for example, *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* August 1975, 192.

with the request that it be resubmitted after development. Using their first names and family initials, editors would notify people that their submission did not meet guidelines, that they needed to send further info for their subscription, or that their submission would be published in an upcoming issue. The rejections in this “*ma’ al-qura’a*” section also help us understand what the journal wanted out of submissions. At times, the editors rejected popular poetry (*al-shi’r al-sha’bi*) as not fitting their guidelines for the magazine, while another writer’s submission about Farid al-Atrash was deemed outside of the journal’s parameters.⁷⁵⁹ One writer wanted their letter to the editor published anonymously but the journal refused, addressing the writer by their kunya (Abu Saad). Later, the magazine rejected pieces on multiple occasions because the culture described was deemed to be true of wider regions of Iraq and not limited to the area the writer specified.⁷⁶⁰ Articles consistently addressed elements of Arab heritage or Islam but did not highlight these terms discursively. These delineations shape the ideal piece in *al-Turath al-Sha’bi* as focused on a city, region, or group of people, inside the boundaries of Iraq, and relating to their practices, beliefs, and trades.

Promoting Iraqi folkloric studies and heritage came together with the bottom-up nature of submissions explicitly in a project to gather “popular stories” (*hikayat sha’biyya*) from around Iraq in an archive held by the Folkloric Center (*Markaz al-Fulkhuri*). Founded in 1971, the Folkloric Center was created by decree from then-president Ahmad Hassan al Bakr. The center was established to undertake activities and exhibitions of folkloric literature, dancing, music, costumes, and crafts, funded by the Ministry of Culture and directed by the Minister of Culture.⁷⁶¹ The call for submissions of popular stories went out in 1973 and was repeated in 1974, published in *al-*

⁷⁵⁹ No Author, “*ma’ al-qura’a*” *al-Turath al-Sha’bi* vol.6 no.4 (1975): 197.

⁷⁶⁰ See, for example, *al-Turath al-Sha’bi* vol.6 no.7 (1975): 245 about fishing techniques in Eski Mosul.

⁷⁶¹ No Author, “Decree 451”, *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*, vol. 3, no.10 (1971): 151-153.

Turath al- Sha'bi. The call laid out submission guidelines, underscoring that the stories had to be authentic (*aseela*). The stories were to be written in the local dialect exactly as they are told and should not have been previously published.⁷⁶² Writing stories in local dialect proved difficult for many writers who submitted stories as they would submit their articles in formal written Arabic. Short messages appeared in the *ma' al-qura'a* section in some issues asking readers to rewrite their submissions in the local dialect for authenticity's sake. The call for popular stories also insisted that if the story is known by a name, that name should be included with the submission, as well as the locality which the story comes from. For years afterward, regular notices appeared in *al-Turath al- Sha'bi* in the *ma' al-qura'a* section thanking individuals for their submitted stories which had been put in the growing archive.⁷⁶³ The Folkloric Center was firm in insisting that if the story was from Iraq, no matter its language or ethnicity, they wanted it.⁷⁶⁴ The call's parameters were consistent with an Iraqi nationalist view that did not limit Iraqi identity to Arabs to fit in broader Pan-Arab frameworks, but instead found Iraq's diversity, including Arabs and other groups, to be the Iraqi nation's key feature. The emphasis on pluralism is largely, but not completely paralleled in the rest of the content published by *al-Turath al- Sha'bi* in the 1970s.

Articles in *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* addressed religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq in an academic and non-politicized manner.⁷⁶⁵ Shi'a were rarely addressed as such, but articles like "Ramadan in Karbala" or "fishing techniques in Basra" addressed folklore and heritage from

⁷⁶² No Author, "Nida' min al Markaz al-Fulkluri", *al-Turath al-Sha'bi*, vol.5 no. 11 (1974): 176.

⁷⁶³ I have not been able to determine what became of this archive and if it still exists or not.

⁷⁶⁴ No author, "Nida' min al Markaz al-Fulkluri", 176.

⁷⁶⁵ The only official comment I can find in the pages of *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* regarding different ethnicities and the magazine's coverage of them is one from Lutfi al-Khuri where he references the way *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* writes about *al-qawmiyat al-muta'khiya*, implying a familial relations among the different ethnicities in Iraq. See *al-Turath al-Sha'bi*, vol.6 no.1 (1975).

predominantly Shi‘i areas.⁷⁶⁶ Kurdish folklore was a common topic, while other articles addressed Sabaeen Manadeans and their practices, or folklore in the Turkmen community. In late 1974, an article effusive in praise for Kurdish folklore appeared, written by Nahd Abdul Sattar Rashid. Rashid analyzed a popular Kurdish folktale about forbidden love between a shepherd and the daughter of a rich Pasha, arguing that the story showed love surmounting class barriers. Kurdish folklore, in Rashid’s presentation, frequently showcased themes of heroism, bravery, and cunning.⁷⁶⁷ The academic “quality” of the piece or the objective validity of its argument is not as interesting to me as the fact that it was published in *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* during a period of heightened tension between the Iraqi Ba‘th and Kurds, prior to the Algiers Agreement. A 1971 article about Kurdish folklore was far more substantive; it was an entire chapter from a work published in Kurdish by Dr. ‘Izzeddin Mustafa Rasoul, translated into Arabic for publication in *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi*. Rasoul demonstrates a problematic tendency to write about “eastern” poetry and epics, opposing those to western versions, but the overarching point here is that Rasoul’s work was genuinely interested in intellectual engagement, not demonization of Kurds or other non-Arab groups. An article about Turkmen by Abdul Latif Bandaroglu underscored the “tremendous wealth” to be found in Turkmen folklore, pointing out that the group’s status has grown significantly since the founding of a “Directorate for Turkmen Folklore” in the Ministry of Media.⁷⁶⁸ This directorate was made possible, the article emphasized, by the granting of “cultural rights” to the Turkmen by the Revolutionary Command Council in January 1970. After pointing out the role of intellectuals and literary figures in the preserving the history of their *qawm*, or ethnic community, Bandaroglu argues that “...it is their *national and ethnic* duty at the same time to

⁷⁶⁶ I use the word “rarely” here to be on the safe side because I have not been able to consult every single issue, but I have never found anything using the term “Shi‘a” in what I have read.

⁷⁶⁷ Nahd Abdul Sattar Rashid, “*Min al Fulklur al Kurdî*”, *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* vol.5, no.12 (1974): 98.

⁷⁶⁸ ‘Abdul Latif Bandaroglu, “*nathra ila al fulklur al turkumani*”, *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi*, vol.3 no.3 (1971): 67.

revive our heritage in service of the values of Iraqi heritage and preserving the thunderous voice of the people.”⁷⁶⁹ Such an argument did not seek to subsume Turkmen identity to Arabism, but rather Bandaroglu maintained it was a key part of the “eternal Iraqi voice” and needed to be developed. Only in this manner could Turkmen folklore support a broader Iraqi national identity into which it fit.

Issues of Yazidi identity and history were debated amongst Yazidis of different ideological convictions in the pages of *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*. A 1971 issue contained a review and criticism of a book written on Yazidis by Sami Said al-Ahmad. George Habib, another prominent Yazidi writer, took al-Ahmad’s book to task for its adoption of a framework that Yazidis have Ummayad, and thus Arab roots.⁷⁷⁰ This discourse would find official support years later when the Iraqi Ba’th racialized Yazidis as Arabs (see opposition chapter). While al-Ahmad was not Yazidi, this view of Yazidi roots tying them to Arabs was held by some Yazidis.⁷⁷¹ A different article by Al-Amir Beyezid Al-Umawi from early 1975 advanced the same argument that the Yazidis had Ummayad roots, and thus were Arabs who used to be Muslims but had broken away.⁷⁷² Yazidi social issues were addressed by Badl ‘Ali Al-Umawi in 1975, who argued that Yazidi society was denigrating to women, “in a manner consistent with the Middle Ages.”⁷⁷³ A printed rebuttal merely two issues later took issue with Al-Umawi’s characterization. Insisting he was not disagreeing with al-Umawi from a misogynist point of view (we are in the year of the woman, he wrote). Kars Murad Helou insisted that as a Yazidi, his view of Yazidi society and its treatment of women did not align with

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁰ George Habib, “*al-Yazidiya Ahwalhum wa mu’taqadatum*”, *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*, vol.3, no.4 (1971): 152-154. See Saad Salloum’s overview of the subject: *Ezidis in Iraq: Memory, Beliefs, and Current Genocide* (Baghdad: CEI, 2016)

⁷⁷¹ Salloum notes that al-Ahmad’s work on Yazidis was trying to demonize them, as his first book was about the origins of evil and the devil, leading him to study Yazidis next. See Salloum p.42 footnote 3.

⁷⁷² Al-Amir Beyezid Al-Umawi, “*al-nizam al-wirathi laday al-umawiyeen al-yazidiya*”, *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*, vol.6 no.2 (1975): 49.

⁷⁷³ Badl ‘Ali al-Ummawi, “*al- Mara’ fi al-majtama’ al-yazidi*”, *al-Turath al-Sha’bi*, vol.6 no.1 (1975): 59.

al-Umawi's article. These debates raged in the pages of *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* from 1971 through at least 1975. Discourses in *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* about Iraq's diverse peoples were mixed overall, seemingly reflecting the views of their authors and not the editorial board, which ran rebuttals addressing most if not all subjects the journal published. If the Iraqi Ba'ath were interested in controlling or censoring such national discourses, the articles above likely would not have been published, yet they were.

Shifts in content in *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* were indicative of larger changes in Iraq. The content in the 1970s overwhelmingly was politically neutral and almost never mentioned the Ba'ath Party. The first mention of the Iraqi Ba'ath I can find came in 1978 in an article celebrating ten years of the magazine's publication.⁷⁷⁴ The article by Lutfi al-Khuri commemorated the coincidence of the ten-year anniversary of the magazine with the 1968 Revolution which brought the Iraqi Ba'ath to power, referring to the "*hizb*" and the "*thawra*" as synonyms for the Iraqi Ba'ath Party.⁷⁷⁵ Mentions of the commemoration of the 1968 Revolution indeed appeared earlier than this, but these appearances lacked the political tone that became more salient later and never connected the commemoration to the Iraqi Ba'ath explicitly.⁷⁷⁶ The low level of political symbolism in *al-Turath al-Sha'bi* was still a far cry from what the party regularly published to push its ideas in other state publications and newspapers. In the middle of 1979, seemingly right after Saddam Hussein seized full power, this would change.⁷⁷⁷ Two articles were inserted prominently in the beginning of the magazine that were much closer to the party propaganda found elsewhere than the previous content of *al-Turath al-Sha'bi*. Later in 1980, party slogans had become consistent

⁷⁷⁴ Lutfi al-Khuri, "*Ashira Aw'am Majeeda*", *al-Turath al-Sha'bi*, vol. 9 no.7 (1978): 8.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

⁷⁷⁶ See, for example, No author, "*Akhbar*", *al-Turath al-Sha'bi*, vol.3 no.9 (1971).

⁷⁷⁷ The analysis is based on collections at the Library of Congress- vol. 10, no.6 lacks any such Ba'athist pieces and they are present in volume 10, no.7. There is a gap in early 1979, unfortunately so I cannot account for those issues.

features in the magazine; one that appeared right after the table of contents in multiple issues from this time read that “the popular schools are a living embodiment of the principles of the party and the revolution.”⁷⁷⁸ A 1983 issue had a similar quote, placed in the same spot in the magazine, declaring: “the banners of *Qadisiyya* ripple in the hands of the brave Iraqi fighters.”

New leadership and changing state priorities made a drastic mark on *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* as the 1980s moved on. The Ba‘thification of *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* gained significant momentum. Abdul Sahib al-Aqabi and Yusuf Asadi were not famous party thinkers but they both wrote articles that consistently reflected the views of the party.⁷⁷⁹ The two authors, who were never previously published in the dozens of *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* copies I consulted from 1969-1979, came to be fixtures in the publication in the first half of the 1980s. Al-Aqabi had worked in the Ministry of Culture in the 1970s for some time, a prestigious position, apparently because of his party activities and perceived loyalty.⁷⁸⁰ In the early 1980s, al-Aqabi became the Deputy Editor and remained as such until 1983. At that point, Lutfi al-Khuri, the journal’s Editor-in-Chief from its inception, resigned and al-Aqabi became the Editor in Chief. Eric Davis classifies this period of overlap before al-Aqabi became the Editor-in-Chief as one where al-Aqabi exercised increasing control over the journal and added an “ever-greater political tone.”⁷⁸¹ Al-Khuri’s removal from the editorship was not what caused the changes, rather his exit was reflective of them. The unique nature of *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* that had been cultivated seemingly when the Ba‘th ignored it had largely disappeared and it became like other Iraqi Ba‘thist intellectual publications, transforming

⁷⁷⁸ No Author, *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi*, vol.11, no. 9, (1980): 4. *Al-mudaris al-sha‘biya*, or the popular schools, played a central role in the campaign to fight illiteracy detailed in the chapter on literacy, yet this facet was not mentioned here.

⁷⁷⁹ See *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi*, vol.10 no.7 (1979).

⁷⁸⁰ No Author, “Abdul Sahib al-‘Aqabi “*Moajam al Babiteen lil Shu‘ara al-‘Arabiyya*” Date of Access: 4/6/2018. http://www.almoajam.org/poet_details.php?id=3927

⁷⁸¹ Davis, *Memories of State*, 221.

the magazine into a more nuanced version of what *Afaq 'Arabiyya* already published. Al-Aqabi's tenure as Editor-in-Chief only lasted into 1985, when he was replaced by Basim Hamoudi. Al-Aqabi later became the Iraqi Cultural Attache in Khartoum, Sudan.⁷⁸² Having rarely to never published a political speech, the journal now regularly published Saddam Hussein's speeches as well as letters written by groups in Iraqi society to the president.

Saddam Hussein on Heritage in Politics

Saddam Hussein's speeches and interviews became regular facets of Iraqi Ba'athist cultural production in 1975. From that point until 1979, dozens of his speeches were reproduced in book and pamphlet form by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Information. One such speech, reproduced in multiple compilations and on its own, is key to tracing the beginning of larger changes in the party's ideas and discourse. Even though Ahmad Hassan al Bakr was still the president of Iraq, publications featured Hussein's photo prominently and had the markings of the cult of personality that would emerge in full once he ousted Bakr from the presidency. The photo to the right came from a 1975 text, taking up a whole page before the text began.⁷⁸³ In the summer of 1977 at a meeting of the Media Bureau of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party, Saddam Hussein spoke explicitly about religion and heritage in a speech that foreshadowed many of the discourses the Iraqi Ba'ath would adopt over the next decade. His speech was titled *A View on Religion and Heritage* and his line of argument directly confronted the relation between religion and politics. Hussein frequently referred to his position, and that of the Iraqi Ba'ath, as "the revolution" in the speech. *A View on Religion and Heritage* became an important text for years to come, and appeared on syllabi about

⁷⁸² No Author, "Abdul Sahib al-Aqabi "Moajam al babiteen lil shu'ara al-'arabiya" Date of Access: 4/6/2018. http://www.almoajam.org/poet_details.php?id=3927.

⁷⁸³ Saddam Hussein, *Hawl al Qadhaya al 'Arabiya al-Rahina* (Baghdad: Wizarat al l'lam, 1975).

party doctrine and Arab history that were given to various ranks in the Iraqi Ba‘th Party in 1984.⁷⁸⁴ Indeed, an earlier document from the Political Guidance division (explored in chapter three on culture) shows that branch of the government sending out copies of the new book in March of 1980.⁷⁸⁵ It was reprinted yet again in a 1988 collection about Hussein’s views on history, heritage, and religion. He insisted that “our philosophy” was neither religion nor heritage by itself but rather that Ba‘thism started from “the past” in all its dimensions along with religion.⁷⁸⁶ The Iraqi Ba‘th took strength from religion but would not politicize it, Hussein insisted.⁷⁸⁷ Going too far with Islamic principles in Iraqi Ba‘thist politics would surely split the party’s popular base and hinder the development of its intellectual positions.⁷⁸⁸ This hindrance would only help “enemies of the revolution,” Hussein intoned. His speech divided those whom he labeled “incapable of innovation” as fitting into two kinds of followers who cloned foreign ideologies: the old versions, i.e. reactionary rightists, and the new versions, i.e. those who copied their ideas from others, namely in the name of religion.⁷⁸⁹ Nuancing this argument, Hussein pressed that religion by itself could not address the problems of modern society Iraq faced. Not only was the Iraqi Ba‘th not merely a religious party, according to Hussein, but it was a new worldly doctrine for Arabs to express their civilization. A consistent facet of Iraqi Ba‘thist doctrine was its claim to offer a *nathra shumuliyya* (a complete view) which could speak to all aspects of life. This level of aspiration is

⁷⁸⁴ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0534.

⁷⁸⁵ NIDS 1346832. Indeed many other records I located from the *tawjih siyasi* in this period were related to seizing and banning books from Iraqi markets and libraries. Instead, this book got the royal treatment.

⁷⁸⁶ Saddam Hussein, *al-Turath al-‘Arabi wa al-Mu‘asara* (Baghdad, Dar al Huriyya lil Taba‘at, 1980), 3. This was a book called *Arab Heritage and Contemporary Times* and it gathered different speeches Hussein had given. The first speech reproduced had been given to the media bureau (*maktab al-l‘lam*) in August 1977, but the book itself was published in 1980. Hussein drew a metaphor referring to religion and heritage as “rafidayn” which is well known to Iraqis as the coming from a common name for Iraq, *bilad-al-rafidayn*. It literally means “two sources” but in the name of Iraq refers to the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

⁷⁸⁷ Saddam Hussein, *al-Nathra fi al din wa al-turath* (Baghdad, Dar al Huriya lil Taba‘at, 1978), 12-13.

⁷⁸⁸ Hussein, *al-Nathra fi al din wa al-turath*, 14.

⁷⁸⁹ *ibid*, 14.

easy to dismiss as the delusions of a dictator, but it also helps fit Iraqi Ba‘thist rhetoric about *din wa turath* into a larger Cold War picture, as parallel systems identified as *shumuliyya* were capitalism, Islam, and communism.⁷⁹⁰

In a different speech from the same period, *On the Writing of History*, Hussein laid out his view that the creation of a specific Ba‘thist project for history would address the problems of accepting the rules of others that did not line up with Ba‘thist values.⁷⁹¹ Hussein grappled with the characteristics of trust, honor and generosity present among Arabs, asking if these characteristics predated Islam.⁷⁹² Islam changed these characteristics by changing the social foundation they came out of, at least according to Hussein. Acknowledging this importance of Islam to Ba‘thist positions, the Iraqi Ba‘th was not neutral when it came to faith and atheism. The Iraqi Ba‘th was decidedly on the side of faith but it was not a religious party.⁷⁹³ At the same time, Hussein argued that party members and people more broadly should be free to practice their religion as they see fit.⁷⁹⁴ Here again, one can see the tension in party thought about religion. The Ba‘th Regional Command Committee archives (BRCC) provide an instructive example of these very points arising in diplomatic negotiations between Iraq and Pakistan. Multiple documents in the files come from consultants paid by the Iraqi Ba‘th to file reports from abroad. A report from Islamabad contained the following anecdote: A Pakistani editor told the Iraqi Ba‘thist representative that Iraq’s socialism meant it could not value faith at the same time. “Truly,” the editor reportedly said, “Ba‘thism is another facet (*wajh ukhr*) of Communism.” The Iraqi diplomat responded that “...we

⁷⁹⁰ The word *shumuliyya* in Arabic implies completeness. As an adjective it can be loaded with meaning through context to be translated as holistic, complete, or even totalitarian.

⁷⁹¹ Saddam Hussein, *Hawla Kitabat al-Tarikh* (Baghdad, Dar al Huriyya lil Taba‘at, 1977), 6-7. This is the clearest example I have seen of Hussein wrestling with issues of epistemological liberation alongside politics and economics.

⁷⁹² Hussein, *al-Turath al-‘Arabi*, 4.

⁷⁹³ *ibid*, 5.

⁷⁹⁴ *ibid*, 7.

are truly the opposite of Communism (*al-wajh al-munaqhidh*) when it comes to religion. Our president Saddam Hussein insists that we are not neutral between faith and atheism but that we were are always on the side of faith.”⁷⁹⁵

Issues of how to battle opposing political parties dominate the rest of Saddam’s speech, using metaphors about tactics and hand-to-hand combat. Hussein’s language reflected his combative stance towards opposition parties and foreign enemies. It led to the question, shortly thereafter, “so which of these methods do we apply against religious and sectarian extremism?”⁷⁹⁶ He labeled religion (brought into politics) here as a “reactionary” position, a common denunciation relative to the Ba’thist value of “progress.” Hussein also referred to what he saw as doctrinal inconsistency by “the leftists,” which helps us see that he did not include the Iraqi Ba’thists in this category. He was adamant that accepting any “lack of clarity” on party principles would lead to defeat and leave the party facing an intellectual (*fikri*) crisis. These were no random remarks; Hussein referred to “intellectual ground” as the foundational source of the Iraqi Ba’th party’s power in the same speech.⁷⁹⁷ Winning the war of ideas, or at least perceiving that he had, was a central part of Saddam Hussein’s approach to politics. At this time, Hussein saw no legitimacy for his party to rule Iraq without democracy if it could not claim to be superior intellectually.

Saddam Hussein touched on similar themes in a different speech given only two months later at a meeting of the Iraqi Ba’thist Media Bureau. In speaking about the specificity of the history of the Arab *Umma*, Saddam addressed the idea that Arabs “were a nation born out of Islam.” Hussein argued this conception of heritage would lead to reactionary and backwards religiosity.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁵ BRCC 01-2165-0003-0294. The author of the report was a “media consultant.” It is not clear if he was a member of the party or not. Similar reports from media consultants can be found in other files of the BRCC.

⁷⁹⁶ Hussein, *al-Turath al-‘Arabi*, 7. Religious and sectarian extremism is my translation of “*al-ta’ssub al-dini wa al-madhabbi*”

⁷⁹⁷ *ibid*, 7.

⁷⁹⁸ Hussein, *Hawla Kitabat al-Tarikh*, 14.

He reasoned that developing a specific Ba‘thist approach to history would avoid this problem. To do so, Hussein argued, one had to dig *prior* to Islam, because the history of the Arab *Umma* stretched back prior to the emergence of Islam and that implied that the Arabs shared heritage with other groups (who remained nameless).⁷⁹⁹ This clearly exemplifies the embrace of Mesopotamian themes in the name of heritage, rejecting Islam at that time. In attempting to sharpen this argument, he clarified that it was not the desire of the Iraqi Ba‘th to merely copy the past, but that one had to seek inspiration from it, and that the Iraqi Ba‘thist expression of heritage based on this history was “genuine and authentic.”⁸⁰⁰ Hussein again equated the use of religion in politics as “reactionary,” and he continued later in the speech accusing those who use religion for political goals of being aligned with “colonialism.”⁸⁰¹ This hit a cornerstone of Ba‘thist thought from the party’s beginnings, opposition to colonialism, and tied it to the present moment in which Hussein spoke.

Reaching for authenticity through Islam carried intellectual baggage. Doing so necessitated that Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba‘th negotiate the place of Islam in Arab authenticity. Hussein’s position was a tenuous one. Iraqi Ba‘thist rhetoric would have to shift away from Islam, they would have to champion it, or the party would have to attempt to strike a balance between the two. My reading finds that Hussein feared that those who brought Islam into politics had a stronger position to argue in the battle of ideas from and thus could promote a more “authentic” political stance based on Islam. The Iraqi Ba‘th thus had political competitors to its left and its right whom it needed to develop positions against. History shows us the party slid to the right on the political scale embracing religion and nationalism with socialist rhetoric backed up by very little actual socialist policy. The Iraqi Ba‘th continued to harp on the “religious question” moving forward, but

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁰¹ Hussein, *al-Turath al-‘Arabi*, 8.

this vague phrase obscured the fact that Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba‘th were primarily focused on Islam. The texts, speeches, and associated cultural production were clearly focused on the connection between Arabism and Islam and did not take up other religions.

Up until 1980, publications about heritage had been predominantly subtle in their attacks on opposition groups. Cultural production was centered around themes of handicrafts, historical continuity, and the aspects of Arab heritage the Iraqi Ba‘th was proud of. Discourse behind the scenes had already changed, as this chapter will demonstrate later. The Iraqi government had been pushed to re-emphasize Pan-Arabism because of events in Afghanistan that made the Iraqi Ba‘th fear a Soviet invasion of Iraq to support the Iraqi Communist Party. The *I‘lan al-Qawmi* and the discourse it adopted to deal with one part of the Iraqi opposition, the Communists, was adapted and later used against Iran, and by dint of the vague and accusatory language, Iraqi Shi‘i groups as well. The modern use of the term *shu‘ubiyya* indeed began as an epithet for Communists, so Hussein’s use paralleled others, but he added new dimensions to the term with the onset of war against Iran. The Iraqi Ba‘th began a comprehensive attempt to coerce and co-opt religious leaders in the country in March 1979 in early response to the revolution in Iran.⁸⁰² Later that year, Hussein modified the Ministry of Endowments to have a broader mandate and a new name, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs from that point forward.⁸⁰³ On the ground, the Iraqi Ba‘th sent Shi‘i scholars into captured Iranian territory to speak to local populations to show their support for the Iraqi Ba‘th and demonize Khomeini’s government.⁸⁰⁴

A 1981 book, *Religion and Heritage in Ba‘thist Thought*, followed none of the previous discursive patterns centered on Mesopotamian themes and anti-imperialism.⁸⁰⁵ These themes did

⁸⁰² Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion*, 46-51.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid*, 47.

