IRAQ 1963: THE SHORT RULE OF THE BAᶜTH

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In the circumstances of a military dictatorship, there was no alternative for a civilian group other than to persuade a faction of young officers opposed to ᶜAbdalkarīm Qāsim's rule to raise an open military rebellion, even at the risk of provoking civil war. The group that was ready to influence officers likely to take action was, of course, the *Baᶜth Party*. Its members had the reputation of not being afraid to face danger in their struggle against military dictatorship ever since their unsuccessful attempt on ᶜAbdalkarīm Qāsim's life in 1959. When they finally succeeded in carrying out one of these plots, of which the margin of success was not very great, on 8 February 1963, the army turned to them to govern the country. Once in power, they had a golden opportunity of realizing the goals of their party. Political developments in the period between February and November 1963 were extremely confused, and consisted largely of different groups manoeuvring for power against a background of indiscriminate murder and terror. However, by June, ᶜAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saᶜdī had lost the Ministry of Interior, his faction had quarrelled with both Jamāl ᶜAbdannāṣir and the Iraqi *Nāṣirists*, and fighting had broken out again in Kurdistan. He now faced increasing hostility both from other *Baᶜthists* in the army and from his *Baᶜthist* colleagues in Damascus, who were also becoming increasingly critical of some of his methods. On 18 November 1963 ᶜAbdassalām ᶜĀrif, with the support of the armed forces, moved to exercise personal control over the country.

Key words: the Ramaḍān revolt; the *Baᶜth Party*; pan-Arabism; Arab-unity talks; the Kurdish question

During the armed revolt against the regime of ᶜAbdalkarīm Qāsim on 8 February 1963 (the 14 Ramaḍān revolt) a National Council of the Revolutionary Command (NCRC) was set up by the *Baᶜth Party* to replace the ᶜAbdalkarīm Qāsim Government. The NCRC was composed of *Baᶜthists* and Arab nationalist officers.[1] The membership of this council was never disclosed to the public and

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[1] The NCRC members were: (military) Staff Marshal ᶜAbdassalām ᶜĀrif, Brigadier Aḥmad Ḥasan

some of the members were not known even to high authorities. The NCRC was proclaimed to the public as a self-appointed body, presumably deriving its validity from the de facto control of authority by the military, which replaced the extinguished regime by force of arms. No mention was made of the *Baʿth party's* in the proclamation to the Iraqi people.[2]

At this stage the NCRC disclosed no new revolutionary principles, for its main purpose was to turn public opinion against ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim, who had allegedly betrayed the goals of the July Revolution. The Ramaḍān revolt was, therefore, regarded as the vindication of the July 1958 Revolution. The NCRC abolished the Sovereignty Council and at ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī's recommendation, who was then secretary of the *Baʿth* Iraqi regional command, appointed ʿAbdassalām ʿĀrif, whose name was identified with pan-Arabism, as temporary President of the Republic, pending the establishment of a permanent constitutional regime. But the choice turned out to be unfortunate for the party.[3] The initial response to the new revolutionary regime was favourable; but all opposed to pan-Arabs, especially the Communists, naturally saw grave danger to their very existence in the downfall of ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim. The Communists had often been subjected to restrictive measures and were by no means fully satisfied with ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim's methods, but they seem to have realized that if ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim were ever exposed to danger caused by a pan-Arab uprising, they should come to his rescue by rallying the elements opposed to pan-Arabs to his support. Thus, as soon as tanks and armoured cars were seen in the Rashīd Street heading towards ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim's headquarters, the Communists swiftly entered the battle against the pan-Arabs.[4]

From the beginning of the Ramaḍān revolt, the *Baʿth Party* preferred to remain in the background and to guide the new Government from behind the scenes rather than to come to the forefront and take direct responsibility for public actions. It no doubt tried to avoid possible opposition from religious and moderate nationalist groups until it had overcome a possible Communist