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 52.

⁸⁰⁵ Sha‘ban Rajab, al-Shahab, *al-Din wa al-turath fi al-fikr al-Ba‘thi* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya lil Taba‘at, 1981)

not disappear completely from Iraqi Ba‘thist rhetoric. Instead, a desire to ‘speak for Islam’ more credibly than Ayatollah Khomeini seems to have shaped Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse at that time. The Iraqi Ba‘th held no punches when they addressed the groups that they accused of politicizing religion. Attacks against Iranians peppered the text, distracting from substantive disagreements. These slurs dismissive of Zoroastrians (*al-majus*, *majusi*) entered Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse as a way to speak pejoratively about Iranians and question their Islamic bona fides. This 1981 text is the earliest I have found which uses the figure of the Baramika, a Persian family of viziers who served Caliph Haroun Rashid in the late 8th century AD and were apparently executed for treason. Because of this treason, the use of the term *al-Baramika* became synonymous with labeling someone as a fifth column.⁸⁰⁶ *Religion and Heritage in Ba‘thist Thought* sought to portray Arabs, now synonymous with Iraq, as glorious and victorious *despite* the treacherous behavior of Iraqi opposition groups supported by Iran or Syria. By labeling these groups with historical terms, the Iraqi Ba‘th sought to present the static nature of the opposition demonstrated in historical continuity. The text could have taken a different title, one more literally descriptive of its arguments, but the content attacking opposition groups under the title of *Religion and Heritage in Ba‘thist Thought* is no accident. Rather, what seems to be slippage is not slippage at all; it is quite revealing of the way the Iraqi Ba‘th tied the concepts of religion and heritage to opposition groups.

The onset of war against Iran also marks the entrance of messages emphasizing Arabs as those who carry the message of Islam. A June 1983 speech by Saddam Hussein, titled “Arabs and the Leading Role in the Message of Islam” is indicative of this discourse.⁸⁰⁷ Hussein engaged his audience with a rhetorical question: “so why is the Quran in Arabic?” His answer was that language

⁸⁰⁶ Amatzia Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam, 1968-2003: Ba‘thi Iraq from Secularism to Faith* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 175.

⁸⁰⁷ Saddam Hussein, *al-‘Arab wa al-Dawr al-Qiyadi li-Risalat al-Islam*” in *Mukhtarat al-Juz’ al-Tasi’a: al-Din wa al-Turath wa al-Tarikh* (Baghdad: Dar al Shu’un al-Thaqafiya al-‘Ama, 1988), 27-34.

was more than a means of communication, it was a tool of thought. The thoughts expressed through language, Hussein argued, were “colored” by it; the Arabic language alone was capable of clearly expressing God’s intent.⁸⁰⁸ A different text from 1984 laid out the roots of Arab *qawmiyya*, arguing that its deep roots predated European nationalisms and as such, Iraqi Ba‘thist *qawmiyya* was not merely a western import.⁸⁰⁹ Arabs thus had the responsibility to take a leading role in the Muslim *Umma*. This conclusion was turned against Khomeini shortly thereafter when Hussein dismissed Khomeini as someone who rejected the leading role of Arabs in Islam. Khomeini “does not understand Islam as it should be understood,” Hussein insisted.⁸¹⁰

The leading role of Arabs in Islam was connected directly to a slur Hussein employed against his enemies. Hussein set to attacking “*shu‘ubiyyun*” and their interpretations of the Arab link to Islam as being one not intended by God, but rather resultant from Muhammad’s material surroundings in the Arabian Peninsula.⁸¹¹ Hussein argued that such a claim inverted the reality. The growth of Islam among Arabs was not merely a coincidence of surroundings but rather God’s design and familiarity with the characteristics of Arabs that led him to reveal the Quran to Muhammad. God wanted Arabs to have this leading role in spreading the message of Islam, Hussein argued to the *‘ulema*.⁸¹² *Shu‘ubiyya* intertwined with and cannot be completely separated from broader Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse about religion and Arab nationalism. It is to Iraqi Ba‘thist discursive deployment of “the religious question” that this work turns, while *shu‘ubiya* is explored in depth in the chapter on Iraq’s political opposition.

⁸⁰⁸ Hussein, “*al-‘Arab wa al-dawr al-qiyadi...*”, 31.

⁸⁰⁹ Hamid Ahmad al Ward, *al-Mas‘ala al-Diniyya wa al-Qawmiyya al-‘Arabiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1984), 43.

⁸¹⁰ Hussein, “*al-‘Arab wa al-dawr al-qiyadi...*”, 32.

⁸¹¹ *Shu‘ubiyya* is explored in depth in chapter five on the Iraqi opposition.

⁸¹² *Ibid*, 30.

“The Religious Question”

A reinvigoration of Pan-Arabist rhetoric came to the fore in Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse in early 1980 in response to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, bringing with it new notes of emphasis on Islam. The “religious question” appeared in multiple prominent texts and speeches in the early 1980s, a point through which the Iraqi Ba‘th sought to counter Ayatollah Khomeini’s claims to speak for Islam. Various state publications from this period highlight public discourse and the forms it took. A 1982 Iraqi Ba‘thist publication *Between Religion and the Exploitation of Religion* accused Iran of deliberately conflating the religious and the political, seeking to turn people’s loyalty to religious precepts into loyalty for Iran’s rulers.⁸¹³ The text laid out the position of the Arab *Umma* and that of the Third World more broadly as being stuck between competing universal systems, namely Capitalism and Marxism. For ‘Abd al Jabbar Muhsin, neither of these systems could truly represent the Third World in the way the locus of Arabism and Islam could.⁸¹⁴ Like Saddam Hussein’s speeches from the late 1970s, Muhsin argued here that the US deliberately sought to revive religion and sectarianism in the Third World after WWII. His texts sometimes slipped to “Capitalism” as the subject carrying out these actions. While Western support of religious fundamentalists is commonly understood to target Communist parties and the PLO (think US support of Mujahideen in Afghanistan or Israeli support of a nascent Hamas) the Iraqi Ba‘th insisted that radical nationalists like themselves were the target of this Western attempt to revive religion.⁸¹⁵ This fundamentalism attacked both nationalists and Communists, smearing them as “atheists” to promote its religious piety.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹³ ‘Abd al Jabbar Muhsin, *Bayn al Din wa Istighlal al-Din* (Baghdad: Dar al Rashid lil-Nashr, 1982), 21-22.

⁸¹⁴ Muhsin did not elaborate how that worked for other parts of the Third World outside Arab countries.

⁸¹⁵ The revival of religion is much more complex than merely foreign support of fundamentalist groups. Also, others would counter that the CIA helped the Iraqi Ba‘th into power in 1963 to overthrow Abdul Karim Qasim.

⁸¹⁶ Muhsin, *Bayn al Din wa Istighlal al-Din*, 8.

In a different speech given by Iraqi Ba‘thist intellectual Ilyas Farah, he trumpeted the revival of religion taking place across the postcolonial world, pointing out that it had been documented in both Islam and Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The key argument in the text that carried over from other Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production of this period was the inseparable connection between Arabism and Islam, through heritage. This connection between religion and heritage, according to Muhsin, was precisely the one that foreign imperialists wanted to split leaving its *qawmiyya* weakened.⁸¹⁷ The argument picked up on one presented by Saddam Hussein in 1977, *A View on Religion and Heritage* discussed above. Muhsin extended the argument, positing that separating religion and heritage (*din wa turath*) would make it easier for fundamentalists to placate people with religion without its revolutionary power, which came from Islam. As the 1977 text predated the Islamic Revolution and the beginning of war against Iran, Hussein’s speech did not tie the “religious question” to Iran. Muhsin’s 1982 text did make this connection explicitly, accusing Iran of deliberately conflating the religious and the political, seeking to turn people’s loyalty to religious precepts into loyalty for Iran’s rulers.⁸¹⁸ Muhsin hedged his position by reaffirming the point made by ‘Aflaq and others that while being vigorously nationalist, Iraqi Ba‘thist *qawmiyya* was not racist. One can imagine that many Iraqis already targeted by the government, namely those labeled as having an “Iranian inclination” would not be convinced by the idea that Iraqi Ba‘thist *qawmiyya* was free of racism. Summarizing to close the text, Muhsin affirmed the Iraqi Ba‘th had no intention of replacing *qawmiyya* with religion or vice versa. The Iraqi Ba‘th could not embrace Islam in politics, Muhsin reasoned, because it goes against our principles and the movement of progress. While the Iraqi Ba‘th party often referred to itself as “progressive” and to others as “reactionary,” this closing idea of Abdul Jabbar Muhsin’s

⁸¹⁷ *ibid*, 18.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid*, 21-22.

text is a notable embrace of modernization theory, something one finds explicit traces of in Iraqi Ba‘thist writings and discourses about development more broadly.

The Iraqi Ba‘th released the Central Report from their Ninth Regional Congress in late 1982 and made sure to address “the religious question.” The report, written in the voice of the party and published in early 1983 (from here on 1983 Report), took credit for being “the only socialist and revolutionary party in the Arab Homeland” which paid attention to the issue of religion.⁸¹⁹ As was shown in the first chapter on Iraq’s place in the Third World, the Iraqi Ba‘th was not able to reconcile with other Arab republics like Syria or Libya, both of which antagonized the Iraq Ba‘th and supported Iraqi opposition groups. The above claim was almost certainly a veiled slight to these regional competitors. “The religious question” had to balance two key aspects- first it had to attack Iran without seeming to criticize Islam more broadly, and second it had to deal with the perceived authenticity of the Iranian government’s Islamist discourse.⁸²⁰

Many of the facets elaborated in that 1983 Report foreign colonialism, the ties of Arab nationalism to Islam, opposition to Communism, and the artificial division of the Arab World strongly resembled the examples from ‘Aflaq and Hussein earlier. Indeed, Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production cited many of the same texts and speeches as it did before. This discursive continuity helped issues related to the Islamic Revolution in Iran stand in stark relief. In the 1983 Report, the Iraqi Ba‘th offered their view of the events next door in Iran, arguing that “ideal conditions for the growth of the religious-political phenomenon and its prevalence have been provided in Iran.”⁸²¹ The 1983 Report expounded at length about the conditions the Iraqi Ba‘th saw leading to the revolution in Iran. According to the Iraqi Ba‘th, Ayatollah Khomeini’s government squandered its

⁸¹⁹ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress* (Baghdad: Party, 1983), 245.

⁸²⁰ Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*, 59.

⁸²¹ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Congress*, 261.

opportunity and failed to live up to what it had promised.⁸²² “This (Iranian) experience is today the negative model of this (religious-political) phenomenon,” the 1983 Report averred, “and will be the main reasons of its defeat in this phase on ideological, political, and practical levels.”⁸²³ Having outlined its views on the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the party turned its sights to “the religious-political phenomenon in Iraq.” A vague beginning of this section of the 1983 Report spoke about how religious groups (which it did not name) were hostile to Communism in Iraq. The 1983 Report followed with the claim that religious parties have been even more hostile to the Ba‘th than they were to the Communists.⁸²⁴ “One of the most active of such parties in this phase was the so-called al-Da‘wa Party,” the report finally stated openly, “which has so (sic) well-known sectarian nature and suspicious orientations that they have become well-known to most of the people.”⁸²⁵ Clear in this statement was the implication that “the people” of Iraq sided with the Ba‘th and were suspicious of al-Da‘wa Party.⁸²⁶ This connection between discourses about Islam and heritage and Iraqi opposition groups can be inferred from a 1988 publication which gathered together various speeches Saddam Hussein had given under the title *History, Heritage, and Religion*.⁸²⁷

The Iraqi Ba‘th sought to strengthen its claim to Arab heritage through Islam, while rejecting the politicization of religion. In practice, this meant the Iraqi Ba‘th framed its approach to religion as the only viable one and delegitimized all others who tried as guilty of politicizing

⁸²² *ibid*, 260-270.

⁸²³ *ibid*, 260.

⁸²⁴ *ibid*, 271.

⁸²⁵ *ibid*, 272.

⁸²⁶ An Iraqi political party based around Shi‘i Islam that will be explored in more detail in the chapter on the Iraqi opposition.

⁸²⁷ Saddam Hussein, *Mukhtarat al-juz’ al-tasi’a: al-din wa al-turath wa-tarikh* (Baghdad: Dar al Shu’un al-Thaqafiya al-‘Ama, 1988). The volume contained speeches about historiography, heritage, religious movements, Khomeini, and the Arab role in leading Islam. The Ba‘th saw these connected and organized them in this volume as such.

religion. The party touted itself as open to religious freedom and constantly used the word “democracy” in party speeches and materials, but argued its tolerance was unfortunately facilitating the problem of religious extremism. The 1983 Report painted the politicization of religion as very difficult to deal with because it hid among those legitimately practicing their religion.⁸²⁸ Although never stated openly, the Iraqi Ba‘th implied that religion should have no place in politics. Ideas introduced by Hussein in speeches several years earlier in 1977 were now being elaborated in the party’s 300-page 1983 Report. Hussein’s argument that Iraqis were free to practice their religions but not to bring them into politics in any way thus set a bar for opposition movements that was not reachable, and demonized them for not reaching it. Yet Hussein himself drew on Islam as a key source of heritage, adding to Iraqi Ba‘thist claims about Arab nationalism that were fundamentally political. The state actively co-opted religious leaders to control their roles in society, working through bureaucracy to control their ability to undermine Iraqi Ba‘thist legitimacy. In controlling religious discourse in this manner and tying it to heritage for Iraqi Ba‘thist *qawmiyya*, Hussein denied for opposition movements that which he claimed for himself and the Iraqi Ba‘th.

The state organized two large Popular Islamic Conferences in 1983 and 1985, both in Baghdad. In the first decade of Ba‘thist rule in Iraq, the state used the arts, membership in the Non-Aligned Movement, or Pan-Arabism as the basis of festivals and conferences it hosted. By the mid-1980s after Iraq’s painful snubbing by the NAM, the Iraqi government needed to counter Ayatollah Khomeini’s claims to speak for Islam and attempted to do so with these two large conferences.⁸²⁹ Islamic scholars came from around the world, invited and paid for by the Iraqi

⁸²⁸ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Congress*, 272.

⁸²⁹ See chapter one for more on how the plans for Iraq to host the 1982 NAM conference in Baghdad fell apart.

Ba‘th, on the condition that they denounce Iran as furthering war between Muslims.⁸³⁰ The hosts and organizers of the conferences institutionalized into the Popular Islamic Conference Organization and came to have a permanent headquarters in Baghdad from 1987 on, planning and holding smaller events and publishing works on Islam.⁸³¹

Iraqi Ba‘thist intellectual Shibli al-‘Aysami contributed several notable texts to the religious question in the second half of the 1980s. A text from 1987 took its title from the party’s original slogan, named *Risala al-Umma al-‘Arabiyya*.⁸³² At the outset of the text, al-‘Aysami says he aimed to explain the meaning of the *risala khalida* or “eternal message” to younger party members who did not find the party’s slogan clear.⁸³³ Al-‘Aysami sets up a dialogue between himself and a hypothetical member of the party, asking straightforward questions so al-‘Aysami can answer to elaborate party doctrine. Consistent with the positions taken by Saddam Hussein laid out already in this chapter, al-‘Aysami described how he was proud of and took strength from Islam as a Ba‘th Party member, since Islam constitutes the largest piece of the history and *turath* of the Arab *Umma*.⁸³⁴ Al-‘Aysami also clarified that there were some differences between the understandings of secularism held by the Iraqi Ba‘th and “the West.” Supporting secularism for the Iraqi Ba‘th, did not mean denouncing Arab heritage or its positive spiritual values as some materialists did in the West.⁸³⁵ Materialism here was clearly outlined to refer to either dialectical

⁸³⁰ Ibid, 53-55.

⁸³¹ Ibid, 57.

⁸³² The original slogan was “*umma arabiyya wahida dhat risala khalida*,” roughly translating to “One Arab Nation with an Eternal Message.”

⁸³³ It is hard to know if this was a rhetorical and not literal example, merely meant to open the text. No matter the veracity of the example, the party struggled to elaborate its points and ideas in a simple format; at the short end of texts published by the Iraqi Ba‘th in this period, it is still 150+ pages with dense language.

⁸³⁴ Shibli al-‘Aysami, *Risalat al Umma al-‘Arabiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al-Shu’un al Thaqafiyya al-‘Ama, 1987), 70.

⁸³⁵ al-‘Aysami, *Risala al Umma al-‘Arabiyya*, 72.

or historical materialism and was a thinly-veiled shot at the Iraqi Communist Party. There are no clear changes from earlier versions of the discourse, and indeed strong continuity exists.

CONCLUSION

Debates in the postcolonial world about heritage and in the Arab World in particular shape and frame issues of *turath* in Iraq under Iraqi Ba‘thist rule. Many Arab intellectuals participated in ongoing debates about the role of heritage. Some argued that appreciating heritage was necessary for progress, similar to the Iraqi Ba‘th, while others argued the emphasis on heritage was backwards-looking and would not address the problems of modernization it sought to address. For the purposes of this conclusion, Shakir Mustafa’s argument that *turath* and the way different thinkers approached it served as a political delineation is paramount. As this chapter has shown, Saddam Hussein made clear that *turath* was almost always a code word for talking about the Iraqi opposition. Several Iraqi Ba‘thist books showed this distinction clearly with titles about religion and heritage for works or speeches that were almost exclusively about political opposition groups. Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba‘th insisted on the connection between religion and heritage (*din wa turath*) as that which gave their *qawmiyya* strength. Indeed, an Iraqi Ba‘thist intellectual Abd al Jabbar Muhsin argued that this *qawmiyya* stretched all the way back to the spread of Islam, it was not a recent emergence in the end of the Ottoman Empire. In his view, this made Iraqi Ba‘thist *qawmiyya* “authentic,” not merely nationalism copied from Europe. This closely parallels Michel ‘Aflaq’s positions on Islam and nationalism, showing his extended influence on the Iraqi Ba‘th Party. Cold War reality of Western support for Islamic fundamentalist groups was thus understood

by the Iraqi Ba‘th as threatening them deliberately, seeking to split the union of *din wa turath*. Once separated, the Iraqi Ba‘th would be easier to defeat and both of their primary ideological enemies would have stronger critiques to make. Iraqi Communists, who were the most politically powerful proponents of the Iraqist narrative and its Mesopotamian emphasis, would have a stronger claim to *turath* and growing political Islamist groups like the Iraqi Da‘wa Party would have a more authentic claim to *din*. Yet as the chapter on the political opposition will show, the Iraqi Ba‘thist reading of *turath* came to be racist, divisive, and extremely violent in practice no matter how many times they denied as much in party texts. This political sphere and its mix of nationalists, regionalists, Communists and Islamists was characteristic of Iraq’s position in the Third World.

Archaeology and folklore were two central features of Iraqi Ba‘thist emphases on *turath*. As this chapter showed, the former could not be extricated from larger power relations, through which researchers from Western countries carried out excavations in Iraq to search for archaeological treasures. The Iraqi Ba‘th was forced to navigate a balance; it needed to cut down on antiquities smuggling and theft while simultaneously benefiting from the expertise of foreign researchers. In this way, digging for antiquities paralleled digging for oil, as Iraq struggled to exercise its sovereignty over subterranean spaces, carrying out full nationalization of oil in 1972. Just as Iraq had to wrestle with foreign oil companies over concessions relating to oil underground in Iraq, the state likewise had to mitigate antiquities smuggling and theft to make sure it was the only party to benefit financially and in terms of legitimacy from the antiquities buried underneath Iraq’s soil. It is easy to dismiss the ostentatious festivals, magazines, and architecture all tied to *turath* as “kitsch.” To do so, unfortunately, stops short at denouncing the aesthetics of the program rather than pushing forward for a deeper understanding of why the Iraqi Ba‘th emphasized these

motifs. Situated in the Third World, alongside competing visions of modernity, the Iraqi Ba‘th sought to forge their own path with radical nationalism of the Pan-Arab variety guiding them into the future. No matter the realpolitik under which the Iraqi Ba‘th accepted help from the USSR, in the end Ba‘thists in both Iraq and Syria were hostile to Communists in their domestic realms.

Iraq’s local cultures and heritage come through most prominently in the journal *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi*. Explored in detail in this chapter its first decade was representative of Iraqi society in ways no other Iraqi Ba‘thist publication truly was. Intellectuals of all ages and stripes were published in its pages, reflecting diverse understandings of history and Iraqi identity. *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* and the *Markaz al-Fulkluri* served as institutions documenting and studying Iraqi customs and local histories. Once the Iraqi Ba‘th decided to exert more control over the publication, new editors and writers changed the face of the journal to something strikingly different than how it was established. Focusing on *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* to track these changes opens a new window upon changes that have been written about in Iraqi history more broadly, notably new discourses about *Qadisiyya Saddam* during the Iran-Iraq War. The intellectual content did not disappear completely in the 1980s, far from it; it was far more focused on Arab/Islamic themes and ran alongside overt Iraqi Ba‘thist propaganda like editorials about the war against Iran or reproductions of Saddam Hussein’s speeches. In this sense, *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* is a microcosm of Iraqi life under Ba‘thist rule.

CHAPTER FIVE: OPPOSITION

“After losing his sense of shame, Saddam did whatever he pleased! It was demanded of every Iraqi that he/she analyze his/her blood to prove that over the passage of centuries, never once had his/her blood ever mixed with a drop of Iranian blood.”- Safinaz Kazem⁸³⁶

Such was one of the many barbed quotes directed by Safinaz Kazem at then Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in her memoir, entitled *Yawmiyyat Baghdad* (Baghdad Diaries) 1975-1980. An Egyptian intellectual who had lived in Baghdad for five years before events overwhelmed her, Kazem fled Iraq in July of 1980, but describes how the last straw had come several months earlier. Years earlier in April of 1976, Kazem was published in the Ba‘thist intellectual monthly, *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, a rare female voice in the magazine otherwise dominated by men. Yet as time wore on, Kazem’s patience with the Iraqi state grew thin. Kazem had been close to leaving Iraq after Saddam seized full power and carried out a bloody purge, but she cited Hussein’s April, 1980 execution of revered Shi‘i Imam Baqir al Sadr and his sister, Bint al Huda, as the event that pushed her to flee. Facing a growing opposition movement from the Iraqi Da‘wa Party, energized by the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Iraqi state was increasingly resorting to extreme measures. Kazem expounded at length on “Saddam’s war on the Iraqi people” and the flaws she perceived in Hussein’s version of nationalism, railing against any possibility of a pure Arab the Iraqi Ba‘th could claim to represent: “When we say ‘Arab,’ we do not just mean supposedly pure-Arab Bedouins. We mean the ‘new Arabs’ who cover the entire Arab World, those whose Arab blood mixed with Kurds, with Turks, with Tatars, with Mongols, with Fars, with Berbers, and

⁸³⁶ Safinaz Kazem, *Yawmiyyat Baghdad 1975-1980* (London: Open Press Publishers, 1984).

Habash.”⁸³⁷ While it had to be published in London because of censorship and political oppression in Iraq, Kazem’s memoir captures the tensions of the moment and points us to a largely ignored facet of modern Iraqi history- that of racialization under the Iraqi Ba‘th.

This chapter investigates opposition to the Iraqi Ba‘th in the 1970s and 1980s from new angles to reach a better understanding of why the Iraqi Ba‘th lumped opposition groups together under the umbrella of an ancient 9th century term, *shu‘ubiyya*. At the outset of my research, I sought to understand why the Iraqi Ba‘th changed its state discourses to re-embrace Arab nationalism close to the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War. After completing my research, this question proved to be incomplete, or rather its answer only explained some of what my research uncovered. Instead, a different question had emerged, one whose answer was indicative of a largely forgotten facet of Iraqi history. As shown in chapter one, the Iraqi Ba‘th introduced state racism in the form of *shu‘ubiyya* discourse seven months before the war against Iran and in a speech that did not mention Iran or Shi‘a but rather concentrated on communism. Chapter one also showed how this speech, the *I‘lan al Qawmi*, was a reaction to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, representing Ba‘thist fears of a similar intervention in Iraq on behalf of the Iraqi Communists. With the beginning of overt state racism shifted forward and not solely tied to war against Iran, the first research question had an unexpected answer, but a new one begged to be answered. How could the Iraqi Ba‘th employ such a discourse (*shu‘ubiyya*) against Iraqi Communists and the USSR but continue to promote it once the war began, then directed at the new theocratic government of Iran? Why did state discourse *stay the same* when shifting its focus from Communists to Shi‘a?

Iraq’s place in Cold War history comes into better focus by examining the racializing state discourses in the early 1980s, shown to be due as much to fear of a Soviet invasion of Iraq that

⁸³⁷ Kazem, *Yawmiyat Baghdad*, 33-34. Translation mine.

never came as impending war with Iran. Liberalism was equated with western colonialism; challenged by Islamist and Communist visions of modernity, anticolonial doctrine from the Party's roots and position in the Third World foreclosed embracing a Liberal vision of modernity. Radical nationalism of an international variety, namely pan-Arabism, was to be supplemented with the best technology the Iraqi Ba'th could buy with oil money to push Iraq forward into the future. Clashing violently with both Communism and growing Shi'i Islam, the Iraqi Ba'th could not effectively control opposition groups which were supported with money and arms by Iran, Syria, or the Cold War powers. The alignment of subnational groups with supranational powers bedeviled the Iraqi state, itself a state seeking to shape a nation. These transnational tensions exploded in the late 1980s against Kurds when the Iraqi Ba'th used chemical weapons to suppress an insurgency in northern Iraq, and attempted to Arabize the city of Kirkuk. Years of domestic and international tensions mixing together culminated in gross state violence and genocide that Iraqi society has never fully healed from.

The overarching thesis of this chapter is that the Iraqi state deliberately adopted discourses and policies of repression treating its political opposition as a coherent race of people, namely Persians. State discourse equated loyalty to the state with the Arab race. The details of the violent and oppressive tactics deployed by Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba'th against opposition groups are well known and have been extensively documented in previous scholarship. This chapter will show how transnational forces, ideological affinities, and spatial dimensions shaped opposition politics, and consequently state discourse about the opposition in Iraq from 1968-1991. While salient, the categories of Communists, Shi'a, and Kurds as the primary loci of resistance to the state obscure important links across these categories. The basic outlines of the opposition did not change significantly, but the composition of those groups and rhetoric they used against the Iraqi

government did change in a manner consistent with larger trends in the Middle East, moving from political ideologies like socialism, communism, and nationalism toward religion. In response to losing control of some territories inside of Iraq's internationally recognized borders, the Iraqi state moved to clearly delineate who was in the Iraqi nation and who was not. Where territory could not serve to define the nation, the state attempted to modify the composition of population through Arabization, Arabizing groups who aligned with the state politically while labeling Iraqis as “*shu‘ubis*” and “Persians” by dint of their opposition. Opposition figures might be Iraqi citizens with decades or centuries of family history in the area but they were cast out of the nation discursively and legally for their political opposition to the Iraqi Ba‘th.

Debating Sect, Nation, and Race in Ba‘thist Iraq

The role of religion in conflict in Iraq is not only fraught but widely oversimplified. Multiple bodies of scholarship have looked at the ways that modern concepts, categories, and institutions which are secular in nature have their roots in religion. Modernization theory was a teleological version of this argument for which the erasure of religion and full secularism of the world would be the “modern” endpoint. The Islamic Revolution shocked the world and showed that modernization would not inexorably lead to secularism. Framed differently, the ways religion was practiced and related to power changed over centuries before reaching modern times. This process was more than just states replacing kings who had right from the church. Race became the means of delineating a modern “we” at the center of Enlightenment modernity in contrast to the “others” (Judaism and Islam) around which this “we” was formed.⁸³⁸ Various important domains previously understood through religion came to have racial resonance, namely questions of human

⁸³⁸ David Theo Goldberg, *Are We All Postracial Yet?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 7.

origins, the intense feelings around kinship, and as David Theo Goldberg described it, “naturalizing the artifice of socially produced and fashioned identifications.” “As religion did for the medieval,” Goldberg continued, “race now offered for modernity the imagining of mass community out of the individualized social anonymity.”⁸³⁹ Understood this way, race can be argued to be the secularization of the religious.⁸⁴⁰ Goldberg maintains that race has a “socio-conceptual agility,” allowing it to pin down people while also escaping a singular meaning or significance.⁸⁴¹ This flexibility in racial definitions will be key in understanding racialization in Iraq under the Iraqi Ba‘th.⁸⁴²

Existing scholarship has largely ignored race in analyses of the Arab world. Instead sectarianism that is the most hotly debated concept. Much of what this chapter explores has until this point been discussed conceptually as sectarianism. Indeed, “Arab” as a category has traditionally been understood as ethno-linguistic, meaning that Arabs as a group are defined by a shared language. Part of this may be a terminological issue in Arabic itself, in which there is no clear, commonly used term for “race.” The terms *qawm* as well as *sha‘b* both come close, yet are better translated as “nation” and “people” respectively. Indeed, the word “racism” is not connected to these Arabic words etymologically. Instead, “racism” is *‘unsariyya* in Arabic. *Ta’ifi*, or sectarian, seems to most closely resemble the English “racist” as an accusation of being prejudiced

⁸³⁹ *ibid*, 8.

⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid*, 10.

⁸⁴² The term “racialization” has a complex history and no clear agreement on how it should be used as an academic concept. The uncertainty and social construction tied to “race” underlies the plurality of uses of the term racialization. This dissertation refers to a top-down process in which a categorization of essential characteristics is imposed upon a group of people who does not define themselves in this manner. Arguably, “-ization” words have a teleology built in that is problematic and likewise undermines their analytical value. No clear endpoint is assumed for the process of racialization described in this chapter. Instead, it was an attempted transition that did not result in Iraqi opposition members taking up a racialized Persian/ Shu‘ubi identity. See Karim Murji and John Solomos, “Introduction: Racialization in Theory and in Practice” in *Racialization Studies in Theory and Practice* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

and hateful toward others from different groups. Yet complicating this understanding is the fact that Arab identity could not be separated historically from the spread of Islam, discursively at least. In the minds of some Arab nationalists, Arab nationalism can be understood as a secularization of Islam, arguably paralleling Goldberg's theorization of the historical relationship between religion and race. In Saddam Hussein's view, this secularization away from Islam had deprived Arab nationalism of its crucial "authenticity" as well as its connection to its "heritage," placing political groups explicitly drawing on Islam in a seemingly superior position.⁸⁴³ Seen this way, one can better understand why the Iraqi Ba'ath dug for Arab heritage through Islam and brought it into modern politics in the late 1970s and 1980s. As was shown in chapter four, the connection of *qawmiyya* to *turath* (heritage) was envisioned by the Iraqi Ba'ath to be a position strong enough to challenge other global ideologies like Capitalism and Communism. At first glance, such an idea centered on *qawmiyya* and *turath* would seem limited to Arabs in a manner that economic ideas do not share, constraining its potential spread or appeal to non-Arab groups. Instead, non-alignment and alliance with other Third World and postcolonial nations was adopted to serve as a much-needed international dimension for Iraqi Ba'athism.

Michel Foucault presented similar ideas about race to those of Goldberg in lectures at the College de France in 1976. Tracing European history through discursive changes, Foucault accounts for what he calls "state racism" or a racism directed inward by the state at its own elements and products.⁸⁴⁴ This was a racism meant for internal purification. Foucault's ideas have some resonance with the empirics outlined in this chapter, but do not fit with others, and it is crucial not to stretch too far in thinking Foucault can explain everything, especially in a society he

⁸⁴³ There were both Sunni and Shi'i groups in Iraq bringing Islam into Iraqi politics, but Hussein was far more concerned, at least domestically, with Shi'i groups. Hussein's ideas about Arabism and Islam are explored in depth in the Heritage chapter.

⁸⁴⁴ Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, 60.

never explicitly studied. That said, one key insight about state racism from Foucault in this work was its counterrevolutionary nature. “Racism is,” Foucault lectured to those gathered at his public seminar, “quite literally, revolutionary discourse in an inverted form.”⁸⁴⁵ Coming at the same point from a different angle, Goldberg argues that racisms are fundamentally about the exercise of power, namely who exercises power and who is the object of the power exercised.⁸⁴⁶ The Iraqi Ba‘th had long placed the concept of revolution at the center of party ideology and discourse, aiming in the party’s beginnings to overthrow foreign rule in the Arab Middle East as well as the local bourgeoisie. Yet after coming to power in 1968, *thawra* or “revolution” was fundamentally a counter-revolution against Iraqi opposition groups. Discourse about imperialism, Zionism, and Palestine took legitimate grievances for Iraqis and acted as a cover for the Ba‘thist magic trick, i.e. preaching revolution while explicitly using state racism as part of squashing any revolution inside Iraq that would remove it from power. As demonstrated in chapter one, the primary threat the Iraqi Ba‘th acted to forestall was a communist opposition supported by the USSR. This swing to the conservative right after the Ba‘th party’s left-of-center roots heralded the emphases on nationalism, religion, and race explicitly used by the party in the 1980s.

The Progressive National Front in Iraq

The nature of the approaches used by the Iraqi Ba‘th toward opposition groups fluctuated in the early years of Ba‘thist rule in Iraq but were authoritarian throughout the period of 1968-1991 this dissertation explores. When the Iraqi Ba‘th seized power in 1963 by overthrowing Abdul Karim Qasim, they carried out a bloody purge against Iraqi Communists, and their rule was short-lived, ending in less than one year. The Progressive National Front was the second major policy

⁸⁴⁵ *ibid*, 81.

⁸⁴⁶ Goldberg, *Are We All Postracial Yet?*, 13.

push by the Iraqi Ba‘th in power toward opposition groups, and the first since 1968. The National Front emerged out of the relative weakness of the Iraqi Ba‘th in the early 1970s, serving as a means of co-opting elements of opposition groups and binding them to Iraqi Ba‘thist policy. Historian of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) Tareq Ismael argues that weakness on the communist side was also something the Ba‘th sought to take advantage of, citing a quote to that effect from Abdul Khaliq Al-Samarrai, then-Secretary of the Ba‘th Regional Command.⁸⁴⁷ Al-Samarrai lays out his perception of the multiple positions held inside the Ba‘th Party, helping to explain much of the disagreement in the historiography. One group, al-Samarrai explains, wanted to benefit from the experience of the ICP in different fields, while the other, including Saddam Hussein and then-President Ahmad Hassan al Bakr wanted to control the ICP.⁸⁴⁸ In mid-1970, the Progressive National Front was formed to attempt to co-opt “moderate” elements of both Communist and Kurdish groups clashing with the Iraqi state bringing together the Iraqi Ba‘th, the Iraqi Communist Party, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, despite lingering tensions among them.⁸⁴⁹ The KDP was effectively crushed in fighting in 1975, ended by the Algiers Agreement. Sluglett and other scholars discuss this period of Iraqi history in detail in multiple works, which reach largely the same conclusions about the Front.⁸⁵⁰ The history of the Front is briefly covered here to build toward the state’s use of *shu‘ubiyya* discourse to include Shi‘i and Communist opposition parties together.

⁸⁴⁷ Tareq Y. Ismael, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party in Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 168.

⁸⁴⁸ Ismael, *Communist Party*, 168.

⁸⁴⁹ Nazih Ayubi, *Overstating the Arab State* (London: IB Tauris, 1996), 424.

⁸⁵⁰ See, for example, Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958* (London, New York: IB Tauris, 1987), 134-167; Ali Babakhan “The Deportation of Shi‘is During the Iran-Iraq War” in *Ayatollahs, Sufis, and Ideologues* ed. Faleh Abdul Jabar (London, UK: Saqi Books, 2002), 196.

Saddam Hussein laid out key components of the Iraqi Ba‘th Party’s approach to the National Front in a widely-distributed and translated text entitled *One Common Trench, or Two Trenches?* The Iraqi Ba‘th had chosen a military metaphor - being “in the trench together” - to evoke the imagined comradeship of the National Front. In this pamphlet, Hussein argued that the Iraqi Ba‘thist “experiment” with the National Front had long-term aims for itself and for the “Arab revolutionary movement” more broadly. The text is at turns introspective and aggressive, discussing how some members of the Iraqi Ba‘th relate to their failed stint in power in 1963. “We have seen the Ba‘thists criticizing the Communists directly or indirectly for their acts” the party admits, “[T]he Communists have done the same, but without any self-criticism.”⁸⁵¹ The error of the Communists outweighs that of the Ba‘thists, Saddam Hussein continued.⁸⁵² Error as defined in Saddam’s presentation was when an individual member of the Front believed they could bring about the full truth in practice on their own, without collaborating with other members of the Front. The oblique reference to communication problems was clarified later in the text when Hussein castigated the Communists for only wanting to be teachers, and not students at the same time. “We all agree that theory is formulated and developed in the light of reality,” Hussein intoned. “Why then, should some of you only wish to be teachers, without agreeing to interact with others?”⁸⁵³ Throughout the text, Hussein questions the behavior of the Iraqi Communist Party, expressing a position of power, of magnanimity even. Discussing when the Communists “turn against us”, Hussein clarified: “We mean, rather, that in its education position and every day activities, it turns against us. By this method, it tries to make gains at the expense of other patriotic groups.” The clear implication from the passage is that as long as the ICP was in the National Front, they should

⁸⁵¹ Saddam Hussein, *One Common Trench, or Two Trenches?* (Milan: Grafis S.p.A., 1977), 14.

⁸⁵² Hussein, *One Common Trench, or Two Trenches?* 14-15.

⁸⁵³ *ibid*, 17.

not compete in any form against the Ba‘th on the ground. Hussein alluded to some impatience among Iraqi Ba‘thists, who wonder why the party needs the National Front if they already have the popular support for “revolutionary measures.”⁸⁵⁴ To hammer the point home from a different angle, Hussein asked rhetorically what the ICP could have gained by remaining outside the Front:

Comrades, you are thinking of your own interests, but what have you lost? You have grown in number and popularity. Your organization has grown stronger. Today, you are free to exchange ideas with other patriotic groups and you are acting freely. What would you have gained if you remained outside the Front?⁸⁵⁵

The Iraqi Ba‘th envisioned the Front as not only beneficial for Iraq, but for all involved. Most notably in the text about the National Front, perhaps, was Hussein’s willingness to admit that the Iraqi Ba‘th had gone too far after defeating some Kurdish forces in 1975.⁸⁵⁶ Hussein conceded this point, but still argued that the greatest victory of the Ba‘th in this period was the restraint they showed overall in defeating the Kurds but not vanquishing them, bragging that the defeated were not killed and their women were not raped.⁸⁵⁷ While vulgar, such rhetoric emphasized shared belonging to Iraq, arguing that Iraqi troops could not treat Kurds, who were also Iraqis, the way one would treat a foreign nation in war. The text makes clear that Iraq had also settled on autonomy for Kurds, as it was seemingly the best solution to allow for Kurdish populations in the state run by Iraqi Ba‘thists not truly interested in sharing power. The National Progressive Front continued for years in name only but the Iraqi Communists had been kicked out by 1979, already subject to heavy repression. Many Iraqi Communist leaders fled to the Eastern Bloc, while “thousands” of

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid, 18.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid, 20.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid, 41.

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid, 40.

party members languished in Iraqi prisons.⁸⁵⁸ Ismael identifies fractured ICP leadership as a problem preventing more effective policies from the party toward the Front, though he ultimately blames the Iraqi Ba‘th for sabotaging the Front.⁸⁵⁹ As the Iraqi Ba‘th grew in power, its patience for conciliatory measures toward opposition parties dwindled and the cross-border rivalry with its Syrian cousin heated up, with both states eager to play a dominant role in the region and in the vanguard of Arab nationalism.⁸⁶⁰ The report of the Ninth Regional Ba‘th Congress from 1982 highlighted the ludicrous nature of the position the Iraqi Ba‘th came to take. The party appreciated the Front as an “open area for the interaction of views” as long as the leading role of the Iraqi Ba‘th was unquestionable.⁸⁶¹ As other members of the Front would not accept such a power imbalance, tensions only continued. The Iraqi Ba‘th accused the ICP of seeking to delay a peaceful and democratic settlement on the Kurdish question; the ICP was guilty of a double standard in the eyes of the Iraqi Ba‘th, treating Arab nationalism differently, and with hostility, compared to its acceptance of Kurdish nationalism. Where Communism traditionally attracted the disaffected to challenge existing power structures, it was no different in Iraq. Iraqi Kurds, Iraqi Shi‘a, and earlier, Iraqi Jews made up large chunks of the Communist Party’s popular base. The Iraqi Ba‘th saw this as a deliberate strategy, not a structural effect, blaming the Iraqi Communists for seeking to sow division among ethnic and religious groups in Iraq.⁸⁶² The Iraqi state did everything it could to paint the ICP as the problem, while it drove Communists abroad, killed others, and tightened its grip on power in Iraq. In the Iraqi Ba‘th Party’s 1983 Report, Communists were dismissed as mere

⁸⁵⁸ Babakhan, “The Deportation of Shi‘is...” 196.

⁸⁵⁹ Tareq Y. Ismael, “Al-Menbar Group and the Iraqi Communist Movement” *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* vol. 7, no. 2, (2013): 98.

⁸⁶⁰ This opening in Arab leadership came after the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970 and is discussed around the events of Camp David in chapter one.

⁸⁶¹ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress, June 1982* (Baghdad: Party, 1983), 61.

⁸⁶² *Ibid*, 62.

lackeys for the USSR: The ICP, "...throughout all its history lacking the subjective will...has never had any independent policy, or stances, or initiatives whatever (sic) limited they may be."⁸⁶³

The Iraqi Ba'ath went further, stating:

Because of this aspect as well as the backwardness of the Communist Party's leading bodies, this party has no original or creative contribution to realizing and analyzing the basic facts and basic phenomena characterizing Iraq in particular or the Arab homeland as a whole. All the Communist Party's analyses of the conditions in Iraq and the Arab homeland and of all local and national issues and problems were therefore a literal translation of Soviet stances and a poor transcription of traditional Marxist literature despite all essential differences in time and conditions.⁸⁶⁴

The relationships of Mulla Mustafa Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) with outside powers reveal the transnational complexities of Iraqi Kurds well. Many Kurds joined the early Iraqi Communist Party when it was founded in 1935.⁸⁶⁵ The reasons for this affinity for communism were not purely ideological. A brief but fascinating experiment in Kurdish sovereignty took shape in the Mahabad Republic between Iraq and Iran, but this only lasted for six months in early 1946. The fighting over that territory culminated in Barzani being exiled from Iraq to the Soviet Union.⁸⁶⁶ He spent more than the next decade there, but had a mixed relationship with his Soviet hosts, staying until the 1958 Revolution toppled the monarchy and allowed him to return home. During this time, Barzani insists that he did not become a communist, claiming that "good Muslims cannot be communists."⁸⁶⁷ Yet as history unfolded, Kurds continued to form a strong contingent among communists in Iraq. The Iraqi Communist Party later had a branch in Kurdistan, multiple prominent Communist leaders were Kurds, and various temporary fronts were

⁸⁶³ Ibid, 61.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁵ Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds of Iraq: Tragedy and Hope* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 10-11.

⁸⁶⁶ Nader Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 55-56.

⁸⁶⁷ Gunter, *The Kurds of Iraq*, 11.

formed between the Iraqi Communists and other Kurdish parties. ICP policy during the Iran-Iraq War that supported the overthrow of the “reactionary” Iraqi Ba‘th government caused problems inside the party, with a group known as “*al-Menbar*” forming to express its own positions. The Al-Menbar faction took the position that the ICP, whose leadership was in exile in Damascus, had conflated Kurdish issues with those in the interest of all Iraqis against the Iraqi Ba‘th.⁸⁶⁸ As the members of the ICP in the 1970s were disproportionately Shi‘a and Kurds, this statement aimed to negate any legitimate claim they had to act on Iraq’s behalf through the ICP. The Iraqi Communist Party was imprisoned, exiled, and fractured.

Communism was a mid-20th century phenomenon in Iraq that grew to have strong popular support in the 1940s and 1950s. By the mid 1930s, the Iraqi Communist Party already had cells in many cities around Iraq, including Basra, Nasiriya, Diwaniya, Baghdad, Kirkuk, ‘Amara and Kut, showing a spread across the country.⁸⁶⁹ Notably, the Iraqi Communist Party grew significantly in the aftermath of the 1941 Rashid Ali Coup. Arab nationalists in the armed forces temporarily seized power and ruled Iraq independently and sought to align themselves with the Axis Powers, only to have Britain invade and seize power again. Britain did not want to see Arab nationalism steady or growing in the period following the 1941 coup and WWII, so Britain exiled and imprisoned many of its supporters to keep Arab nationalism suppressed. In fact, Baghdad in the interwar period was a center of Marxist thought and communist activism.⁸⁷⁰ Sunni dominance built by Ottoman rule had placed Sunnis in a relatively privileged position, but some Iraqis from Sunni

⁸⁶⁸ Ismael, “Al-Menbar Group and the Iraqi Communist Movement”, 98.

⁸⁶⁹ Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 492.

⁸⁷⁰ Rula Jurdi-Abisaab and Malek Abisaab, *The Shi‘ites of Lebanon: Modernism, Communism, and Hizbullah’s Islamists* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 54.

families nonetheless joined the ICP. The ICP increasingly attracted young people from Shi'a backgrounds, educated in growing government schools, into its ranks with its strong Iraqist (*wataniyya*) streak.⁸⁷¹ Hanna Batatu noted that many of the ICP members from Najaf were extended family members of prominent Shi'i *'ulema* in the shrine city.⁸⁷² As early as the 1940s, these Shi'i clerics in Iraq had begun to worry about the growing influence of communist ideas among Shi'i youth, and sought to mitigate the influence of Communism to little avail.⁸⁷³ Multiple groups in Iraqi society found a platform for their social and economic grievances through the Iraqi Communist Party. In 1959, much to the chagrin of the Shi'i clerical class, the annual pilgrimages for Shi'a had their lowest numbers in decades.⁸⁷⁴

Iraq's demographic balance was changed markedly when many previously nomadic Arab tribes converted to Shi'ism in the late 19th Century.⁸⁷⁵ The reasons for the large-scale conversions of different tribes to Shi'ism were complex but ultimately tied to larger dynamics between shrine cities Najaf and Karbala and their relationships with Qajar Iran and the Ottoman state. Material reality for Shi'a in Iraq created conditions for the widespread engagement of the populace with communist ideas and organizing, especially in the growing urban periphery around Baghdad. Khalil Osman argues in his work on sectarianism in modern Iraq that the growth of communist sympathies was at least partially due to a leadership vacuum in the Iraqi Shi'i community, one that opened when religious leaders adopted a quietist stance in 1924.⁸⁷⁶ Jabbar argues more specifically that Bedouin tribal confederations broke down, opening the way for conversion. Just as the

⁸⁷¹ Khalil Osman, *Sectarianism in Iraq: The Making of State and Nation since 1920* (London: Routledge, 2015), 73.

⁸⁷² Batatu cited in Yamao Dai, "Transformation of the Islamic Da'wa Party in Iraq: From the Revolutionary Period to the Diaspora Era" *Asian and African Area Studies* vol.7, no.2 (2008): 242.

⁸⁷³ Jurdi-Abisaab, Abisaab, *The Shi'ites of Lebanon*, 54.

⁸⁷⁴ Faleh A. Jabbar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq* (London, Saqi Books, 2003), 75.

⁸⁷⁵ Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁸⁷⁶ Osman, *Sectarianism in Iraq*, 73.

transformed Bedouin found a cultural antidote to their alienation in Shi'ism, landless migrant peasants now living as lower middle class city dwellers found their emancipation in Communism.⁸⁷⁷

In both southern Iraq and southern Lebanon, the 1920s and 1930s were formative in the growth of communism among Shi'a. The two regions had a tangible connection through the movement of Shi'i *ulema*, with Najaf and Karbala serving as centers of Shi'i religious training in Iraq. Religious scholars from Lebanon, Syria and beyond frequently came to study in Najaf (Iraq) or Qom (Iran), emphasizing transnational connections. Importantly, Iraqi Arab Shi'a had very different social and cultural norms than the Shi'a of Qajar Iran, whose community dated back to the 16th century. While these connections meant it was common for scholars from these four nations to frequently reside in each other's countries, noticeable fault lines remained. In this way, Shi'ism resembled Pan-Arabism in its transnational reach. Indeed, Shi'ism, Communism and Pan-Arabism all sought to establish bases of solidarity that transcended the nation-states erected in the Mashriq after WWI. A key figure of transnational Shi'ism was Musa as-Sadr, who left Iran in the late 1950s to move to southern Lebanon, where his political impact on the Lebanese Shi'i community can hardly be understated. Lebanese Shi'a largely accepted Musa As-Sadr as one of their own since he came from a family of distinguished clerics who traced its roots back to Jabal 'Amel in southern Lebanon, despite the fact that he spoke with a noticeable Persian accent.⁸⁷⁸ Another influential figure of transnational Shi'ism was Baqir as-Sadr, mentioned at the outset of the chapter; he was a leading Shi'i intellectual whose writings are still of great importance for Shi'i Islamic thought. His works focused on Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic views on the economy, and

⁸⁷⁷ Jabbar, *The Shi'ite Movement*, 66.

⁸⁷⁸ Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr, *Shi'ite Lebanon: Transnational Religion and the Making of National Identities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 24.

the creation of an Islamic welfare state.⁸⁷⁹ Taken together, Sadr formed his own positions fusing Shi'i Islam with questions of economic justice.

Ali Shariati reflects different facets of the same ethos that shaped Musa and Baqir As-Sadr. Shariati was renowned in Iran in the late 1970s, leading up the Islamic Revolution, although he died before the fall of the Shah. Shariati's oeuvre aimed to successfully blend modern socialism with traditional Shi'i theology, drawing on the ideas of Frantz Fanon and Karl Marx to form a distinctly third world ideology.⁸⁸⁰ Ruhollah Khomeini was another prominent Shi'i figure with transnational influence; he resided in Najaf outside his native Iran for more than a decade across the 1960s and 1970s. These examples help illustrate the dominant ethos in Shi'i political fields through which Communists and Shi'i Islamists sought to merge economic and religious discourses into their own preferred balance. The Shi'a were thus a bellwether in signaling the demise of Communism and the rise of political Islam, which impacted the Iraqi Ba'ath when the primary external threat shifted from being the USSR to Khomeini's Iran. These dimensions between subnational opposition groups and powerful, supranational forces are explored next through the lens of territory and ideas of spatial control.

Unstable Territory, Unstable Nation?

When Iraqi land borders could not delineate the Iraqi nation, the Iraqi Ba'ath resorted to racialization to redefine the Iraqi nation. Iraqi state sovereignty ebbed and flowed in Iraqi Kurdistan over the more than twenty years of Iraqi Ba'athist rule there from 1968 to 1991.⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁹ Hanna Batatu, "Iraq's Underground Shi'a Movements: Characteristics, Causes and Prospects" *Middle East Journal* Vol. 35, No. 4 (Autumn, 1981), 579.

⁸⁸⁰ Ervand Abrahamian, "Ali Shariati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution" *MERIP*. Vol. 102 Jan/Feb 1982. <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer102/ali-shariati-ideologue-iranian-revolution>.

⁸⁸¹ Iraqi Kurdistan, now known as the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), effectively broke away from the Iraqi state after the 1991 intifada, covered later in this chapter.

Debating how to approach restive Kurdish groups, the Iraqi Ba‘th faced a conundrum. It could try to impose full rule of the Iraqi state over the territory, and have insurgency flare up, taking more energy and resources while costing lives. The porosity of borders meant that insurgents could easily escape to Iran, which was willing to help them from 1968-1975 and again after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Such relations were still complex, however, as the Iranian state also wanted to suppress Kurdish irredentism and stifle opposition movements. It was this relationship of settlement near the borders that the Iraqi Ba‘th sought to change with the destruction of villages and the creation of a space separating villages from the Iranian border.⁸⁸² Alternatively, the Iraqi Ba‘th could allow a large measure of autonomy, an approach that Iran, Turkey and Syria could not condone lest it catalyze tensions with Kurds in those countries. Indeed, Iraq almost reached a deal with the Kurdish PUK in 1984, in which the state would have conceded more autonomy than it would have in the 1970s because of its weak position during the war. Turkey, upon getting wind of the impending agreement, immediately conveyed their disapproval to Saddam Hussein, causing Iraq to shelve the agreement lest it deal with Turkey potentially closing off pipelines key for Iraqi oil exports.⁸⁸³ Turkey and others saw the mirror effect of the trans-border Kurdish presence, worrying from their points of view about how influences from Iraq undermined their state sovereignty. It is thus not surprising that relations between Iraqi Kurds and the central state in Baghdad fluctuated significantly from 1968-1991.

Iraqi state attention was divided across multiple fronts of war, especially in the early 1970s, complicating attempts to quell domestic insurgency. Iraq had committed a large military force to be stationed in Jordan, so it had fewer troops available to deal with Kurds in northern Iraq. In April

⁸⁸² Human Rights Watch *Claims in Conflict: Cleansing in Northern Iraq p.6-8 last modified August 2004.*
<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/iraq0804/index.htm>

⁸⁸³ M.R. Izady, "The Kurdish Predicament" in *Iran, Iraq, and the Legacies of War*, (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 82.

1969, Iraqi leaders asked that its troops be released from the front, so they could be used in Iraqi Kurdistan.⁸⁸⁴ In response to the March 11, 1970 Autonomy Agreement struck between Baghdad and the Kurds (discussed in more detail below), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) leader George Habash described the agreement as “a decisive blow against Zionism, imperialism and reaction and their plans.”⁸⁸⁵ Habash looked forward to the implementation of the agreement “...so that all of the Iraqi people’s resources would be devoted to supporting the Arab and Palestinian people’s armed struggles against the Zionist enemy.”⁸⁸⁶ A Palestinian radio broadcast from “Voice of Fatah” lauded the agreement, noting that “the enemy press and propaganda have begun a violent, concentrated campaign against it...the enemy knows the guns will be pointed in the right direction- at the heart of the enemy who threatens all of us- Arabs and Kurds alike.”⁸⁸⁷ On the other side, US leaders supported Kurds with clear eyes about what their efforts could achieve; Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger inflamed Kurds against Baghdad as a means of limiting the Iraqi state’s ability to confront Israel.⁸⁸⁸ Indeed, a history of the Israeli Mossad talks about their operations to support Kurds against the Iraqi state. Mossad armed Kurdish groups and trained Kurdish fighters in commando warfare.⁸⁸⁹ The key point here, lest the argument take agency away from Kurds themselves, is that genuine grievances existed among Kurds toward the Iraqi state. The foreign policies of the US, Israel, and Iran could not produce Kurdish anger

⁸⁸⁴ “Iraqi Attacks on Kurds” 4 April 1969 from Anita L.P. Burdett ed. *Records of the Kurds: Territory, Revolt, and Nationalism 1831-1979 British Documentary Sources*, vol. 12 (Cambridge Archive Editions), 249.

⁸⁸⁵ “Text of report of statement by Dr. George Habash” 14 March 1970 from Anita L.P. Burdett ed. *Records of the Kurds: Territory, Revolt, and Nationalism 1831-1979 British Documentary Sources*, vol. 12 (Cambridge Archive Editions), 293.

⁸⁸⁶ *ibid*, 293.

⁸⁸⁷ “Voice of Fatah broadcast” 14 March 1970 from Anita L.P. Burdett ed. *Records of the Kurds: Territory, Revolt, and Nationalism 1831-1979 British Documentary Sources*, vol. 12 (Cambridge Archive Editions), 294.

⁸⁸⁸ Gunter, *The Kurds of Iraq*, 27-28.

⁸⁸⁹ Ronen Bergman, *Rise and Kill First* (New York, NY: Random House Publishers, 2018), 345. Mossad reportedly considered assassinating Saddam Hussein on request of the Kurds it was working with, but did not get the approval of Israeli Prime Minister at the time Golda Meir.

where no grievances existed, but their policies could exacerbate those existing issues for short-term gain. Rhetoric from multiple Arab figures, both Palestinian and Iraqi, argued that Kurds and Arabs should unite against Zionism. Yet in tough times, Mulla Mustafa Barzani did not reject Zionist assistance out of hand, nor did he reject assistance from the Shah. The Iraqi Ba‘th used this collaboration rhetorically against Kurdish leadership when ties strained.

Framing clashes between Kurds and the Iraqi state as a distraction from fighting Zionism was not always present, nor would it last. Iraqi Ba‘thist framing of issues with restive Kurds relative to colonialism and Zionism drew distinctions based on ideologies, but was not explicitly extrapolated to involve Communism, Liberalism or Socialism. One angle of the Arab/Kurd vs Zionist discourse implies the alignment between ideology and ethnicity was explicitly shaped by power relations. Zionism, allied with imperial powers, was to be resisted by Arabs and Kurds together, both of whom were colonized peoples still seeking true self determination. This discursive frame was drawn on for some time; it appeared again in 1982, when the Iraqi Ba‘th blamed industrialized countries for fomenting border issues in the Third World to slow their progress and hinder their attempts to catch up economically.⁸⁹⁰ Yet framing based on power relations and the meddling of international forces leaves out the all-too-successful attempts by local states to co-opt various groups and the political splits among them. Unable to present the accord as universally accepted, the Iraqi Ba‘th praised those Kurds willing to negotiate with the state and denounced those who wanted to fight as *jib al-‘amil*, that is, “in the pocket of clients” (of foreign states).⁸⁹¹ The Iraqi Ba‘th continued to use this tactic, seeking to co-opt some sections of ethnic and ideological challengers to weaken the threat they posed to the Iraqi state. Such tensions

⁸⁹⁰ Isam Rashid Huwaish, *The Strategy of National Development in Iraq* (Baghdad, Dar al Ma‘mun for Translation and Publishing, 1982), 12.

⁸⁹¹ Hizb al Ba‘th, *al-Ba‘th wa mawqif min al-aqliyyat al-qawmiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al Thawra, 1974), 7.

came in the shadow of US attempts to pit two aspiring nationalisms (Arab and Kurd) against each other for the benefit of Zionism.

Iran's heavy involvement in the tensions outlined above at the behest of the US and Israel provoked the Iraqi Ba'ath to direct its ire at Iran in the early 1970s. In a text written in the name of the party, *The Ba'ath and Ethnic Minorities*, the Iraqi Ba'ath questions why Iran and other powers continue to support Kurds after they had already struck agreements with the Iraqi government.⁸⁹² Iran meddled in Iraqi affairs, the Iraqi Ba'ath argued, because Iran wanted to prevent its own Kurds from expecting anything like what the Iraqi Ba'ath gave them in Iraq.⁸⁹³ Indeed, the success of Kurdish self-rule was presented as the positive result of Iraqi Ba'ath policy toward minority groups.⁸⁹⁴ Yet the framing of the issue in the book's title and indeed, throughout the text is itself indicative of an Arab nationalist framework laden with assumptions. Referring to Kurds as "ethnic minorities" only makes sense if the Iraqi Ba'ath counts all Arabs among the majority to see Kurds as one group in the minority. Counted honestly, Sunni Arabs did not constitute a majority in Iraq; the Iraqi Ba'ath came to focus itself around a minority group, Sunni Arabs, and increasingly, Sunni Arabs from Tikrit.⁸⁹⁵ Iraqi Shi'a had seen successive Iraqi governments adopt Pan-Arabism and resented what many saw as a narrow understanding of Arab nationalism that focused on urban Sunnis.⁸⁹⁶ Arabs were certainly a majority in the region more broadly; neither Kurds nor Arab Shi'a could count themselves alongside other populations in neighboring countries to perceive themselves as a majority in the region. Yet such framing of Arab nationalists as a majority drew

⁸⁹² Hizb al Ba'ath, *al-Ba'ath wa mawqif...*, 7.

⁸⁹³ Ibid, 7.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid, 12.

⁸⁹⁵ This is not to say that only Sunnis were Ba'athists, or that any single ethnic or religious group was entirely for or against the Iraqi Ba'ath, it was never so simple.

⁸⁹⁶ Yitzhak Nakkash, "The Nature of Shi'ism in Iraq" in *Ayatollahs, Sufis, and Ideologues: State, Religion and Social Movements in Iraq*, edited by Faleh Jabbar. (London, UK: Saqi Books, 2002), 31.

on other aspects of Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse, which selectively emphasized territorial nationalisms and championed a larger pan-Arabism. One must read the term “minorities” to be something different than a literal minority in population count for the book’s title to make sense. “Minority” as used here is indicative of a power relationship between territory, the expanding state, and groups who refused the state’s dictates.

Tensions in Iraqi Kurdistan centered on infrastructure and were met with state repression. In March of 1969, Kurdish groups were alleged to be behind multiple attacks against Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC) installations in Kirkuk.⁸⁹⁷ Iraqi air forces responded with rockets and napalm in a punitive raid against Kurdish villages deemed responsible for the attack against the IPC. Mulla Mustafa was reported to be under pressure to attack IPC oil installations because oil revenues were being used by the Iraqi state to purchase weapons for use against Kurds.⁸⁹⁸ To incentivize Kurds to stop these acts of sabotage, the Iraqi state offered Kurds full cultural rights announced in a statement read over the radio. Kurdish language was to be taught in schools, all elements of national/social persecution were to be eliminated, Kurdish texts were introduced into libraries, and institutions for Kurdish scholars were established.⁸⁹⁹ Clearly, cultural rights were conceded to stop attacks on oil infrastructure, an economic necessity for Iraqi Ba‘thist goals. Amatzia Baram argues the beginnings of Mesopotamian discourse are to be found in this episode, meant to placate Kurds and give them a sense of belonging in the Iraqi nation.⁹⁰⁰ Because Mesopotamia predated the arrival of Islam and the Arabization that shaped many peoples with the religion’s spread, it was read as more open and inclusive of Iraq’s diversity, and was especially embraced by non-Arab Iraqis. Baram’s point tying the beginning of the Ba‘thist embrace of

⁸⁹⁷ “Iraqi Attacks on Kurds” (4 April, 1969), in Burdett, *Records of the Kurds*, 249.

⁸⁹⁸ “Kurdish Threat to Oil Installations in Iraq” (2 June, 1969) in Burdett, *Records of the Kurds*, 253.

⁸⁹⁹ “Iraq Announces New Deal for Kurdish Language” (no date, 1969) in Burdett, *Records of the Kurds*, 255.

⁹⁰⁰ Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Ba‘thist Iraq*, 21.

Mesopotamian themes as a concession to Kurds shows how the roots of discursive change at the state level were a form of cultural counterinsurgency. Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to quell rebellion with inclusive discourse would not suffice; the state had to use repressive violence at the same time.

From the state’s point of view, one straightforward solution was to deport the groups it found troublesome. The first stage of mass deportations took place over a two-year span from 1969-1971. Iraqi Shi’a were deported in large numbers to Iran when tensions flared up between the two states over the Shatt al Arab waterway, encapsulated in Iran’s abrogation of a 1937 agreement.⁹⁰¹ Estimates vary significantly; the KDP presented a report to the United Nations putting the number at 40,000 Fayli Kurds deported in 1971.⁹⁰² The second wave came in April 1980, right after the attempt on Tariq Aziz’s life described by Safinaz Kazem in the beginning of the chapter. *Le Monde* wrote at the time that Iraq was deporting more than 2,000 “Iraqis of Iranian origin” every week.⁹⁰³ The estimates for the numbers of people deported in the second wave in 1980 vary even more, but scholars and figures in the Iraqi opposition consistently place the number over 100,000, with some as high as 150,000 deportees.⁹⁰⁴ Others mix the refugees and deportees in Iran together, estimating more than 250,000.⁹⁰⁵ Whatever the exact numbers are, it is clear the state carried out mass deportations, disproportionately targeting Fayli Kurds, who are Shi’a. Beginning not long after the first wave, the state sought to Arabize communities in Iraq through a combination of means.

Arabization sought to rearrange spatial dimensions of ethnic population distribution in a manner the Iraqi Ba‘th could control more effectively than the existing patterns of settlement.

⁹⁰¹ Babakhan “The Deportation of Shi’is...” 195.

⁹⁰² *ibid*, 197.

⁹⁰³ *ibid*.

⁹⁰⁴ *ibid*.

⁹⁰⁵ *ibid*.

Accordingly, Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse and approaches to the Kurdish citizens of Iraq took a permanent turn for the worse in the early 1970s. In this period, the question of carrying out a census in northern Iraq had proven to be politically fraught. The act of the state confronting its citizens in the name of registering and producing knowledge about their totality occasioned the chance for change in official status and exercise of state power. A census also needed to be carried out to properly delineate the Kurdish Autonomous region, measuring where Kurds were the majority. This need for a census was drawn up in Article 14 of the March Manifesto of 1970, but it was postponed from December 1970 until spring of 1971.⁹⁰⁶ The census was postponed yet again because Mulla Mustafa was not confident it would measure a Kurdish majority in Kirkuk, a key city for Kurds.⁹⁰⁷ In a public statement, Mulla Mustafa declared “Kirkuk is part of Kurdistan... I will not bear, before the Kurds, the responsibility of relinquishing Kirkuk.”⁹⁰⁸

Arabization campaigns began in 1974 along with the unilateral declaration of Kurdish Autonomy by the Iraqi Ba‘th.⁹⁰⁹ Unable to reach any form of agreement after their provisional March 11 agreement in 1970, the Iraqi Ba‘th imposed its version of a deal on Kurds, and years of a tense relationship followed, culminating in brief war in 1974 and 1975. The Algiers Agreement in 1975 between Iran and Iraq brought the hostilities with Kurds to a temporary halt, and Iran agreed to stop supporting the Kurds against the Iraqi state. The agreement called for a zone 10-25km wide along Iraq’s borders with Iran and Turkey to be cleared of villages and population, explicitly to address the porosity of the borders.⁹¹⁰ Key to Arabization was delineation of Kurdish

⁹⁰⁶ Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism*, 72.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁹ Human Rights Watch *Claims in Conflict: Cleansing in Northern Iraq p.6-8 last modified August 2004.*
<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/iraq0804/index.htm>

⁹¹⁰ Melisande Genat, “From Agrarian Experiments to Population Displacement: Iraqi Kurdish Collective Towns in the Context of Socialist Villagization of the 1970s” in *Disciplinary Spaces: Spatial Control, Forced Assimilation, and*

areas relative to the oil underground, fraught and never officially delineated in the 1970 deal or the period afterward. Increasing violence and lack of implementation of the census meant the March Manifesto was never concretized. By 1975, no census had been carried out.

In the same period of the early 1970s, the Iraqi Ba‘th began a different set of policies to privilege Arabs in a wide variety of legal mechanisms, concretized in decisions by the BRCC.⁹¹¹ On February 2, 1972 the BRCC issued directive no. 76, stating that Arabs from outside of Iraq were to be granted visas to enter Iraq at any time and apply for residency.⁹¹² This right was not correspondingly granted to Kurds from neighboring states. Almost exactly three years later in 1975, Iraq’s generosity to Arabs of other nationalities was extended to granting them Iraqi citizenship, not merely residency or unlimited movement.⁹¹³ While symbolically powerful, the Iraqi state’s own data shows that over the next four years (1975-1978), only 466 Arabs from other states took the opportunity to move and take Iraqi citizenship.⁹¹⁴ While state law moved to privilege Arabs and even invite Arabs from abroad to settle, some 4,500 villages were demolished between 1976 and 1986, internally displacing several hundred thousand Kurds.⁹¹⁵ The targeted villages were concentrated around Kirkuk, Khaniqin, Mandali, Shaikhan and, further away, Sinjar and Zakho.⁹¹⁶ War with Iran was still several years away, but the state was already enacting unequal forms of citizenship, extreme examples of the carrot and the stick for Arab and Kurdish Iraqis respectively. Iraqi policies toward Kurds earned international reproach in early 1977, as the

Narratives of Progress since the 19th Century Edited by Andrea Fischer Tahrir and Sophie Wagenhofer (New York, NY; Columbia University Press, 2017), 149.

⁹¹¹ Hassan Mohammad Tawalbeh, *al-Muwatinun al-‘Arab wa Tashri‘at al-Thawra* (Baghdad: Wizarat al Thaqafa wa al-‘Ilam, Dairat al-‘Ilam al-Dakhli al-‘Ama, 1980).

⁹¹² Tawalbeh, *al-Muwatinun al-‘Arab*, 7.

⁹¹³ *Ibid*, 8.

⁹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 11. There is no clear indication how the state identified Arabs from foreign countries.

⁹¹⁵ Hania Mufti and Peter Bouckaert, “Iraq: Forcible Expulsion of Ethnic Minorities” *Human Rights Watch*, March 2003, Vol 15, issue 3. https://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/iraq0303/Kirkuk0303-01.htm#P119_26745

⁹¹⁶ *ibid*.

International League for Human Rights made a statement through the United Nations denouncing Iraq's "systematic attempt" to destroy the Kurdish people.⁹¹⁷ The statement cited arrests, torture, deportations, executions, and the Arabization campaign in making its case.⁹¹⁸ What the Iraqi Ba'ath had yet to do, by my reading of the evidence, was racialize Kurds, Shi'a and Communists together under the term "Persian."⁹¹⁹ In the early 1980s, once this racialization already ran for several years in state discourse, the Iraqi Ba'ath resettled 231 Party personnel and 350 teachers in Iraqi Kurdistan to continue implementing Arabization.⁹²⁰ In line with deporting Kurds from northern Iraq, the party also managed who could resettle there to further Arabization, making sure they were not Kurdish or "Persian."⁹²¹ Indeed, Iraq had calm relations with Iran after the Algiers Agreement until the Shah was overthrown and Ayatollah Khomeini, who previously lived in Iraq for more than a decade, assumed power. Marshlands in southern Iraq, while not identical to the mountainous regions of Iraqi Kurdistan, similarly caused problems for the Iraqi Ba'ath and became a conduit for Iranian influence into Iraq, especially from 1979 on.

A Lack of Control over the Marshlands

The marshes in southeastern Iraq are an important site in Iraqi history yet also isolated from the center of state power in Baghdad. They are believed to have been the location of the famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.⁹²² At the beginning of the Ba'ath period in 1968, the state saw the marshes through an agricultural lens as both British

⁹¹⁷ No Author, "Iraq Accused of Trying to Wipe out Kurds" *New York Times*, 15 January, 1977.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid.

⁹¹⁹ As this chapter has sought to show, none of these groups was a monolith.

⁹²⁰ Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party*, 40. The quotes around "Persian" are mine, as Sassoon used the term without critically engaging with it.

⁹²¹ Ibid, 39.

⁹²² Joshua J. Mark "The Seven Wonders," *Ancient History Encyclopedia* published 02 September, 2009. https://www.ancient.eu/The_Seven_Wonders/

mandate and Ottoman authorities had.⁹²³ The 1980s and the war against Iran changed the situation for the marshes and their inhabitants. The marshes were closely located to the area of southern Iran where the Iraqi Ba‘th first invaded Iran and sought to seize Khuzestan, with its large ethnic Arab population. While there were many Arabs on the Iranian side of the border, this should not be understood as the result of colonial border delineation.⁹²⁴ Throughout the eight-year war, the Iraqi Ba‘th was frustrated by the way people it viewed as “saboteurs” and “deserters” used the space of the marshes to escape detention by the Iraqi army. Many were caught while deserting and forced back into service.⁹²⁵ Other deserters who hid in the marshes were caught in raids by the Popular Army (*al-jaish al-sha‘bi*) or were forced to fight by the Islamist opposition groups using the marshes as a base of operations.⁹²⁶ The Popular Army played an especially prominent role in catching deserters in or near the marshes, though it was far less effective in fighting against Iranian soldiers or holding Iranian territory captured early in the war.⁹²⁷

Iraqi government archival documents obtained by Human Rights Watch in the aftermath of the 1991 Intifada provide insight into the insurgency waged from the Iraqi marshes against the Iraqi Ba‘thist government. In December 1988, after the official end of the war between Iran and Iraq, Iraqi officials held a conference at the offices of the Directorate of Security of the Governorate of Basra to address the ongoing attacks launched from the marshes.⁹²⁸ The gathering discussed directives apparently intercepted from Iran to groups acting as its proxies in marshes in Dhi Qar, Misan, and Basra to coordinate their activities and maintain their connections to Iran in

⁹²³ Bridget Guarasci, *Reconstructing Life: Environment, Expertise, and Political Power in Iraq’s Marshes 2003-2007* (University of Michigan Dissertation: 2011), 11.

⁹²⁴ The rough outline of the border between present-day Iran and Iraq is much older and has persisted for centuries.

⁹²⁵ Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 99.

⁹²⁶ *Ibid*, 99

⁹²⁷ *ibid*, 99.

⁹²⁸ Human Rights Watch “The Bureaucracy of Repression” 1994, 145.

secret.⁹²⁹ Actions by Iranian-backed groups were to be carried out away from their bases in the marshes so as not to give away those locations.⁹³⁰ If the Iraqi assessment of the Iranian intelligence is correct, Iran took many of the same actions to punish traitors and maintain loyalty in the ranks of those fighting alongside them that Iraq took against its own citizens. The Iraqi army additionally enforced an economic blockade on the regions in which “saboteurs” were operating, burning and destroying homes as deterrent operations, and controlling vehicle traffic in and out of the marshes.⁹³¹ A follow-up document from the Directorate of Security in Shaqlawa (in Iraqi Kurdistan) at the end of January 1989 laid out what the Iraqi Ba‘th believed to be happening. The attacks from the marshes had not stopped, and the groups were still working in accordance with the Iranian government, as well as elements of the Iraqi opposition. “In fact,” began the report, “the criminal Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, the head of the so-called “Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq,” considered those elements to be the nucleus of the so-called Islamic Army for the Liberation of Iraq and has increased his support for them in his public statements.”⁹³² The nexus of territory outside state control was key to the linkage of subnational groups to supranational powers. This fluctuating control over territory, indeed incomplete sovereignty, is central to understanding why the Iraqi state ultimately resorted to racialization of subnational groups that it could not control.

The Racialization of Arabs and Persians

What in fact is racism? It is primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die. The appearance within the biological continuum of the human race of races, the distinction among races, the hierarchy of races, the fact that certain races are described as good and

⁹²⁹ *ibid*, 145-146.

⁹³⁰ *ibid*, 145.

⁹³¹ *ibid*, 147.

⁹³² *ibid*, 144.

that others, in contrast, are described as inferior: all this is a way of fragmenting the field of the biological that power controls.... That is the first function of racism: to fragment, to create caesuras within the biological continuum addressed by biopower.

- Michel Foucault, 17 March 1976.⁹³³

Race is a rarely used term in studies of Iraq or the country's history. Much of this may be due to the relative absence of the term in studies of the Middle East more broadly, but other reasons have weight. The terms *ta'if* and *qawm* both have more salience in Arabic discussions of collective identities, with the first being closer to "sect" and the second falling somewhere between "people", "nation", and "ethnie". *Qawm* is at the center of this chapter, where the terminological vagueness becomes an open question: What should we call *qawmiyya* in Ba'athist Iraq once it has so many other discursive terms paired with it as came to be the case in the 1980s? In keeping with the broader argument, state discourse about heritage paralleled the rest of the Third World but was always implicitly tuned to address the Iraqi opposition. The contradictions in state discourse represent competing and transnational forces the state felt it had to respond to, which it did with an increasingly racist form of Arab nationalism, gelled in the term *shu'ubiyya*, only present in state discourse from early 1980, with the *I'lan al Qawmi*.

The use of *shu'ubiyya* discourse was fundamentally ahistorical. It was a term for a ninth century movement of non-Arab groups (Persian Muslims) challenging Arabs for the leadership of the Islamic *Umma*. The term seems to come from the word *sha'b*, meaning "people." The plural of the word *sha'b* is *shu'ub*.⁹³⁴ By taking this plural, *shu'ub*, and adding a noun suffix, similar to the English "-ism," the term became something like "pluralism" in reference to peoples (literally, peoples-ism). There is an egalitarian tone in the Quranic verse which speaks of *shu'ub* (Verse 13

⁹³³ Michel Foucault, Mauro Bertani, Alessandro Fontana, François Ewald, and David Macey, *Society Must Be Defended : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76* 1st ed. (New York: Picador, 2003), 254-255.

⁹³⁴ Ignaz Goldhizer (1967) cited in Roy Mottahedeh "The Shu'ubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran" *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.7, No.2 (1976): 164.

of Surat al Hajarat), mirrored later in references to *shu‘ubiyyun* as *ahl al-taswiya* or “those who advocate equality.”⁹³⁵ Many Arabs at the time wanted sole leadership in the community of Islam, so it makes sense to understand the term *shu‘ubiyya* as referring to pluralism, i.e. plural groups among the leadership of Muslims.

As many studies of Iraq in this period have already covered, Saddam Hussein chose the historical reference of the War of *Qadisiyya* between Arabs and Persians, using this term for the war against Iran in the 1980s. One state-published text explicitly made the connection in its title and content, linking “the first *Qadisiyya*” and “Saddam’s *Qadisiyya*.”⁹³⁶ Abdul Salum al-Samarrai differentiated between “religious (*diniya*) *shu‘ubiyya*” and “racist (*ansuriyya*) *shu‘ubiyya*” , arguing that the former pushed a perverted understanding of Islam meant to distance Arabs from the correct interpretation of the religion, while the latter sought to empower non-Arab groups at the expense of Arabs.⁹³⁷ The historical examples could not read perfectly over the modern example, but the differences were fudged. Persians were not Shi‘i in the time of the war of *Qadisiyya*, and the war did not represent a religious conflict. Neither were Arabs in the seventh century analogous to Iraqis in the twentieth century, but the example could fit as part of Iraqi Ba‘thist Arabization campaigns and discursive choices that marginalized non-Arab Iraqis unless they professed loyalty to the state. Many did not even get a chance to profess loyalty, and were summarily banished in various waves of deportations that took place over the period of Iraqi Ba‘thist rule.⁹³⁸

⁹³⁵ Mottahedeh, *The Shu‘ubiyah Controversy*, 164. Translation of *ahl al-taswiya* was Mottahedeh’s.

⁹³⁶ Mahdi Hussein al-Basri, *Bayn al-Qadisiya al-ula wa Qadisiya Saddam Hussein* (Baghdad: Manshurat Dar al Jahiz, Wizarat al Thaqafa wa al -I‘lam, 1980).

⁹³⁷ Abdul Salum al-Samarrai, *Al-Shu‘ubiyya Haraka Mudhada lil Islam wa al-Umma al-‘Arabiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al Rashid lil Nashr, 1980), 8.

⁹³⁸ Again, there are many details of state repression I choose not to rehash here as they are already covered in depth in existing literature. See Jabbar, *The Shiite Movement in Iraq*.

Saddam Hussein, by now the sole ruler of Iraq, brought this discourse to bear on his confrontations with enemies both foreign and domestic. *Shu'ubiyya* was not political in its roots, argues Roy Mottahedeh, rather it was primarily literary and thus lacking clear nationalist or ethnic themes.⁹³⁹ On the other hand, Mottahedeh concedes, the *shu'ubiyya* controversy provoked some violently angry replies, showing a zeal that goes beyond effete literary discussions. Hussein was not the first Arab nationalist to use the term in the modern era to insult enemies of Arab nationalism. Yitzhak Nakkash tied the use of *shu'ubiyya* discourse to Sati' al-Husri questioning the loyalty of Iraqi Shi'a in his attempts to develop Pan-Arabist sentiment in Iraq; when Shi'a protested their marginalization in Iraq, they were labeled as *ta'ifi* (sectarian).⁹⁴⁰ Orit Bashkin probed the use of *shu'ubiyya* in her work *The Other Iraq*, exploring the intellectual history of Iraq under the Hashemite Monarchy. Bashkin found that *shu'ubi* was indeed used in that period as an insult directed toward Iraqi Shi'a; she found the concept used indefinitely, which "came to signify anything that was anti-Arab, not necessarily Shi'i, from homoerotic poetry to communism."⁹⁴¹ Bashkin also details that *shu'ubi* was used against Iraqi nationalists like the Ahali Group, also perceived as enemies of Arab nationalism.⁹⁴² The concept likewise appeared in Syria in the late 1950s, employed to vent anger at communists. 'Abd al Aziz al-Duri, for example, wrote a text in the early 1960s published in Beirut titled *The Historical Roots of Shu'ubiyya*. Al-Duri was a prominent Sunni historian, holding the position of Dean of Baghdad University under 'Abdul Rahman 'Arif in the mid-1960s.⁹⁴³ He laid out an historical vision which argues that *shu'ubiyyun*

⁹³⁹ Mottahedeh "The Shu'ubiyah Controversy...", 163-164.

⁹⁴⁰ Nakkash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 113. Al-Husri was a powerful figure in 1930s Iraq, as he ran the Education Ministry and shaped a Pan-Arabist curriculum.

⁹⁴¹ Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford, CA; Stanford University Press, 2009), 171.

⁹⁴² Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 171. The Ahali Group was formed in 1930 among Iraqis frustrated with the Monarchy and was central in the 1936 Bakr Sidqi Coup. See Davis, *Memories of State*, 62-68.

⁹⁴³ Jabbar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq*, 69.

(non-Arab Muslims, plural) were clearly against Arabs and Arab Islamic culture from a prejudiced point of view.⁹⁴⁴ Al-Duri's text argued that *shu'ubiyya* led to disorder in Abbasid times, and that this could be expected under the rule of Qasim in Iraq, presenting a static phenomenon whose impact would be the same in situations hundreds of years apart.⁹⁴⁵ *Shu'ubi* (*the singular*) became a synonym for Communists, almost always Shi'a. Some flexibility was needed to apply the term in this way. Locating Communism under the umbrella of *shu'ubiyya* meant that the outside power helping to subvert Arabism was the USSR, despite the fact that *shu'ubiyya* was tied to Persian culture in Abbasid times.⁹⁴⁶ Similarly, Iraqi Ba'athists had to be flexible as many of those they wanted to tar with the label of *shu'ubi* were indeed Arab.⁹⁴⁷ The Sunni-Shi'a split was not at the root of issues of *shu'ubiyya* as Persia did not truly become a center of Shi'ism until centuries later, when the Safavid dynasty invited Shi'i *ulema* from Jabal 'Amel in what is now southern Lebanon to come to Iran. It was truly Persians as an ethnic group, not Shi'a, whom the term *shu'ubiyya* originally referred to.

As this dissertation showed in chapter one, the *I'lan al Qawmi* issued by Saddam Hussein in response to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan selectively emphasized the overthrow of Abdul Karim Qasim. Faced with provocation from both the USSR and Iran in early 1980, Saddam Hussein directed the *shu'ubi* slur at Communists and expanded its use to Iranians mere months later.⁹⁴⁸ Saddam Hussein accused the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) of seeking to isolate Arabs from Kurds, a statement that flips the reality on its head given his government's tactics toward

⁹⁴⁴ Abdul Aziz al-Duri, *al-Judhur al-Tarikhyya lil Shu'ubiyya* (Beirut: Dar-al-Tali'a, 1962), 13. I do not know the extent of the term's use before this, if present it is very esoteric and has not appeared in any of the existing accounts of the Monarchical period.

⁹⁴⁵ Davis, *Memories of State*, 133.

⁹⁴⁶ Davis, *Memories of State*, 130.

⁹⁴⁷ Shi'a in Iraq disproportionately were Arabs, with some Kurds, Turkmen, and others

⁹⁴⁸ See chapter 1.

Kurdish political groups. But how new was *shu‘ubiyya*, if as we have seen, it had been used by many different Arab nationalists throughout the twentieth century? One could argue that the *I‘lan al-Qawmi* represented a modest shift in discourses about the nation, at best. The Iraqi Ba‘th blended Iraqism and Arabism before the speech and it continued to do so afterward. The *I‘lan al-Qawmi* indeed referenced the “honorable connection between *qawmiyya* and *wataniyya*” as something that Qasim’s “monstrous” government did not appreciate. Yet to stop there misses the important discursive dimension of *shu‘ubiyya* ushered in by the *I‘lan al-Qawmi*. All enemies of the Iraqi Ba‘th were now lassoed under the label of *shu‘ubiyya*, and soon would be denounced as Persian allies, indeed as Persians.⁹⁴⁹ This rhetoric was also introduced alongside a new call for Arab nonalignment from Saddam Hussein in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, showing the overlap between Communists and Shi‘a in Hussein’s eyes. In 1982, the Iraqi Ba‘th once again insisted it was valid to call Iraqi Communists *shu‘ubiyyun*, explained in the English text as an anti-Arab, divisive trend.⁹⁵⁰ This report was central in the Party’s own cultural programs for members and was repeatedly referenced in the cultural plan of 1983 as a part of the curriculum.⁹⁵¹ Insisting the Iraqi Ba‘th always blended Iraqism and Arabism also misses the shift in discursive use of the term “heritage” and its important links to this debate, covered in the Heritage chapter. Indeed in the same 1983 Cultural Report, “religion and heritage” is listed as a topic to be focused on with party members in monthly meetings, alongside “the Arab-Persian struggle”, “Qadisiyya Saddam” and “Implementing Socialism.”⁹⁵²

The malleability of *shu‘ubiyya* was clear from an historical angle, but the overlap and affinity many Shi‘a had for Communist ideas made the shift possible from a more recent,

⁹⁴⁹ Explored in deep detail in the chapter on heritage and history.

⁹⁵⁰ Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress*, 63.

⁹⁵¹ BRCC 01-3048-0001-0533. This is the citation for the beginning of the 1983 cultural report.

⁹⁵² BRCC 01-3048-0001-0535.

materialist angle. Iraqi government radio broadcasts throughout the war against Iran from the Directorate for Political Guidance consistently used a series of terms including “Persian Majusi” and “*shu‘ubi*” to describe the Iranian enemy.⁹⁵³ Iraqis might not have read the dense, several-hundred-page volumes about *shu‘ubiyya* put out by the state, but television and radio would serve to expose them to the slurs and discourse. “Majusi” as an insult referred to pre-Islamic religion in Iran like Zoroastrianism, and functioned as a means of denying the person was a Muslim. A work called *Khomeini wa al Khomeiniyun* (Khomeini and the Khomeinists) was written on behalf of the Ba‘th by an Iraqi Shi‘ite cleric, Sheikh Hayder al Marjani and emphasized the Arabness of those fighting against Iran. Marjani is listed as the Secretary of the Religious Guidance Society in Najaf.⁹⁵⁴ His work set up the discussion of the war against Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini beginning with the Iraqi Revolution of 1920, in which largely Shi‘i tribes rose up against the British. Marjani lauds the fighters and martyrs of 1920 as great Iraqis and connects this to the way Iraqis were battling Iran at the time of his book, in 1982.⁹⁵⁵ Rizk-Khoury is notable for presenting the term as being directed at the Iraqi Communists prior to the outbreak of war with Iran. She argues that “all intellectual trends that did not conform to the Ba‘thist Party line” were labeled the same way, as “*shu‘ubiyun*.”⁹⁵⁶ Rizk-Khoury posits that the term came to have a racial meaning but does not push the argument further. Peter Wien refers to an “...Arab ethnocentric state ideology that rejected the earlier Iraqism of Qasim’s regime as *shu‘ubiyya*” ushered in by Saddam Hussein after his seizure

⁹⁵³ Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*, 89.

⁹⁵⁴ Hayder al Marjani, *Khomeini wa al Khomeiniyun* (Baghdad: Dar al Rashid lil Nashr, 1982), 8. On a publishing note, this text is notable in that it is listed as on the inside cover as coming from Dar al Rashid, but at the end of the text is listed as coming from *Dar al Huriyya* and having been distributed by *Dar al Wataniyya lil Tawzi‘a*. Whether this was an accident or indicative of the publishing process is not clear.

⁹⁵⁵ Marjani, *Khomeini wa al Khomeiniyun*, 11-14. This subject will only be touched on briefly here, but Iraqi Ba‘thist engagement with the historical memory of 1920 is a deep subject. The Iraqi Ba‘th had no strong claim to its memory, as it predates the party and is generally associated with Iraqi *wataniyya*, but they tried anyway here with a Shi‘i sheikh writing on behalf of the Iraqi Ba‘th.

⁹⁵⁶ Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*, 90.

of power.⁹⁵⁷ “Although not based on pseudoscientific racist theories,” Achim Rohde argued, “political practice in Ba‘thist Iraq contained a racist dimension based on an ethnicized hypernationalism...” Rohde adds in a footnote that this was shown in Arabization and in the “regime’s dealing with Iraqis of Persian origin.” This is indeed on the right track, but as I argue here, only part of the story, and indeed must be called “racialization” and not “ethnicization.” Fanar Haddad links *shu‘ubi* with *ta’ifi*, arguing that the two insults were often used in tandem toward Shi‘a in Iraq.⁹⁵⁸ Ofra Bengio advances a similar argument, that *shu‘ubiyya* was tied to sectarianism and also racism.⁹⁵⁹ She briefly mentions the occasional earlier use of *shu‘ubi* to refer to Iraqi Communists earlier in Iraqi history but she does not explore this point further.⁹⁶⁰ None of these works tie *shu‘ubiyya* to the *I‘lan al Qawmi* or the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Attempts at racialization began in practice before it was explicitly elaborated by the Iraqi Ba‘th in public discourse. A BRCC memo from March 1979 about monitoring mosques and *husseiniyyat* for radicalism in the wake of the Islamic Revolution lacks the racialized terminology present in archival documents and state cultural production from barely a year later.⁹⁶¹ The Iraqi Ba‘th had a legal distinction, found state archival documents of *taba‘iyya iraniyya*. Iraqi Arab Shi‘i groups or individuals were encouraged by the Iranian consul to seek Iranian citizenship, called *taba‘iyya*. Decades later, this distinction was equivalent to being a fifth column.⁹⁶² If labeled with *taba‘iyya iraniyya*, one could not be in the Iraqi Ba‘th Party, meaning one could not hold jobs in

⁹⁵⁷ Wien, “From Forty-One to Qadisiyat Saddam”, 105.

⁹⁵⁸ Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (New York, NY; Columbia University Press, 2011), 44

⁹⁵⁹ Bengio, *Saddam’s Word*, 103-106.

⁹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 104.

⁹⁶¹ BRCC 003-1-1-0410. *Husseiniyyat* are Shi‘i places of worship and study.

⁹⁶² This practice had its roots in the early 20th century when citizens of Ottoman Iraq fled across the border into Persia to avoid conscription, and gained Persian citizenship, later referred to by the Iraqi Ba‘th as *tabaiyya iraniyya*. Having this history marked their families from that point on.

public administration as these were already limited to party members. A close relationship to someone- a friend or family member- in an opposition group racialized as “Persian” was sufficient to have one targeted. These relatives were called “*salili al-khiyana*” in government documents, meaning they were guilty by association, and again undercuts the idea that “Arab” or “Persian” can be understood as ascriptive categories in this period in Iraq.⁹⁶³ A March 1980 memo from Ali Hassan Al-Majid, Saddam Hussein’s cousin and high-ranking Iraqi Ba’th Party member, illustrated this reality well. The memo chastised party members at the Baghdad branch level for giving party membership to two individuals known to the Iraqi Ba’th as having “non-Arab origins.”⁹⁶⁴ These men were an “internal threat” to the party and later explicitly referred to in Arabic as “Iranians.” The document shows the conceptual blurring engendered by Iraqi Ba’thist racialization- the two individuals are referred to in the short memo as being variously “non-Arab,” “Iranian,” “*taba’iyya iraniyya*,” and as “*shu’ubiyyun*.” The Party sent out instructions in November of 1983 to its branches that marriages of members were to be scrutinized; if someone with “non-Arab origins” was involved, the marriage was not to be allowed.⁹⁶⁵ If any doubt remained about what needed to be done about those whom the state tarred with these labels, Saddam Hussein did not mince words. A clip of Hussein was shown on television, in which he visited the wounded Tariq Aziz after a 1980 bombing carried out by Samir Mir Ghulam, a man the state labeled as a naturalized Iraqi of *Iranian origin*. The clip in the hospital zoomed to a young girl, who said “oh, I hate Persians” into the camera, provoking Hussein to respond that “Not a single Persian will remain after today on the land of the party and revolution.”⁹⁶⁶ Zooming out

⁹⁶³ North Iraq Dataset (NIDS) 1765952.

⁹⁶⁴ BRCC 003-1-1-0533. Interestingly, this memo predates the beginning of war between Iraq and Iran and comes in the period when Iraq had just released the *l’lan al-Qawmi* to attempt to preclude any possibility of Soviet intervention in Iraq as shown in the previous chapter.

⁹⁶⁵ Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein’s Ba’th Party*, 43.

⁹⁶⁶ Babakhan, “The Deportation of Shi’is...”, 193.

briefly to larger questions about the nature of Pan-Arabism is necessary to situate *shu‘ubiyya* and *taba‘iyya iraniyya* in the long-term arc of Ba‘thist discourse.

The Pan-Arab movement sought to unite all Arabs but had little to nothing of substance to add about non-Arab groups which would be subsumed under this Arab umbrella. The Iraqi Ba‘thist embrace of socialism mitigated this for some time, and numerous Iraqis from Shi‘i families joined the party in its early stages, before the period covered by this dissertation. Perhaps nothing better illustrates the complex relationship of Ba‘thism to different non-Arab and non-Muslim groups better than one of the party founders, Michel ‘Aflaq, being an Orthodox Christian who embraced a special role for Islam in the party’s founding texts. The Iraqi Ba‘th had earlier made the claim that their *qawmiyya* stood apart as a “new kind” from others who embraced an old school nationalism with no conception for pluralism, as well as those whose *qawmiyya* was overwhelmed by racism.⁹⁶⁷ Indeed the Party pointed to a section of Michel ‘Aflaq’s writing in which he argued that the socialism and nationalism of the Ba‘th kept each other in check, preventing slippage into a racist and extremist nationalism.⁹⁶⁸ Even at the time of making the claim in 1974, as this chapter has shown, the Iraqi Ba‘th had already deported thousands of Iraqis for their *taba‘iyya iraniyya*. Denise Natali laid out how a group she called “*qawmiyya* nationalists” had an ethnicized (her term) conception of Arabism. Iraqi Ba‘thists most certainly fell under her description of *qawmiyya* nationalists but not all Arab nationalists did.⁹⁶⁹ Natali argues that this *qawmiyya* nationalism formed from below, in response to the policies of larger powers it sought to be independent from. As such, her description of *qawmiyya* nationalism as “ethnicized” fits such a bottom-up formation. Taking her argument further, *qawmiyya* nationalists employed policies once in power that

⁹⁶⁷ Hizb al Ba‘th, *al-Ba‘th wa mawqif...*, 13-14.

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid, 18, footnote 3.

⁹⁶⁹ Denise Natali, *The Kurds and the State* (Syracuse University Press, 2005), 36.

categorized the peoples the Iraqi Ba‘th sought to control. This imposed a top-down, delineated identity in terms that the people did not use themselves. Such a top-down definition of people’s identity at their behest is defined here as *racialization*.⁹⁷⁰

Delineating the politico-historical discourses described above as racialization and not sectarian is key. Iraqi state discourse centered *on shu‘ubiyya* should not be understood as sectarianism because the government never publicly used the terms “Sunni” in reference to itself nor “Shi‘a” in reference to Persians, at least in this period.⁹⁷¹ Instead, the Iraqi Ba‘th resurrected antagonisms in the history of Islam between Persians and Arabs that took on a racial nature in the modern era, not sectarian, and used this lexicon to shape understandings of the nascent war between Iran and Iraq. The 1983 Party Report averred that “(P)ast and present experience showed that Persians and Persianised (sic) elements,” present a problem to the extent that “(they) are driven by their anti-Arab racialist and shu‘ubite (anti-Arab) complexes...”⁹⁷² “Persianised” in the example above is a reference to Iraqi groups who had sought Iran’s support to fight the Iraqi Ba‘th, and is a clear example of racializing a group, delineating them in a manner they do not use to define themselves.

From the other side, when “Iraqi” was made to be synonymous with “Arab” in government discourse, any Iraqi citizens who did not fit clearly into a category of Arabs were excluded from the nation discursively. By racializing Sunnis into Arabs and thus Iraqis, the Iraqi Ba‘th consequently racialized all Shi‘a as Persians through exclusion, whether they were Iraqi or not.

⁹⁷⁰ See footnote

⁹⁷¹ Even in the BRCC documents that represent the best look inside the Iraqi Ba‘th state’s administration, there is rarely if ever explicit reference to “Sunni” or “Shi‘a.”

⁹⁷² Hizb al-Ba‘th, *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress*, 273. The clarification of the term “Shu‘ubite” to mean “anti-Arab” is present in the original text and indicative of the basic meaning the Ba‘th ascribed to the term *shu‘ubiyya* when they deployed it discursively. The term “racialist” is in the original and is not elaborated upon, I suspect it was a translation error.

This racialization was an important step *toward* sectarianism, but the two should not be conflated. Sectarianism is defined here as the politicization of a religious identity that has been separated from religious doctrine. Sectarian discourses can be deployed that indeed draw heavily on scripture from a given sect to demonize and marginalize another sect, but the important point is that people affiliated with the targeted sect who do not practice the faith are still subject to its discursive attack. Sectarianism subsumes other determinants of identity, effectively racializing religious difference.⁹⁷³ This remained one key step removed from Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse.

Hussein’s decision to equate Iraqi identity with Arabism can be understood more clearly when one looks at the historical ties between Islam and Arabism. Arab as an ethnicity has no definition more refined than being a native speaker of Arabic. Arabic language spread with the nascent growth of Islam in the first hundred years after Muhammad received revelation from God. As such, the question of who spoke Arabic and thus, who was Arab, was largely determined by the spread of Islam. The quote from Safinaz Kazem in the introduction of this chapter used this point, namely the mixing of so many different groups with Arabs during the spread of Islam, to push back against any claims that there were ‘pure Arabs’ in any measurable sense of the word. This reality makes Arab race/ethnicity an ascriptive category, beyond the control of the individual. Persian identity is likewise ascriptive, something one is born into. Yet when Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Ba‘thist state racialized Arabs, these ascriptive notions were thrown aside. A political litmus test, support for the Iraqi Ba‘th against Iran, determined if an Iraqi was included in the Arab nation or not. One might be Arab in every sense of the word, but if this person embraced Communism, the Da‘wa Party, or other opposition parties, they were no longer Arab in the eyes of the Iraqi Ba‘th. One might be Iraqi but not of Arab origins; if they remained apolitical and

⁹⁷³ Because sectarianism does not always tie to religious practice, some scholars prefer the term “communalism.”

supported the state, they would not face its wrath. If they dared to challenge the state while Iran did so at the same time, they were Persians. They were *shu‘ubiyyun*.

Are Yazidis Arabs?

The Iraqi Ba‘th did not merely racialize groups out of the Iraqi nation; they also racialized groups *into* the nation, attempting to Arabize groups like Yazidis who did not generally identify as Arab. The “Heritage” chapter discusses in some detail how Yazidis, a non-Muslim Kurdish group were labeled as “Arabs” in an article about Yazidis and their culture in *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* from 1975.⁹⁷⁴ A decade after this article, in the heat of war against Iran with an insurgency raging in northern Iraq, the Iraqi Ba‘th had indeed insisted that Yazidis were Arabs, not Kurds. Some Yazidis were coopted by the Iraqi Ba‘th into special battalions, which pursued and attacked “saboteurs” in the area around Sinjar on behalf of the Iraqi state.⁹⁷⁵ Some from the Yazidi community acted as informants for the Iraqi Ba‘th; the state understood this to be possible because of the “crumbling centers of power and authority among the leaders of the Yazidi sect.”⁹⁷⁶ The collapse of structure in the community opened the way for the enrichment of an Arab nationalist view among the “sons of that sect.”⁹⁷⁷

The racialization of Yazidis as Arab is key for answering larger questions about the nature of the government’s use of cultural production and state racism as part of its larger efforts at counterinsurgency. As shown above, Kurds, Shi‘a, and Communists were all lumped together as Persians. It must be said that this was not entirely unfounded; some members of Kurdish, Shi‘i, and Communist groups did collaborate with Iran during the Iran-Iraq War, fighting against Iraqi

⁹⁷⁴ See Heritage chapter.

⁹⁷⁵ Human Rights Watch “The Bureaucracy of Repression” 1994, 25.

⁹⁷⁶ *ibid*, 26.

⁹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 26.

troops.⁹⁷⁸ Yet countless other non-Sunni and non-Arab members of Iraqi society did not, for the Iraqi army had no possibility of fighting for eight years without them. Collaboration by opposition groups with Iran was used as justification by the Iraqi Ba‘th for state racism. Yet Yazidis are not Arabs or Muslims; Yazidis practice their own largely non-Abrahamic faith and speak Kurmanji Kurdish, which is also the language of Yazidi religious texts.⁹⁷⁹ Yazidis were a target of Arabization by the state, but prior to and even after state attempts at Arabization, many Yazidis did not fluently speak Arabic. The Iraqi Ba‘th had discursively targeted Iran for its failure to adequately represent Islam, and the Iraqi Ba‘th also targeted Kurds as being impossible to assimilate into Arab nationalism. The Iraqi Ba‘th could have chosen to tar Yazidis with these discursive attacks, labeling them as Persians, and thus the enemy. The fact that the Iraqi Ba‘th did not marginalize Yazidis in this way helps us look more critically those discursive attacks in shaping the category of the enemy, or Persians. Instead, the state tried to Arabize Yazidis, effectively giving them the possibility of being recognized as Arabs, and thus Iraqis whom the state would embrace and support. To be clear, this acceptance was conditional.

In 1987, the Iraqi Ba‘th carried out another census in northern Iraq, reviving the issues of registration in the face of state power. Hiltermann argues that by 1987 the Iraqi state existed in Iraqi Kurdistan in name only, with government forces concentrated in fortified compounds and military bases.⁹⁸⁰ The state thus gave people in Iraqi Kurdistan an ultimatum, that they must come forward and be counted or they would lose their Iraqi citizenship. After several decades of on-and-off war with the state, Kurdish residents had to present themselves to the Iraqi state they had been

⁹⁷⁸ This in no way exonerates the Iraqi Ba‘thist government for the atrocities it committed in response to its fears of collaboration by these groups with foreign powers.

⁹⁷⁹ I say “largely non-Abrahamic faith” because there are indeed traces of elements of Christianity in parts of Yazidi orthodoxy, but they do not make up the majority and other, polytheistic beliefs are key.

⁹⁸⁰ Joost Hiltermann, “1988 Anfal Campaign in Iraqi Kurdistan” *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, 2 accessed from faculty.washington.edu/goldberg/The-1988-Anfal-Campaign-in-Iraqi-Kurdistan.pdf

rebellious against. The state announced this ultimatum through radio and word of mouth, pushing Kurds to register in the collective housing spaces (*mujamaat*), camps, or collective towns. Few rural Kurds came forward, but some who did come forward not only registered but identified as “Arab” on their census forms.⁹⁸¹ Yazidis found themselves with yet another choice once the Anfal Campaign began, and those who chose to stay in territory that the Iraqi Ba‘th deemed “prohibited areas” had to leave or face consequences.⁹⁸² Staying in the “prohibited areas” was interpreted by the Iraqi Ba‘th to mean these Yazidis had chosen to side with the opposition. On top of this, those Yazidis who indeed went against the Iraqi government were not included in the General Amnesty issued September 6, 1988 when the Anfal ended.⁹⁸³ The amnesty only extended to Kurds, yet the Iraqi government still officially viewed Yazidis as Arabs, meaning Yazidis were effectively excluded.⁹⁸⁴

Dozens of documents in the North Iraq Dataset show Iraqi government efforts to register and count returning Kurds under the General Amnesty. A sub-branch of the Suleimaniya Branch of the Iraqi Ba‘th Party called the “Council for Receiving Families Returning from Outside the Country” carried out these tallies, listing the numbers of returnees and the groups they were affiliated with.⁹⁸⁵ The same document also counted those returning “from inside the country” but does not explain, almost certainly referring to the “prohibited areas” mentioned earlier.⁹⁸⁶ A separate document from the same boxfile lists “families returning from the areas where there are saboteurs” among groups being counted, with “saboteurs” and “saboteurs with no weapons” tallied

⁹⁸¹ Human Rights Watch “The Bureaucracy of Repression” 1994, 29.

⁹⁸² *Ibid*, 26, 37, 40.

⁹⁸³ *Ibid*, 26.

⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid*.

⁹⁸⁵ NIDS 1765952.

⁹⁸⁶ NIDS 1765952. The original Arabic was “min dakhil al qatr”

on the same sheet.⁹⁸⁷ Returnees are listed as “agents of Iran,” “Communist Party,” or “leaders of the opposition,” among others.⁹⁸⁸ A 8/31/88 memo from the Erbil Security Branch to security directorates across Iraq reported that members of the Shabak tribe had changed their ethnicity from Arab to Kurd, and that Ali Hassan al-Majid, now the head of the Northern Bureau overseeing northern Iraq, ordered the destruction of their homes and their deportation to housing complexes under Iraqi government control.⁹⁸⁹ Earlier in the 1970s, the Iraqi government sought to divide opposition groups, accommodating and placating those willing to join the Progressive National Front. The constant tactic used throughout the 1970s and 1980s was state force to reshape spatial distribution of population and settlement. Iraqi Ba‘thist policy reshaped racial and spatial dimensions as a form of counterinsurgency. Despite all those efforts, or indeed intimately tied to them, a huge uprising rocked Iraq in 1991 at the end of Gulf War.

The Intifada Sha‘baniyya- la Shi‘a ba‘d al-yowm (No Shi‘a After Today)

The war between Iran and Iraq ended in August of 1988, but the domestic tensions and problems exacerbated by Iraqi state policy during the war continued to simmer. The period after the war’s official end tested the ability of the Iraqi government to guide society back to normal after tumultuous domestic change engendered by the realities of war. Saddam Hussein’s attempt to invade Kuwait brought about drastically different results than he foresaw and prompted foreign military intervention, led by the United States. After the sequence of events in the Gulf War of 1990-91, Hussein and the people of Iraq found themselves very quickly in a situation that none of them had anticipated. A coalition of states was formed against Iraq, and it included many Arab

⁹⁸⁷ NIDS 1765957.

⁹⁸⁸ NIDS 1765954.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid, 29.

nations, a blow to Saddam Hussein's claim to represent the Arab people (at least superficially). Syria and Egypt both joined the international coalition against Iraq. With Iraqi government troops forced to retreat from Kuwait, returning soldiers, many of them clearly not completely loyal to the Iraqi Ba'ath, began an uprising as they returned into southern Iraq.⁹⁹⁰ Other versions of the events paint the uprisings being started by former exiled groups like the Da'wa, which came back across the border from Iran to challenge the Iraqi Ba'ath. Finally, some narratives purely attribute these events as having been started by Iraqis, in the south and later the north of the country.⁹⁹¹ The growing outside opposition to the Iraqi Ba'ath, comprised mostly of exiled political opponents, was caught by surprise by the uprisings, largely deflating the chance that the uprisings were an outside conspiracy.⁹⁹²

The uprisings caught the Iraqi Ba'ath in a moment of weakness and spread to Iraqi Kurdistan. Tens of thousands of Iraqis had to flee the areas of uprising; countless thousands perished, with estimates ranging from 20,000 to 100,000. Recent work based on interviews of survivors of the Intifada argues that the line between victim and perpetrator became blurred especially as those challenging the Iraqi government carried out mass executions of those they knew or believed to be connected to the Iraqi Ba'ath.⁹⁹³ The sense of chaos was heightened by the fact that some 116,000 bombing raids had been carried out during the international response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, significantly damaging Iraqi infrastructure.⁹⁹⁴ Bombings

⁹⁹⁰ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 228.

⁹⁹¹ Faleh Jabbar, "Why The Uprisings Failed" *MERIP*, vol.22, no.176 (1992).
<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer176/why-uprisings-failed>

⁹⁹² Ibid.

⁹⁹³ Dina Rizk Khoury, "The 1991 Intifada in Three Keys: Writing the History of Violence" in *Writing the History of Modern Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges* by Jordi Tejel, Riccardo Bocco, Hamit Bozarslan, and Peter Sluglett (Singapore: World Scientific Publishers, 2012), 247-48.

⁹⁹⁴ Thabit Abdullah, *Dictatorship, Imperialism and Chaos: Iraq since 1989* (New York: Zed Books, 2006), 64.

targeted airports, bridges, roads, factories, communications centers, anything resembling a depot, and suspected homes of Iraqi Ba‘thist leaders.⁹⁹⁵ While these raids could not be ignored, the government’s initial response, and that of government-affiliated radio and television stations, was to deny that an uprising was taking place.⁹⁹⁶ Hussein finally acknowledged the existence of the uprisings on 15 March, calling them *safhat al ghadr wa al-khiyana* or “the page of treason and betrayal” essentially labeling them as an Iranian attempt to invade Iraq.⁹⁹⁷ In tape recordings made available after the 2003 overthrow of the Iraqi Ba‘th, Hussein and his advisers discuss how some of the riots and uprisings began in Kuwait as well as in the north of Iraq, and stumble to connect these to their narrative that events in southern Iraq were the result of Iranian plotting.⁹⁹⁸ Hussein also blamed the uprisings on the army being too large and out of control, contradicting his claims that it was a foreign plot.⁹⁹⁹ The government lost control of several areas of the country for most of the month-long uprising. At the uprising’s peak, rebels held large portions of territory in 14 of Iraq’s 18 provinces.¹⁰⁰⁰ Reports show that during this brief window while the rebels had the Iraqi Ba‘th on the ropes, news quickly spread of each city that came under rebel control, and people thought the Iraqi Ba‘th might lose Iraq along with Kuwait.¹⁰⁰¹ It took very little time for cracks to emerge in the groups challenging the government, where certain Shi‘i elements began calling for the replacement of Saddam with a Shi‘i Islamic state, much to the consternation of Kurds and other non-Shi‘a.¹⁰⁰² An interview with Ibrahim Ja‘fari, then head of the Da‘wa Party in exile, insisted

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁶ No Author, “*al-‘Asifa Talahiq Saddam fi dakhil al-‘Iraq*” *Al-Majalla*, 3/13-19, 1991, 15-17.

⁹⁹⁷ Rizk Khoury, “The 1991 Intifada in Three Keys: Writing the History of Violence”, 252.

⁹⁹⁸ Kevin M. Woods, David D. Palkki, and Mark Stout, *The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime, 1978-2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 200-203.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 228.

¹⁰⁰¹ No Author, “*al-‘Asifa Talahiq Saddam fi dakhil al-‘Iraq*” *Al-Majalla*, 3/13-19/1991, 15-17.

¹⁰⁰² No Author, “*Thawra fi al-‘Iraq: Qawwa al-Mu‘arridha Taqtarib min Baghdad Al-Majalla*, 3/27-4/2/1991, 25.

that the uprising was a popular and Iraqi uprising, not simply a Shi‘i one.¹⁰⁰³ Despite the initial success of these widespread revolts, the Iraqi Army was ultimately able to crush them and regain control of the country. The Iraqi government set up many checkpoints across Baghdad.¹⁰⁰⁴ Iraqi citizens reportedly felt anger at Hussein that “doubled” with the failed invasion of Kuwait that they correctly considered unnecessary and illogical.¹⁰⁰⁵ While the majority of Iraqis supporting the uprising were not calling for an Islamic state, once the Iraqi Ba‘th regained control, it found it necessary to detain the leading Shi‘i Marja‘, Abu-l-Qasim al-Khui, and make him speak in support of the government on Iraqi television.¹⁰⁰⁶

The groups of the Iraqi opposition described in this chapter were all part of the uprisings, challenging state sovereignty and attempting to overthrow the Iraqi Ba‘th. Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse responded by continuing all of the worst of the rhetoric used in the 1980s during the war, denying that any of the rebels were Iraqi.¹⁰⁰⁷ The marshes again played the role of hosting rebels, drawing the state’s ire once the rebellion had been contained. Iraqi Kurdistan broke away from Baghdad during this uprising, and western powers imposed a no-fly zone, effectively taking away Baghdad’s sole tool for re-imposing control. The instability this chapter documented throughout the 1970s and 1980s, exacerbated by foreign meddling and support for groups challenging the state, ultimately culminated in the loss of the territory. The Iraqi state utilized extreme tactics on the marshes, deliberately blocking the flow of water upstream to desiccate the marshes.¹⁰⁰⁸ Forced

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 228.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Rizk Khoury, “The 1991 Intifada in Three Keys...”, 252.

¹⁰⁰⁸ No Author, “Iraqi Military Leaders Discuss Draining Southern Marshes” *Associated Press*. July 16, 1992. See also CIA assessment of the damage: “Iraq: Environmental Impact of Baghdad’s Marsh Drying Scheme” Central Intelligence Agency, FOIA collection 0000396206, March 1, 1994.

ecological disaster was the state's answer to the spatial challenges geography placed in front of its sovereignty. The Iraqi state showed no restraint in its response, challenged for its very existence. An article from the international *Al-Majalla* from October of 1991, not long after the uprising paints a grim picture: it describes Iraq as a "depraved jungle" where "the only cheap things are gasoline and human life."¹⁰⁰⁹

CONCLUSION

This chapter took up the task of untwining complex domestic and transnational relationships as well as spatial patterns that shaped political opposition groups to the Iraqi Ba'ath. It is a common refrain, even among scholars, that artificial borders with too many ethnic and religious minorities inside them make for unstable states plagued by violence and war. This argument problematically implies that ethno-states would be superior. Iraq is commonly spoken of and written about in this manner, which unfortunately embraces Ba'athist discourse about Iraq and its opposition groups as reality. This chapter finds different and complex transnational and spatial reasons behind ethnic conflict in Iraq. For Iraq, the conundrum was not one of pure assimilation, but of trying to exert full sovereignty in a democratic manner over a territory that was far too easily influenced from outside. The porosity of Iraq's borders made it all too easy for foreign powers to manipulate politics inside of Iraq, and the state found itself trying and failing to cut ties between subnational groups and their supranational sponsors, who were legion. Israel, Iran, Syria, and the USSR were all tied to one opposition group or another in this period, and those are the connections that are known. The Iraqi Ba'ath reshaped both space and race in Iraq in response

¹⁰⁰⁹ No Author, "Al-'Iraq Ghaba Mutawahhisha arkhas ma fiha al-insan wal-benzeen" *Al-Majalla*, 10/2-6/1991.

to these transnational pressures, attempting to remain sovereign over Iraq's territory. Arabization by the state is emblematic of this point, as it had both racial and spatial dimensions. From the beginning of its rule in 1968, the Iraqi Ba'th emphasized Arabization of Kirkuk, which involved moving non-Arabs out and relocating them to other parts of Iraq. Frustrated with this ongoing instability and later insurgency, and unable to successfully use state power to stop it, the Iraqi Ba'th eventually resorted to genocide.

As interesting and stimulating as Foucault's work is, his ideas of race and bio-power remained unfinished. James C. Scott elaborated on these ideas, with his work on tribes fighting to remain outside the rule of states in China and Southeast Asia. Scott argues that ethnicities were formed along the frontiers of states, as in groups who refused to assimilate under the state's rule. Those who assimilated took on the characteristics of the ethnicity of the state, be those language, religion, or other practices, leaving behind the characteristics which previously distinguished them. Truly, the distinction of being under the aegis of the state or outside of its reach came to represent a binary of civilization/ unruliness.¹⁰¹⁰ While his work covers an era earlier than the one this dissertation covers, and thus a much earlier point in the process of state formation, it remains quite useful for the discussion at hand. From the Chinese example used by Scott, groups were evaluated in levels of civilization "in which the ideals of the Han civilization are the metric."¹⁰¹¹ Scott argues that incorporation of these "minorities" could never be total, lest the "civilization" lose its meaning.¹⁰¹² In Iraq once the war began against Iran, non-Arab groups and individuals who collaborated with the Iraqi Ba'th faced a form of assimilation, internalized temporarily, even

¹⁰¹⁰ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 99.

¹⁰¹¹ *Ibid*, 103.

¹⁰¹² *Ibid*, 116. This example fits French colonial history in the 20th century, under which *evolue* people from Senegal could pass a series of tests to earn rights as French citizens, yet France struggled to assimilate colonized peoples more broadly without maintaining forms of racism and discrimination against them to preserve basic difference.

racialized as Arab, yet their existence remained tenuous and largely though not completely subject to the whims of Saddam Hussein. Whereas in Scott's examples, peoples who managed to avoid coming under the rule of a centripetal state lived outside any state rule, late modernity in Iraq near the borders with Iran and Turkey offered no such possibility; neither did conditions of war between Iran and Iraq, save for pockets labeled "prohibited areas." As such, "minority groups" in Iraq were not placed purely on a civilized/unruly scale (though there were elements of this in Ba'athist attempts at top-down modernization) but rather inside or outside of the Iraqi nation centered on Arabism. In this sense "Arab" in the late twentieth century was a racial distinction representative of a power relationship with the state, not unlike other parts of the world. Looking for scientific or genetic distinction misses the point that race was never about genetics, only superficially so. When the state shifted its own position toward Islam in the 1990s, specifically Sunni Islam, by undertaking its Islamic Faith Campaign, religious difference was no longer implicit and one step removed from actual state discourse. We must think critically about the lasting impact of the racialization of Arabs and Persians described in this chapter, given that it stopped but what followed was still stigmatizing and violent, both from the Iraqi state domestically but in an overarching sense from international sanctions imposed on Iraq.

CONCLUSION

Saddam Hussein's rule came to an end in early 2003 when US troops invaded Iraq and destabilized the country, leading to violent civil war and instability that continues until this writing. Over the nearly 35 years he was in the ruling faction, twenty-four years of which he was the sole ruler of the country, Hussein came to overshadow Iraqi society and the rest of his government. His power seemed to stretch in all directions; his likeness was found everywhere, constantly reminding Iraqis who was in power, but of course there was no way they had forgotten. Just as he lorded over Iraq, his presence has overshadowed studies of this period in Iraqi history. Having stifled the press and limited academic inquiry, knowledge about this period of Iraqi history suffered. The experiences of Iraqis themselves were just as full and varied as those of people anywhere in the world, of course. Their ability to write about and have debates about those periods in public was significantly curtailed, largely forced underground in Iraq or abroad when Iraqis fled the country. Access to government data and records is not reliable, even today. Many of those archives, as discussed in the introduction, were looted by unknown actors or stolen by US forces after Hussein's overthrow in 2003. These stolen records open a large window onto Iraqi history, but in a manner that is fraught with controversy. Combined with CIA archival documents and hundreds of Iraqi Ba'athist publications, this dissertation has drawn new parameters to frame the story of Iraqi history between 1968-1991 around a battle of ideas. Unfortunately research on the ground in Iraq was not feasible from multiple angles; ongoing instability and the rise of Daesh made an already complex situation even more so. My work here seeks to illuminate this period and make new arguments about how the Ba'ath period from 1968-1991 is to be understood, but I must be clear that I have no aspirations to "save Iraq" or anything of the sort. I have had significant help from various advisers and Iraqi colleagues, but this work and its claims are ultimately mine.

Assumption of power in July of 1968 set the Iraqi Ba‘th in a Third World context with ambitious goals in its sights. Economic development was hindered by complex factors including the state’s postcolonial legacy and ongoing foreign control of Iraqi oil. Development in state capacity, reach, education, health, and transportation were all key in the first five years of rule post-1968. Yet as was the case more broadly, rivalries and tensions with neighboring states and Cold War powers were ever-present, necessitating state attention. Central in the early years of Iraqi Ba‘thist rule were tensions with Israel as well as attempts to finalize autonomy for Kurds inside of Iraq. As the opposition chapter showed, these two issues were not separate, as Israel funded and armed Kurdish groups challenging the Iraqi Ba‘th. The state, for its part, began expanding educational infrastructure, opening new universities outside of Baghdad with new locations in Sulaimaniyya and Mosul in northern Iraq. The expansion of cultural rights for Kurds as well as Turkmen was granted early in this period as a concession by the state, and Mesopotamian discourse was embraced by the Iraqi Ba‘th around the same time. Such discourse along with granting of cultural rights was meant to placate non-Arab groups writhing under Ba‘thist rule while stealing the thunder of groups to the left of the Iraqi Ba‘th, especially the Iraqi Communist Party. Culture as counterinsurgency thus began early and continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

The Iraqi Ba‘th began to confront illiteracy early in the 1970s, but its efforts remained insufficient. Literacy, while clearly central to a society’s economic and educational development, has not received adequate attention in studies of Iraq’s modern history, meriting only passing mention in a few of the key modern histories of Iraq. The Party’s own 1974 report from the Eighth Regional Congress prioritized literacy moving forward. There is a clear acceleration of Iraqi Ba‘thist efforts in multiple spheres from 1975 on, namely in development through literacy and Iraqi participation in the Non-Aligned Movement. The Algiers Agreement between Iraq and Iran,

finalized on the sidelines of a 1975 OPEC Summit, settled issues between the two states temporarily and Iran agreed to stop funding Kurdish groups, removing a source of agitation for the Iraqi state and freeing its energies to address other issues. In the wake of the agreement, Iraqi Ba‘thist identification with and action on behalf of the Third World in the Non-Aligned Movement grew tangibly. This period of expansion and increasing state aggressiveness fueled by nationalized oil revenues also included the initiation of Arabization campaigns. Beginning in 1978, the Iraqi state began its Mass Literacy Campaign, planned for a three-year time span despite multiple reports and studies that suggested much more time was needed.

Impressive yet ultimately mixed results from the Mass Literacy Campaign illustrate the difficulty the state faced in raising the education level of millions of people in a three-year time span. Compared to other Third World states carrying out mass literacy campaigns in the same period, the results in Iraq were not significantly better or worse. Iraq’s situation of course had its particular characteristics; the Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq began before Saddam Hussein’s seizure of power and continued through once Iraq invaded Iran. The war drained resources from development projects but did not completely derail them. As Omar Dewachi notes, Iraq still carried out a campaign against infant mortality during the war with remarkable success. One can only wonder what could have been if the state did not start a war with Iran and slowed down the pace of its Mass Literacy Campaign to something more manageable. Whether due to haste or overconfidence in what the state could achieve, the Iraqi Ba‘th repeatedly undertook projects that were overly ambitious.

Iraq’s developmentalist efforts fit into a context of coeval problems between Third World states in the Non-Aligned Movement and increasing Soviet assertiveness in the second half of the 1970s. Beginning in 1975 with Cuban intervention in Angola, and continuing to Ethiopia in 1977

and South Yemen in 1978, Iraqi leaders saw a worrying series of events in which the USSR and its allies intervened and exerted growing power to shape conflicts in key parts of the Third World. Cuba and its own post-Revolutionary success and aggressive foreign policy was both a model and an uncertainty for Iraq, given Cuba's explicit Communism. The relationship between Iraq and Cuba was most clearly shown in Iraq following Cuba into leadership of the NAM but also found expression in efforts at development like the literacy campaign. By the late 1970s, the Iraqi Ba'ath had been trying to control the Iraqi Communist Party for almost a decade with various agreements or repressive tactics. When the USSR chose to militarily invade Afghanistan to support the Communists there and preserve them in power, Saddam Hussein heard the footsteps coming closer to his own state. Hussein feared the USSR could potentially come for Iraq next, and his reaction was swift and important to shaping Iraqi history, though it has been largely overlooked. He used February 8th, the anniversary of a coup in 1963 that ousted and killed Abdul Karim Qasim to announce the *I'lan al-Qawmi* and discursively connected Qasim to the Communists through *shu'ubiyya*. As the first chapter laid out, the *I'lan al-Qawmi* reshaped Iraq's approach to its international alliances, attempting to link Arab solidarity with the Non-Aligned Movement. Hussein insisted in the same speech on the Iraqi Ba'athist approach of mixing *qawmiyya* and *wataniyya*, whereas Hussein demonized Qasim and the *shu'ubiyyun* for rejecting *qawmiyya*. Any promise the Charter held was short-lived; the invasion of Afghanistan had already divided the Non-Aligned Movement as some wanted to condemn the USSR's actions while others benefited too much from Soviet largesse criticize Soviet actions. Arab nations had never achieved the level of solidarity necessary for Hussein's planned alliance to act as a deterrent. The Charter had no measurable impact on the war against Iran or the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

By unearthing the forgotten impact of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on Iraq, I illuminate Iraq's game of chess against the Cold War powers, especially the USSR. Previous studies focused heavily on increasing tensions between Iran and Iraq after the Islamic Revolution overthrew the Shah, which were certainly important, but they effectively covered over the problems with the Soviets. Both Iran and the USSR represented different ideological challengers to Arab nationalism, and each found groups to support in Iraq against the Iraqi Ba'th. From the Iraqi state's point of view, these opposition groups had shared roots and strongly overlapped. The heavy convergence between Shi'i society in Iraq and Communism helped the Iraqi Ba'th to tar Iraqi Communists with the insult of being *shu'ubiyyun*, explored in detail in chapter five, and then apply the same insult to Iran less than a year later without change. The entire Iraqi opposition and Iran came to be labeled concurrently as "Persians" and "*shu'ubiyyun*." In tracing the roots and deployment of this discourse, the state explicitly racialized its political opposition as "Persians." Racialization has been conflated with sectarianism by many scholars. This work posits a different causal relationship, one in which the Iraqi Ba'th racialized its opponents together, casting them out of the Iraqi nation. This racialization directed at Iraqi society and its explicit use by the Iraqi Ba'th against uprisings in 1991 stimulated largely, but not completely, latent sectarianism as a result. This conceptual nuance is important, focusing on the harm done by Iraqi Ba'thist racialization of its opposition and accounting for the lack of explicitly sectarian terminology in its public statements and the absence of such terminology in the BRCC archives.¹⁰¹³ Further oral history research is needed to explore how Iraqis remember complex state discourses and whether they embraced, rejected, thought critically, or had some mix of those three reactions to these state discourses.

¹⁰¹³ Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party*, 283.

From multiple angles, this dissertation has shown there is nothing exceptional about Iraq; this is true moreover in the state's deployment of discourses of racialization. Iraqi Ba'athist use of racial terminology is not separate from developmentalism, nonalignment, or its lengthy intellectual and tactical battle against Iraqi opposition groups. Iraq's position in the Third World and Iraqi Ba'athist aspirations to lead the Arab countries necessitated an international dimension. In attempting to form a nonaligned bloc to safeguard Iraq during the Cold War and exercise power beyond its borders, the Iraqi Ba'ath utilized race in a manner similar to other projects of such scale, or more basically, of modern states in general. Looked at this way, the massive expansion of Iraqi state capacity shown in the beginning of multiple large scale projects (Kurdish autonomy, agriculture reform, mass literacy, etc) would be exceptional if it did not utilize race as a technology of governance.

The Iraqi Ba'athist use of racialization was resorted to after previous attempts to manage pluralism under its own *qawmiyya* nationalism. Stated most simply, racialization was tactically counterrevolutionary for the Iraqi Ba'ath. Many Iraqi Shi'a fought for the state against Iran, but it is comparable to many Latinos and African Americans fighting for the US armed forces abroad or acting as police officers; it does not negate the fact that larger structural racialization took place in Iraq. It is certainly too simple to assume all Iraqi Shi'a or Kurds were against the state, or that any ethnic or religious groups acted as blocs to support or oppose the Iraqi Ba'ath. Such assumptions about the relationships between ethnic or religious groups and the Iraqi Ba'ath take discourse too far and let it become reality, and can only have any purchase because of the lack of clear public opinion data from Iraq in this period. Willingness to fight for the state among Arab Shi'a also shows that the Arab identity among many Iraqi Shi'a was quite strong. Given the history of the mass conversion to Shi'ism by Arab tribes coming from al-Najd studied by Yitzhak Nakkash and

discussed in Chapter Five, and the marked differences of these Arab Shi'a from Shi'a of Persian heritage, such Arab identity remained while their religion changed. The mass conversion to Shi'ism also shows us clearly how the categories in our debates are contingent and shaped by historical processes, and have not remained the same over time. Moreover, Arabization of Yazidis by the Iraqi Ba'th could not invent a connection to Arabism for Yazidis, but it could draw attention to an existing indeterminacy about Yazidi roots.

Race was shaped at the nexus of territory and power relations in Iraq in the 1970s and 1980s. Throughout this period, multiple areas inside of Iraqi borders were not truly under Iraqi sovereignty, undermining the basis of power of the state. Indeed, the uprisings of March 1991 ended with a no-fly zone imposed over Northern Iraq and the beginning of the Kurdistan Regional Government, moving itself away from Baghdad. Iraqi borders did not align with the state's vision of the Iraqi nation as too many groups lived inside the borders with whom the state could not reach a *modus vivendi*. Out of frustration, the Iraqi Ba'th racialized these opposition groups together and out of the Arabized Iraqi nation. These problems were shaped continuously by the ongoing influence of outside powers (Syria, Iran, Israel, etc) eager to mitigate their own issues. This racialization did not fix groups to territory, but instead shaped a definition of them on the margins of the state as *shu'ubiyyun*. James Scott's work on the Chinese state is useful for extending and filling in the analytical gaps of using Foucauldian ideas on the relationship between states and racialization. As Scott shows, the Chinese state incorporated ethnic groups it conquered into Han culture while those it could not control retained their distinct ethnic characteristics and continued to define themselves as *not* under the aegis of the state culturally or administratively. The border of the state thus doubled as a delineation of race; when the state expanded or contracted, racial delineations correspondingly changed. The key difference is that China did not, to my

understanding, group these ethnicities on the margins of the state together to redefine them in a way they did not define themselves, but the Iraqi Ba‘th did just this.

The Iraqi Ba‘th took institutions and approaches inherited from previous governments and expanded them to implement cultural policies at the intersection of these complex processes and events. The Iraqi Ba‘th constructed a broad cultural infrastructure to disseminate its messages and win a battle of ideas to legitimate itself domestically and internationally. Details largely absent from historiography of modern Iraq were found in a number of Iraqi state publications. Using these details, a picture starts to emerge of the scale of state cultural production and the trends in its content and quantity over the period from 1968-1991. *Al-Turath al Sha‘bi*, for example, acted as the venue for bottom up expression of an Iraqi nationalist sensibility in the early and mid 1970s before it was Ba‘thized. *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* served as an intellectual venue for Ba‘thist content that also seemed to be able to publish what it wanted in other cultural fields, implying to be a type of *quid pro quo* agreement with the Iraqi Ba‘th. Expansion of publication and investment in cultural activities inside and outside of the Iraqi Ba‘th Party tracked alongside the Mass Literacy Campaign. Throughout the post-1975 period, Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production was varied and voluminous in its breadth. Whether in Arabic or foreign languages, books or magazines, the state pumped out content to disseminate state discourses and convince Iraqis and foreigners of ideas and positions it considered crucial.

Before the age of the internet and social media, the Iraqi Ba‘th was waging a war of ideas and information in print, radio and television. Just as questions swirl today about the effectiveness of state attempts to manipulate information online, the effectiveness of Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production is neither clear nor straightforward. Hussein did not seek to spread misinformation as far as this research can discern. For example, in the late 1970s *Afaq ‘Arabiyya* took to attacking

Anwar Sadat for his “treachery” and *Alif-Ba* frequently sought to expose the Syrian Ba‘th in a similar manner. Having squashed the outlets for Iraqi society to speak frankly, the state took to monitoring rumors to keep its finger on the pulse of society.¹⁰¹⁴ Moreover, the state had sought to co-opt discourses from its competitors, thus it did not engage in good faith in a battle of ideas. Obvious contradictions between its emphasis of Arab/Islamic heritage and Mesopotamian themes were glossed over. Pushing such contradictions was even easier to do if one repressed the ability of all others to speak openly and disseminate their views; yet it would be shortsighted to think many Iraqis did not realize the state was stealing the discourses of opposition parties and contradicting itself. Larger than any “victory” or “loss” in this sphere of politics and ideas, the state struggled to keep its plans moving forward as other Arab states did not support Iraq while oil prices fluctuated significantly.

Culture, or *thaqafa*, formed an important trifecta with both history and heritage. Culture was groomed and unfortunately was almost completely politicized in this process by the Iraqi Ba‘th. History was such a large topic that this dissertation only engaged it to the extent necessary to summarize it, but there is most certainly more work to be done on this topic. Eric Davis laid the groundwork here, tracing how historical memory served a key role for the Iraqi Ba‘th. Going deeper than Davis did and in some new directions, this work unearthed significant new details in the realm of heritage, which this dissertation argues must be understood as the crux of culture and history. Emphasis of heritage fit into larger debates in the Arab World that predated and ran concurrently with Ba‘thist rule in Iraq; neither were the Iraqi Ba‘th the pioneers of this idea in Iraq. The emphasis on “heritage” in the Arab World and Iraq most certainly resembled other parts of the Third World, as the introduction showed. Heritage was key to Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts to

¹⁰¹⁴ BRCC 01-3868-0003-0039. This citation is one example of a “rumor report” submitted in 1990.

legitimate itself, as well as wrong-foot its opponents. This discursive tack was intimately tied to the Party's increasing use of Islam *qua* heritage in the 1980s. While fervently insisting it was not a religious party, the Iraqi Ba'ath repeatedly drew on Islam for its connection to Arab heritage in a manner not unlike the way White nationalist groups draw on Western and Judeo-Christian heritage to legitimate themselves in Europe and the US today. Arab nationalism, seen in this light, looks much more like other forms of nationalism and need not only be compared to the Third World in this respect.¹⁰¹⁵ It would be erroneous to call Iraqi Ba'athism "populist" but rather it shares strong affinities with some of the nationalist parties embracing the label of populism today. Especially when linked to the racialization and genocidal actions against Kurds, the veneer of exceptionalism disappears and Iraqi Ba'athist *qawmiyya* resembles the ugliest faces of nationalism from around the world. In its roots, Iraqi Ba'athist *qawmiyya* looked much more like something more characteristic of the Third World, in its mix of anti-colonial nationalism and socialism, but as this work has shown, complex transnational dimensions pushed the Iraqi Ba'ath to seek international solidarity in the Non-Aligned Movement and later to racialize its opposition together as a coherent group under the title of *shu'ubiyyun*.

Just as the Soviet Union was key in shaping Iraqi policy both domestic and international, which were interlinked, its collapse had a profound impact on the Iraqi state.¹⁰¹⁶ Of what value was nonalignment after the end of the Cold War? Likewise, the Iraqi Ba'ath suddenly had significantly less to worry about from the Iraqi Communist Party, as its major outside support

¹⁰¹⁵ It is too early to argue this conclusively, but there are indeed similarities between right wing populist groups today and the discourses of heritage and authenticity discussed in this dissertation in reference to the Third World post-WWII. The clear connecting thread of nationalism ties these two broad categories together, but power dimensions do not clearly align. In several decades, comparing these movements may look less questionable and more obvious, but accounting for the larger argument this dissertation makes, only the superficial similarities are compared here.

¹⁰¹⁶ Jabbar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq*, 268.

collapsed. Of what value now were Mesopotamian images, deployed for more than a decade, that had failed to achieve their desired goal of blunting the ideological appeal of the Iraqi Communists? The Berlin Wall fell while Iraq was still managing its transition back to normalcy after the war against Iran ended the year before. The Iraqi Ba‘th released some pressure and allowed for more expression in society- *tanfis* as it is often referred to in studies of Arab authoritarianism now.¹⁰¹⁷ *Glasnost* had been implemented in the USSR only a few years prior, to my mind, the most tangible comparison one can make between Iraq and the USSR. Yet Iraqi Ba‘thist attempts at *tanfis* could not stifle the broader tensions; Iraq was in dire financial straits internationally in terms of debts and domestically in terms of putting its returning soldiers back to work in society. As Jabbar argues, if the opening could not quell dissatisfaction, then another route, seeking new resources, would have to be tried. Disassembling the war machine proved too difficult after it built eight years of momentum; it proved easier to put the war machine back to use and invade Kuwait to seek new resources.

The international reaction to Iraq invading Kuwait was just what Hussein had hoped to mitigate with his earlier investments in the Non-Aligned Movement and the *I‘lan al-Qawmi*. The eight years of war against Iran had shown no Arab states were truly backing Iraq except Jordan, which was only helping economically and weak itself. Of course, it is highly unlikely that nonaligned states would have come to Hussein’s aid in any Iraqi invasion, and indeed they did not in the case of Kuwait. In at least one sense, Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait caps a decade which arguably began with his own reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. One can speculate things would have been different if Iraq was not the aggressor, but there is even reason to doubt aggression against Iraq would have generated real action by the NAM. Muammar Qaddafi

¹⁰¹⁷ Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 88.

chastised NAM members for their inaction at the 1986 Harare Summit. “In this hall, Qaddhafi lectured, “we have among us notorious agents and dirty spies of imperialism, Zionism, and racism.” Qaddhafi drove his point home further asking aggressively “when the U.S. mined the harbors of Nicaragua, what did you do?... When Grenada was occupied, what did you do?.... What did you do when my country fell victim of U.S. aggression?” Even if his characterization of events regarding Libya was oversimplified at best, Qaddhafi drove the point home that the Non-Aligned Movement, for all its aspirations, was all bark and no bite. Five years later, Iraq found itself staring down the barrel of the gun, with a large international coalition pushing Iraqi troops out of Kuwait, into Iraqi territory where angry Iraqis and some Iraqi soldiers were eager to finally rise up. Qaddhafi’s outburst was prescient, as Iraq found itself almost completely isolated internationally, a coalition built up against it.

When the Cold War ended, the Communist ideological challenge to Iraqi Ba‘thism lost significant steam, but by this time Iraqi Ba‘thism had been pushing largely the same messages to legitimate itself for more than a decade. There indeed was a shift, as outlined in the chapter placing Iraq in the Third World, but the ideas were not “new” but rather represented deepening the commitment to Pan-Arabism and tying it to nonalignment. This meant moving further away from the principles ‘Aflaq laid out at the founding of the Ba‘th Party, closer to those he rejected, namely the racism that pervaded Iraqi Ba‘thist discourse. Notably, Mesopotamian themes had been appropriated from the ICP to strengthen Iraqi Ba‘thist claims about *turath* and historical depth, as both Amatzia Baram and Eric Davis helped me understand. It seems that with no more serious outside backer to support the ICP, it was a significantly smaller threat to the Iraqi Ba‘th. Mesopotamian themes were jettisoned after the fall of the USSR, but a more in-depth look at cultural production is needed to pin down a more exact time after which the messages disappear.

The quantity and the content of Iraqi Ba‘thist cultural production had not met its goal, if it truly can be understood and being primarily about counterinsurgency and strengthening support for the Iraqi Ba‘th.

The collapse of Communist modernity and the vision of an End of History, however short-lived, upset the entire balance of forces in which the Iraqi Ba‘th had found itself for years. Reality for the Iraqi Ba‘th was the reality of the Third World in the Cold War; the Party sought nonalignment and changed what that meant for the Iraqi state in practice instrumentally as it changed its other discourses and policies more broadly.¹⁰¹⁸ The *I‘lan al-Qawmi* was worthless; neither Arab states nor Non-Aligned ones would come to Iraq’s aid. This disorientation came at the end of a draining eight-year war that Iraq had not won by any honest measure, along with accumulating large debts to Arab allies like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Just as the Cold War was over, the zombie of Arab nationalism could be revived no more. The Iraqi Ba‘th had leaned on Arab nationalism far longer than most, as the Naksa in 1967 and then the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser signaled its decline for most of its supporters. No serious help had come for Iraq from many of its fellow Arabs and those who helped insisted Iraq had to pay back its debts. The final indignity came when Egypt and Syria both backed the international coalition to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. How could the Iraqi Ba‘th possibly revive Arab unity with other Arab states aligning against it? The Iraqi Ba‘th seems to have largely moved away from nonalignment after the embarrassment of having the 1982 Summit taken out from under them. What larger form of internationalism remained for the Iraqi Ba‘th to appeal to? Where could Iraq tangibly, discursively, anything really- where could it find allies? Or describe its place in the world? Such was the complete collapse of the ideas the Iraqi Ba‘th had pushed to legitimize itself and marginalize its

¹⁰¹⁸ Just about everything I read from the Iraqi Ba‘th about development has teleological assumptions like those of modernization theory.

competitors. In search of different bases of identity to legitimate itself, the Iraqi Ba‘th shifted toward tribalism, never previously part of Iraqi Ba‘thism, and went all in on Islam, no longer limiting itself to emphasizing Islam as a key part of Arab heritage. Once again, Saddam attempted to split the difference between seemingly contradictory discourses. The Iraqi Ba‘th began the Islamic Faith Campaign in the early 1990s, building mosques and even a university for Islamic studies. Many now seek to connect this explicit embrace of Islam with the emergence of ISIS from the rubble of the Iraqi state in 2003, but much more work needs to be done on the subject. Amatzia Baram’s 2014 book *Ba‘thi Iraq: From Secularism to Faith* deals with this question best of anything I have read, but Baram did not utilize the BRCC documents. Samuel Helfont’s work on the Iraqi Ba‘th and religion also investigates the Iraqi Ba‘thist embrace of Islam in the 1990s, as his work begins in the 1980s and continues until 2003.

This dissertation has deliberately avoided comparing Iraq under Ba‘thist rule to Nazi Germany, the USSR or other Eastern European countries. Instead, the tangible influences of the USSR on Iraq have factored much stronger into this work. Aaron Faust and Joseph Sassoon, despite their vehement disagreement over the word “totalitarian,” both compare Iraq to the USSR, with Sassoon adding China in as well. At best, this approach groups similar ideologies and state systems together, but I worry these comparisons miss important differences. The USSR was at a different point in its historical trajectory and exerted significantly more power and influence on the world stage, and the same must be said for Nazi Germany. China is not so easily dismissed as it played more of a role in the Third World but I likewise worry that its historical trajectory and size makes comparison superficial. Focusing in on party structure and “ideology” oversimplifies dynamics that are much more complex and presents similarities that are only superficial. I have avoided ideology in favor of discourse, seeking to look at shifting representations and arguments

presented by the Iraqi Ba‘th that had tangible, if opaque goals. Rohde is on point in his own condemnation of this trend in the scholarship in which Iraqi is compared to dictatorships like Nazi Germany and the USSR under Stalin, arguing that it a moral rather than analytical approach.¹⁰¹⁹ Rohde’s argument focuses on the comparison to Nazi Germany, but this issue of not separating moral from analytical points carries over to the comparisons to the USSR as well.

Instead, this dissertation situated Iraq in the Third World during the Cold War, a key part of the argument made from multiple angles. Iraq not only identified as a member of the Third World, but it faced the same struggles in that historical period that its *self-identified peers* did. As such, I have compared Iraq briefly to Tanzania, Egypt, Iran, Syria, Cuba, Brazil and others in the Third World, especially in the chapter on literacy. I argue that Kenya, Ghana, Algeria, Morocco, what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, and Indonesia among others would similarly prove fruitful in comparison. Here I am thinking about state size, structure, and postcolonial legacy, as well as some parallels in political discourse about imperialism and independence. Economies dependent on resource extraction that similarly have some degree of resource rentierism are present in several of the cases. There are, however, clear differences in the levels of state violence and tactics used in the cases I mention above, with Iraq under the Ba‘th being as violent or more so than most all the others mentioned. I also point to Frederick Cooper, who developed his concept of the “Gatekeeper State” based on his studies of postcolonial Africa, but it bears strong resemblance to many states in the Arab World, including Iraq. Ignoring Third-Worldism results in a skewed picture that is every bit as shaped by Cold War discourse in the US as it is by the evidence and actions of the Iraqi Ba‘th government under study.

¹⁰¹⁹ Achim Rohde, “Revisiting the Republic of Fear: Lessons for Research on Contemporary Iraq” in *Iraq Between Occupations: Perspectives from 1920 to the Present*, edited by Baram, Amatzia, Rohde, A. and Zeidel, R. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 131.

Appendix One:

“The problem which the symposium continually encountered in more than one of its study papers and in different ways was the role of the Arab past in orienting the Arab future. Whether we call this problem that of authenticity and renovation, or the heritage and modernization, or atavism and westernization, or anything else, it has taken this role of multiple facets and influence in Arab civilizational development only because our look at it has been ahistorical. This heritage is part of us and part of our civilizational formation. But it ought not to make our future possessed by our past. The attempt to project the past onto the future, besides being doomed to failure, leads to a rupture between the Arab and his present, and between him and his future. The fusion of the idea of authenticity with that of the heritage is a dangerous pitfall. Authenticity does not consist in literal clinging to the heritage but rather in setting out from it to what follows, and from its values to a new phase in which there is enrichment for it and development of its values. Real revivification of the heritage is only possible through a creative, historical and critical comprehension of it; through transcending it in a new process of creation; through letting the past remain past so that it may not compete with the present and the future; and through a new assimilation of it from the perspectives of the present and the future.”¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰²⁰ quoted in Issa J. Boullata, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990), 16.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Note on Sources

A series of archival documents were used in the research of this dissertation. BRCC (Ba‘th Regional Command Committee) archives were consulted exclusively at the Hoover Institute, as were NIDS (Northern Iraqi Dataset) records. I address the ethical questions surrounding these sources in depth in the introductory chapter. I received a Silas Palmer Fellowship from Hoover to facilitate my work there, though no strings were attached to this funding. I was not expected to work for or promote Hoover in any way. CIA documents were accessed online through the Freedom of Information Act portal set up on the CIA website.¹⁰²¹ As such, all CIA documents cited were declassified and in the public domain. I used a series of British archival documents about Iraqi Kurdish issues made available to the public through a collection called *Records of the Kurds, Territory, Revolt and Nationalism* collected by Cambridge as part of their “Cambridge Archive Editions” and made available through the University of Washington Libraries. The documents come from British government archives that have been declassified and made available to the public.

I consulted six different magazines and journals published by the Iraqi state, accessed in a variety of places. *Al-Thawra*, *al-Jumhuriyya*, *Afaq ‘Arabiyya*, *al-Istishraq*, and *al-Turath al-Sha‘bi* were all consulted at the Library of Congress in Washington DC. *Sumer* was consulted at both the University of Washington Libraries as well as the University of British Columbia Libraries in Vancouver, BC. *Al-Mu‘arrikh al-‘Arabi* was consulted at the University of Washington through ILL, as were many of the books/ cultural production from the Iraqi state listed in the Arabic primary sources. In my citations of these sources, I have kept the original variations in the names of the departments and publishing houses to reflect the changes in the originals. Thus, sometimes, *wizarat al-I‘lam* was printed instead of *wizarat al thaqafa wa al-I‘lam*. Other times, *Dar al Rashid* is presented as *Dar al Rashid lil-Nashr*. Similarly, I have followed IJMES transliteration standards, but I have kept the transliterations used by others in citing the titles of their works.

A series of English language books are included in a category I call “English Primary Sources” as the authors were either compromised by or worked explicitly with the Iraqi Ba‘th. Other titles are part of Iraqi state cultural production published in English for audiences abroad. Dissertations by Iraqi graduate students written and foreign universities are put in this category to the extent they trumpet state discourse and do not criticize the state in any form.

Magazines

Afaq ‘Arabiyya

Al-Istishraq

Al-Jumhuriyya

Al-Thawra

Al-Turath al-Sha‘bi

Al-Mu‘arrikh al-‘Arabi

Al-Majalla

¹⁰²¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/>

Arabic Primary Sources

- ‘Aflaq, Michel. *Fi Sabil al-Ba‘th* (Beirut: Dar al-Tali‘a, 1976).
----- *al-Ba‘th wa al-Turath* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1976).
Ahmad al Ward, Hamid. *al-Insan wa Bina’ al-mujtama’: fi fikr wa tajriba al hizb al-ba‘th al-‘arabi al-ishtiraki* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1984).
----- *al-Mas’ala al-Diniyya wa al-Qawmiyya al-‘Arabiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1984).
al-‘Aysami, Shibli. *Risalat al Umma al-‘Arabiyya* (Baghdad: *Dar al-Shu’un al Thaqafiyya al-‘Ama*, 1987).
----- *al-Nitham al Suri wa Dawrahu fi Taraddi al Wad’a al-‘Arabi* (no location: *al-Tahalluf al Watani li-Tahrir Suriya*, 1989).
al-Badri, Hala. *al-Mara’ al-‘Iraqiyya* (Beirut, Dar al-Afaq, 1980).
al-Basri, ‘Abd al Jabbar Dawuud. *al-Siyasiyya al-Thaqafiyya fi al-‘Iraq* (Baghdad: Dar al Rashid, 1983).
Al-Basri, Mahdi Hussein. *Bayn al-Qadisya al-ula wa Qadisya Saddam Hussein* (Baghdad: Manshurat Dar al Jahiz, Wizarat al Thaqafa wa al –I‘lam, 1980).
al-Duri, Abdul Aziz. *al-Judhur al-Tarikhia lil Shu‘ubiyya*. (Beirut: Dar-al-Tali‘a, 1962).
al-Jabouri, ‘Isam Muhsin. *al-‘Alaqa al-‘Arabiyya al-Ifriqiyya 1961-1977* (Baghdad: Dar al-Rashid Lil-Nashr, al-Jumhuriyya al-Iraqiyya, 1981).
al-Samarra’i, Abdul Salum. *Al- Shu‘ubiyya Haraka Mudhada lil Islam wa al-Umma al-‘Arabiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al Rashid lil Nashr, 1980).
al-Shahab, Sha‘ban Rajab. *al-Din wa al-Turath fi al Fikr al-Ba‘thi*. (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya lil Taba‘at, 1981).
Dawwaf, Hiyam N. *Harakat Nashr al-Kutb al-‘Iraqiyya: dirasa maydaniyya lil kutb al manshura wa al nashireen lil fatra 1975-1994* (Baghdad: Dar al Shu’un al Thaqafa al ‘Ama, 2000).
Hizb al Ba‘th al ‘Arabi al-Ishtiraki. *Mithaq al-‘Aml al-Watani* (Mosul: Muassasat Dar al-Kutub lil Dirasat wal Nashr, 1971).
Hizb al Ba‘th al ‘Arabi al-Ishtiraki. *al-Ba‘th wa Mawqif min al-Aqliyat al-Qawmiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al Thawra, 1974).
Hussein, Saddam. *Hawl al Qadhaya al ‘Arabiya al-Rahina* (Baghdad: Wizarat al-I‘lam, 1975).
----- *Hawla Kitabat al-Tarikh* (Baghdad, Dar al Huriyya lil Taba‘at, 1977).
----- *Al-Nathra fi al din wa al-turath* (Baghdad, Dar al Huriyya lil Taba‘at, 1978).
----- *Al-Turath al-‘Arabi wa al-Mu’asara* (Baghdad, Dar al Huriyya lil Taba‘at, 1980).
----- *Harakat ‘Adam al-Inhiyaz, Hakatha Nafhamuha*. (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1980).
----- *Nidhalna min ajl al-‘Arab wa al-Insaniyya*, (Baghdad: Dar al-Huriyya, 1980).
----- *I‘lan al-Qawmi al-Asda’ wa Afaq*, (Baghdad: Wizarat al Thaqafa wa al I‘lam Dairat al-I‘lam al Dakhli al-‘Ama, 1980).
----- *al-I‘lan al-Qawmi: Istijabat li-Duwa’i al-Masu’liya al-Qawmiyya* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1980).
----- *“al-‘Arab wa al-Dawr al-Qiyadi li-Risalat al-Islam” in Mukhtar al-Juz’ al-Tasi’a: al-Din wa al-Turath wa al-Tarikh* (Baghdad: Dar al Shu’un al-Thaqafiya al-‘Ama, 1988).
Hussein, Sahib. *al-I‘lam wa al-I‘lam al-Mudhad*, (Baghdad: Dar al-Huriyya, 1978).
Hussein, Harbi Musa and Qazanji, Fouad Yusuf. *Masadir Turath al Hizb al Ba‘th al Arabi al Ishtiraki* (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1977).

Kazem, Safinaz. *Yawmiyyat Baghdad 1975-1980*, (London: Open Press Publishers, 1984).

Mansour, Malik. *Wasa'il Imbiriyya fi Takhrīb al Thaqafi*, (Baghdad, Dar al Thawra lil-Sahafa wa al-Nashr, 1977).

Muhsin, 'Abd al Jabbar. *Bayn al Din wa Istighlal al-Din* (Baghdad: Dar al Rashid lil-Nashr, 1982).

Tawalbeh, Hasan Mohammad. *al-Muwatinun al-'Arab wa Tashri'at al-Thawra*, (Baghdad: Dar al Huriyya, 1980).

No Author. *al-'Iraq sura haya lil tamassuk al thabit bi- muntalaqat al-tahrir*, (Baghdad: al-Wizarat al-I'lam, Dar al Huriyya, 1975).

No Author. *Al-Insan Hadaf al Thawra: ma qadammatahu thawrat al sha'b li-jamahirha khilal al sanwat al 'ashir, 1968-1978*, (Beirut: al-mu'assisa al 'arabiyya lil-dirasat wa al nashr, 1978).

No Author. *al-'Iraq 'ashira sanawat min al-'ita' al-thawri*, (Lausanne: Sartec, 1978).

English Primary Sources

al-Kubba, Bassam. *Iraq and the Non-Aligned Movement* (Baghdad: Dar al-Ma'mun For Translation and Publishing, 1982).

Allawi, Jabbar Audah. *Television and Film in Iraq: Socio Political and Cultural Study, 1946-1980*. Unpublished Dissertation from the University of Michigan, 1983.

al-Nima, Sameer K. *The Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq: A Critical Analysis* unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia. 1982.

al Samarra'i, Nizar Fadhil. *The Iraq-Iran Conflict: A Reading between the Lines* (Baghdad: Dar al Ma'mun for Translation and Publishing, 1982).

Arab Ba'th Socialist Party. *Revolutionary Iraq, 1968-1973: The Political Report Adopted by the Eighth Regional Congress of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party-Iraq, January 1974*. (Baghdad: al-Hizb, 1974).

Arab Ba'th Socialist Party. *The Central Report of the Ninth Regional Congress, June 1982*. (Madrid: Unigraf, S.A, 1983).

Bakir, Kadhim Hussain. *Arabization of Higher Education in Iraq*, (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Bath, 1984).

Birmani, Turki Khabbaz. *The Impact of the Adult Educational Program on Socio-Economic Development in Rural Areas of Iraq as Perceived by Citizens Who Participated in the Program*, University of Northern Colorado Dissertation in Education, 1981.

Hussein, Saddam. *One Common Trench or Two Opposite Ones?* (Milan: Grafis S.p.A, 1977).

------. *President Hussein's Speech on National day (1981)*. (Baghdad: Dar al-Ma'mun for Translation and Publishing, 1981).

------. *Revolution and National Education*, (Baghdad, Dar al-Ma'mun for Translation and Publishing, 1981).

Huwaish, 'Isam Rashid. *The Strategy of National Development in Iraq*. (Baghdad: Dar al-Ma'mun for Translation and Publishing, 1981).

Iskander, Amir. *Saddam Hussein: The Fighter, the Thinker, and the Man* (Paris: Hachette Realities, 1980)

Kishtainy, Khalid. Hussein, Saddam "Women- One half of Our Society" in *Social and Foreign Affairs in Iraq*. (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

Matar, Fuad. *Saddam Hussein: The Man, The Cause, and The Future*, (London: Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, 1981).

Maroof, Taha Muhiddin. "An Assessment of the Non-Aligned Movement" *Third World Forum: Non-Aligned Movement: An Assessment by Iraq*. Colombo (Sri Lanka: Vantage Enterprises, 1976).

No Author. *Final Report: Conference on the Role of Women in Development of Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries: Baghdad, 6-13 May, 1979*. (Baghdad: General Federation of Iraqi Women, 1979).

Secondary Sources

- Abdel Malek, Anwar. *Contemporary Arab Thought* (London, UK.: Zed Books, 1983).
- Abdel-Malek, Anouar, and Anisujjamana. "Modernity in Crisis: The Resurgence of Tradition" in *Culture and Thought*. Transformation of the World Series; v. 3. (London: Macmillan Press, 1983).
- Abdullah, Thabit. *Dictatorship, Imperialism and Chaos: Iraq since 1989* (New York: Zed Books, 2006).
- Abdus Sabur, A.K.M. *Post-Brezhnev Soviet Policy Toward the Third World* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 1988).
- Abisaab, Rula Jurdi and Abisaab, Malek. *The Shi'ites of Lebanon: Modernism, Communism, and Hizbullah's Islamists* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014).
- Abrahamian, Ervand. "Ali Shariati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution" *MERIP*. Vol. 102 Jan/Feb 1982. <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer102/ali-shariati-ideologue-iranian-revolution>.
- Abu Jaber, Kamel. *The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party: History, Ideology, and Organization*. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1966).
- Achcar, Gilbert. *Eastern Cauldron: Islam, Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq in a Marxist Mirror*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004).
- . *Marxism, Orientalism, Cosmopolitanism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013).
- Adelman, Kenneth Lee. "The Recourse to Authenticity and Negritude in Zaire." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 13, no. 1 (1975): 134-39.
- al-Ali, Nadjie. "Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation" *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.26, no.4-5, 2005, pp.739-755.
- Al-Khafaji, 'Isam. "A Few Days After: State and Society in a post-Saddam Iraq" in *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change* (City: The Adelphi Papers, 2003).
- . *War as a Vehicle for the Rise and Demise of a State-Controlled Society*. (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, Research Center for International Political Economy and Foreign Policy Analysis, 1995).
- al-Musawi, Muhsin. *Reading Iraq: Culture and Power in Conflict* (New York: IB Tauris, 2006).
- al-Rubaiy, Abdul and al-Zubaidy, Khawla. "Knowledge Within Reach: Iraq's response to the illiteracy dilemma" *Educational Research Quarterly* vol.12 (4) 1990, 56.
- al-Sharqi, Amal. "The Emancipation of Iraqi Women" in *Iraq: The Contemporary State* edited by Tim Niblock (London: New York: Croom Helm; St. Martin's Press, 1983).
- Benedict Anderson, Benedict. *The Age of Globalization; Anarchists and the Anticolonial Imagination*. (London: Verso, 2005).
- Arango, Tim. "Advocating a War in Iraq, and Apologizing for What Came After" *New York Times* 5/13/16.
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/14/world/middleeast/iraq-war-kanan-makiya.html>
- 'Arawi, 'Abd Allah. *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).
- Ata Alla, Malumud. *Arab Struggle for Economic Independence: Problems of the Third World*. (Moscow: Progress, 1974).
- Atwood Lawrence, Mark. "The Rise and Fall of Nonalignment" in *The Cold War in the Third World* ed. By Robert J McMahon. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

- Ayubi, Nazih. *Overstating the Arab State*, (London: IB Tauris, 1996).
- Babakhan, Ali. "The Deportation of Shi'is During the Iran-Iraq War" in *Ayatollahs, Sufis, and Ideologues* ed. Faleh Abdul Jabbar (London,UK: Saqi Books, 2002).
- Baram, Amatzia. *Culture, History, and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'hist Iraq, 1968-89*, (St. Antony's/Macmillan 1991).
- . *Saddam Husayn and Islam, 1968-2003: Ba'hi Iraq from Secularism to Faith*. (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014).
- Bashkin, Orit. *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq*, (Stanford, CA; Stanford University Press, 2009).
- . "Hybrid Nationalisms: Watani and Qawmi Visions in Iraq under 'Abd al-Karim Qasim, 1958-1961" *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol,43, no.2 (May 2011), pp.293-312.
- Batatu, Hanna. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).
- . "Iraq's Underground Shi'a Movements: Characteristics, Causes and Prospects" *Middle East Journal* Vol. 35, No. 4 (Autumn, 1981), 578-594.
- Bengio, Ofra. "Iraq" *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980).
- . *Saddam's Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Berlin, Michael J. "Nonaligned Policy Paper at UN Creates Radical, Moderate Split" *The Washington Post* October 2, 1981.
- Bergman, Ronen. *Rise and Kill First*, (New York, NY: Random House Publishers, 2018).
- Bernhardsson, Magnus. *Reclaiming a Plundered Past Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).
- Bet Shlimon, Arbella. "Preservation or Plunder? ISIS Files and a history of heritage removal in modern Iraq" *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*. Online 5/8/2018 <https://www.merip.org/mero/mero050818>
- Bhola, H.S. *Campaigning for Literacy: Eight National Experiences of the Twentieth Century, with a memorandum to Decision-Makers*. (Paris: UNESCO, 1984).
- Boodrakas, Alex. "Total Literature, Total War: Foreign Aid, Area Studies, and the Weaponization of U.S. Research Libraries" *Diplomatic History*, September 21, 2018.
- Boullatta, Issa J. *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought*, (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990).
- Bozarslan, Hamit. "Rethinking the Baathist Period" in *Writing the History of Modern Iraq* edited by Tejel, Bocco, and Slugglett. (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2012).
- Brown, James D.J. "Oil Fueled? The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan" *Post-Soviet Affairs* vol. 29(1) 2013.
- Burns, William J. *Economic Aid and American Foreign Policy Toward Egypt, 1955-1981* (Albany: Suny Press, 1985). see <https://www.merip.org/mer/mer145/public-law-480-better-bomber>
- Chams el Dine, Cherine. "Qadisiyat Saddam: The Gamble that did not Pay Off" in *Writing the History of Modern Iraq* edited by Tejel, Bocco, and Slugglett. (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2012).

Chand, Attar. *The Revolutionary Arabs: A Study of the Arab Baath Socialist Movement*. (Delhi, India: Homeland Publications, 1981).

Chomsky, Aviva, Carr, Barry, and Smorkaloff, Pamela María. *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Latin America Readers, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

Cooper, Frederick. *Africa since 1940 : The past of the Present*. New Approaches to African History. (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Cordesman, Anthony and Hashim, Ahmed. *Iraq: Sanctions and Beyond* (City: Westview Press, 1996).

Dai, Yamao. "Transformation of the Islamic Da'wa Party in Iraq: From the Revolutionary Period to the Diaspora Era" *Asian and African Area Studies* vol.7 (2), 2008, pp.238-267.

Davis, Eric. *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Memory in Modern Iraq*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

Dawisha, Adeed. *Iraq: A Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

----- "Identity and Political Survival in Saddam's Iraq" *Middle East Journal*, vol.53, no.4, 1999 pp. 553-567.

Dewachi, Omar. *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq*, (Palo Alto, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2017).

Dishon, Daniel. "The Middle East in Perspective: A Review of 1980" *Middle East Contemporary Survey* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1981).

De Santisteban, Agustín Velloso. "Sanctions, War, Occupation and the De-Development of Education in Iraq." *International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue Internationale De L'Education*, vo.51 (1) 2005. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25054501>.

Doughterty, Beth K. and Ghareeb, Edmund K. "Kamali, Shafiq Al- (1929-1984)" *Historical Dictionary of Iraq*, 2nd edition. (Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, 2013).

Efrati, Noga. "Productive or Reproductive? The Roles of Iraqi Women During the Iran-Iraq War" *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.35 (2) 1999.

Emadi, Hafizullah. "China and Iraq: Patterns of Interaction, 1960-1992." *Economic and Political Weekly* 29, no. 53 (1994): 3316-317. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4402191>

Entessar, Nader. *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992).

Farouk-Sluglett, Marion and Sluglett, Peter. *Iraq since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990).

Eskandar, Saad. "Minerva Research Initiative: Searching for the truth or Denying Iraqis the right to know the truth?" *Social Science Research Council*. 2008.

<http://essays.ssrc.org/minerva/2008/10/29/eskander/>

Flamini, Roland. "Saddam Hussein in 1978: interview" United Press International. web. <https://www.upi.com/Saddam-Hussein-in-1978-interview/86931032023250/>

Foucault, Michel. *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the College De France 1975-1976* (New York, NY.: Picador, 2003).

----- *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at College De France* (New York, NY.: Picador, 2003).

Franzén, Johan. *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism before Saddam*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

Freedman, Robert O. *The Middle East after the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon*. 1st ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

Fukuyama, Francis. *The Soviet Union and Iraq Since 1968*: (Washington DC: Prepared for the United States Air Force by RAND, 1980).

Genat, Melisande. "From Agrarian Experiments to Population Displacement: Iraqi Kurdish Collective Towns in the Context of Socialist Villagization of the 1970s" in *Disciplinary Spaces: Spatial Control, Forced Assimilation, and Narratives of Progress since the 19th Century*. Edited by Andrea Fischer Tahrir and Sophie Wagenhofer, (New York, NY; Columbia University Press, 2017).

Ghareeb, Edmund. "Domestic Politics and Development" in *Sources of Domestic and Foreign Policy in Iraq* ed. Z. Michael Szaz (Washington DC, American Foreign Policy Institute, 1986).

Goldberg, David Theo. *Are We All Postracial Yet?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).

Graham, John A. "The Non-Aligned Movement after the Havana Summit" *Journal of International Affairs*, vol.34, no.1, International Relations of Developing Countries, (Spring/Summer) 1980, pp.153-160.

Grandin, Greg. *Kissinger's Shadow: The Long Reach of America's Most Controversial Statesman*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2015).

Guarasci, Bridget. *Reconstructing Life: Environment, Expertise, and Political Power in Iraq's Marshes 2003-2007* (University of Michigan Dissertation: 2011).

Gunter, Michael M. *The Kurds of Iraq: Tragedy and Hope* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

Habti, Driss. "Debating Islam, Tradition, and Modernity in Contemporary Arab-Islamic Thought: Perspectives of Hassan Hanafi and Abdallah Laroui" in *Debates on Civilization in the Muslim World, Critical Perspectives on Islam and Modernity*" edited by Lutfi Sunar. (London: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Haddad, Fanar. *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity*, (New York, NY; Columbia University Press, 2011).

Haim, Sylvia. *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962).

Harris, Shane and Aid, Matthew M. "Exclusive: CIA Files Prove America Helped Saddam as he Gassed Iran" *Foreign Policy*, August 26, 2013. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/26/exclusive-cia-files-prove-america-helped-saddam-as-he-gassed-iran/>

Helfont, Samuel. *Compulsion in Religion: The Authoritarian Roots of Saddam Hussein's Islam*. (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2015).

Hiltermann, Joost. "1988 Anfal Campaign in Iraqi Kurdistan" *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, accessed from faculty.washington.edu/goldberg/The-1988-Anfal-Campaign-in-Iraqi-Kurdistan.pdf

Hinnebusch, Raymond. "Syria-Iraq Relations: State Construction and Deconstruction and the MENA States System" *LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series, no. 04*, October 2014.

Hobsbawm, E. J. and Ranger, T. O. *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Hopwood, Derek. *Syria 1945-1986: Politics and Society*. (London: Routledge, 1986).

Howe, Marvin. "Iraq Concerned over Security in Persian Gulf" *New York Times*, January 17, 1980.

Ibrahim, Youssef. "Arabs Smooth Way to Resume Ties with Egypt". *New York Times*. 11/12/1987. <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/12/world/arabs-smooth-way-to-resume-ties-with-egypt.html>.

Ismael, Tareq Y. "Ideology in Iraqi Foreign Policy" in *The Iran-Iraq War: New Weapons, Old Conflicts* ed. By Tahir-Kheli, Shirin and Ayubi, Shaheen. (New York: Praeger, 1983).

----- . *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party in Iraq*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

----- . "Al-Menbar Group and the Iraqi Communist Movement" *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* vol. 7 (2) 2013.

Issa, Jinan Hatem and Jamil, Hazri. "Overview of the Education System in Contemporary Iraq" *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol 14 (3) 2010. 360-368.

Izady, M.R. "The Kurdish Predicament" in *Iran, Iraq, and the Legacies of War*, (New York: Palgrave, 2004).

Jabbar, Faleh. *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq*. (London: Saqi, 2003).

----- . "The Arab Communist Parties in Search of an Identity" in *Post-Marxism and the Middle East*. (London: Saqi Books, 1997).

----- . "Why The Uprisings Failed" *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) May/June 1992, vol. 22 (176)* <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer176/why-uprisings-failed>

Jackson, Richard L. *The Non-aligned, the UN, and the Superpowers*. (New York: Praeger Press, 1983).

Kalinovsky, Artemy. "The Soviet Union and the Iran-Iraq War" in *The Iran-Iraq War: New International Perspectives* edited by Nigel Ashton and Bryan R. Gibson. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

Kassab, Suzanne. *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010)

Khalidi, Rashid. *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009).

Kienle, Eberhard. *Ba' th v. Ba' th: The Conflict between Syria and Iraq, 1968-1989*. (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 1990).

Kirkendall, Andrew. *Paolo Freire and the Cold War Politics of Literacy*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

Kirmanj, Sherko. *Identity and Nation in Iraq* (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013).

Khadduri, Majid. *Socialist Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics since 1968*, (Washington D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1978).

LeVine, Victor T. and Luke, Timothy W. *The Arab-African Connection: Political and Economic Realities* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979).

Lucas, Christopher J. "Mass Mobilization for Illiteracy Eradication in Iraq" in *Convergence: A journal of International Adult Education*, Vol 15 (3) 1982.

Makiya, Kanan. *Republic of Fear: The inside Story of Saddam's Iraq*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989).

----- . *The Monument: Art and Vulgarity in Saddam Hussein's Iraq*. (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

Maroun, Ibrahim. *L'Economie Petroliere pour l'economie de guerre permanente* (Beirut : L'Universite Libanaise, section des etudes economiques, 1986).

Marr, Phebe. *The Modern History of Iraq* third ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012).

Marx, Karl. *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, (New York: International Publishers, 1963).

Mehran, Golnar. "Social Implications of Literacy in Iran" *Comparative Education Review* vol. 36, (2) 1992.

Migdal, Joel. *Strong Societies, Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

Mitchell, Carol and Armstrong, James. "Understanding the World: The Library's Operations Overseas" *Information Bulletin*, May 2005. <https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0505/overseas.html>

Montgomery, Bruce. "U.S. Seizure, Exploitation, and Restitution of Saddam Hussein's Archive of Atrocity" *Journal of American Studies*, Vol.48, issue 2, (2014), pp.559-593.

Moss Helms, Christine. *Iraq: Eastern Flank of the Arab World* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1984).

Mottahedeh, Roy. "The Shu'ubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran" *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.7, No.2 (Apr. 1976), pp.161-182.

Mufti, Hania and Bouckaert, Peter. "Iraq: Forcible Expulsion of Ethnic Minorities" *Human Rights Watch*, March 2003, Vol 15, issue 3. https://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/iraq0303/Kirkuk0303-01.htm#P119_26745

Murphy, Kim. "Fatal Iraqi-Egypt Clash in Baghdad confirmed" *Los Angeles Times*, Nov 20, 1989. http://articles.latimes.com/1989-11-20/news/mn-67_1_iraq-egypt-baghdad.

Nakash, Yitzhak. *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Natali, Denise. *The Kurds and the State*. (Syracuse University Press, 2005).

Olson, William J. "Iraqi Policy and the Impact of the Iraq-Iran War" in *The Middle East After the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon* edited by Robert O. Freedman 1st ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

Osman, Khalil. *Sectarianism in Iraq: The Making of State and Nation since 1920* (London: Routledge, 2015).

Prashad, Vijay. *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. (New York: The New Press, 2007)

Ramazani, R.K. "The Impact of Khomeini's Iran" in *The Middle East after the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon* edited by Robert O. Freedman (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 1986).

Rassam, Amal. "Political Ideology and Women in Iraq: Legislation and Cultural Constraints" *Journal of Developing Societies*, vol.8 Jan-Apr. 1992, 85-86.

Rivlin, Paul, *Arab Economies in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Rizk Khoury, Dina. *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

----- "The 1991 Intifada in Three Keys: Writing the History of Violence" in *Writing the History of Modern Iraq: Historiographical and Political Challenges* by Jordi Tejel, Riccardo Bocco, Hamit Bozarslan, and Peter Sluglett, (Singapore: World Scientific Publishers, 2012).

Rohde, Achim. *State-society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship*. (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2010).

----- "Revisiting the Republic of Fear: Lessons for Research on Contemporary Iraq" in *Iraq between Occupations* edited by Baram, Amatzia, Rohde, A. and Zeidel, R. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

----- "Echoes from Below? Talking Democracy in Ba'thist Iraq." *Middle Eastern Studies* 53, no. 4 (2017): 551-70.

Salloum, Saad. *Ezidis in Iraq: Memory, Beliefs, and Current Genocide* (Baghdad: CEI, 2016),

- Sassoon, Joseph. *Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
- Senghor, Leopold Sedar. "Negritude." *Indian Literature* 17, no. 1/2 (1974): 269-73. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23329885>.
- Shaery-Eisenlohr, Roschanack. *Shi'ite Lebanon: Transnational Religion and the Making of National Identities*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
- Shemesh, Haim. *Soviet-Iraqi Relations 1968-1988: In the Shadow of the Iraq-Iran Conflict*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992).
- Singham, A. W. and Hune, Shirley. *Non-alignment in an Age of Alignments*. (London: Zed Books, 1986).
- Smolansky, Bettie M. and Smolansky, Oles M. *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).
- Sousa, Alya. "The Eradication of Illiteracy in Iraq" in *Iraq: The Contemporary State* edited by Tim Niblock (London/ New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).
- Styan, David. *Franco-Iraqi Relations and Fifth Republic Foreign Policy, 1959-1990*. PhD Dissertation, London School of Economics, 1999.
- Temko, Ned. "Surprise Iraq Plan may help US in the Middle East" *Christian Science Monitor*, February 15, 1980.
- Theobald, Robin and Jawad, Sa'ad. "Problems of Rural Development in an Oil-Rich Economy 1958-1975" in *Iraq: The Contemporary State* edited by Tim Niblock (London: New York: Croom Helm; St. Martin's Press, 1983).
- Tripp, Charles. *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- van Hensbroek, Peter Boele. *Political Discourses in African Thought: 1860 to the Present*. (London: Praeger, 1999).
- Walter, Alissa. *The Ba'ath Party in Baghdad: State-Society Relations Through Wars, Sanctions, and Authoritarian Rule, 1950-2003*, (Georgetown University PhD Dissertation, 2018).
- Wedeen, Lisa. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- Weiner, Tim. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2007).
- Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- Woods, Kevin M., Palkki, David D. and Stout, Mark. *The Saddam Tapes: The Inner Workings of a Tyrant's Regime, 1978-2001*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Wright, Marcia. "Behind Iraq's Bold Bid" *New York Times*, October 26, 1980.
- Zubaida, Sami. *Beyond Islam: A New Understanding of the Middle East*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
- No Author. "Iraq Accused of Trying to Wipe out Kurds" *New York Times*, 15 January, 1977.