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al-Bakr, Staff Lt. Gen. Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh, Staff Maj. Gen. Ṭāhir Yaḥyā, Staff Col. ʿAbdalkarīm Muṣṭafā Naṣrat, Staff Col. Khālid Makkī al-Hāshimī, Air Staff Brigadier Ḥardān ʿAbdalghaffār al-Tikrītī, Staff Brigadier ʿAbdalghanī ar-Rāwī, Staff Lt. Col. ʿAbdassattār ʿAbdallaṭīf, Staff Major Anwar ʿAbdalqādir al-Ḥadīthī; (civilian) ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī, Ḥāzim Jawād, Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shabīb, Ḥamdī ʿAbdalmajīd, Karīm Shintāf, Muḥsin ash-Shaykh Rāḍī, ʿAbdalḥamīd al-Khalkhāl, Hānī al-Fukaykī. In BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: a Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Baʿthists and Free Officers*, pp. 1004-1007.

[2] For text of the proclamation of 8 February 1963 see *al-Jamāhīr*, 12 Feb. 1963; AḤMAD, Ibrāhīm Khalīl and Jaʿfar ʿAbbās ḤUMAYDĪ: *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq al-muʿāṣir*. [Contemporary History of Iraq], p. 222.

[3] ABU JABER, Kamel S. *The Arab Baʿth Socialist Party*, p. 68.

[4] KHADDURI, Majid. *Republican Iraq. A Study in Iraqi Politics since the Revolution of 1958*, p. 194.

counter-uprising.[5] Therefore the young and unknown *Ba{c}thists* wished to have an older, well-established figure at the head of the regime, preferably one satisfactory to Jamāl {c}Abdannāṣir. It was for this reason that Colonel {c}Abdassalām {c}Ārif's co-operation was deemed essential to win the support of conservative elements.[6] The NCRC, composed of the *Ba{c}thists* as well as others, was designed to serve as the link between the Government and the *Ba{c}th Party*. The party hoped that the non-*Ba{c}thist* members of the NCRC, including {c}Abdassalām {c}Ārif himself, might eventually become members of the *Ba{c}th Party*. The leadership of the party, entrusted to the Regional Command, was ultimately controlled by a Regional Congress, which could discuss all matters of regional concern to be carried out by the party's representatives in the Government.

From the beginning of the Ramaḍān revolt, the NCRC embarked on sweeping change in the bureaucracy in the civil and military ranks. Staff Colonel {c}Abdassalām {c}Ārif was made president and promoted to field marshal, although in the minds of the party members he was to be mainly a figurehead.[7] Staff Brigadier Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, was appointed prime minister. {c}Alī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa{c}dī, was named deputy prime minister and minister of interior and in his capacity as leader of the *Ba{c}th Party* in Iraq, he became the most influential and powerful member of the three at the time, although his authority did not go uncontested. {c}Abdassalām {c}Ārif, as head of state, and his vice-president Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, instantly issued orders allowing officers whom {c}Abdalkarīm Qāsim had dismissed to return to service, and placing on the retired list officers who had been closely identified with his regime.[8] Military appointments were given to men who had participated in the coup. The NCRC held the powers to appoint and remove cabinets and to assume the powers of the commander in chief of the armed forces. The membership in the NCRC was initially kept secret, but it was clearly dominated by the *Ba{c}th Party*, who now held all the command posts of power.

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[5] KHAYŪN, {c}Alī. *Thawrat 8 shubāṭ 1963 fī al-{c}Irāq*. [The Revolution of 8th February in Iraq], p. 170.

[6] *Niḍāl al-Ba{c}th. Al-mu'tamar al-qawmī ath-thāmin, nīsān 1965*. Documentary Record. Vol. 9. [The Struggle of the *Ba{c}th*. The Eighth National Congress, April 1965], p. 60.

[7] KHAYŪN, {c}Alī. *Thawrat 8 shubāṭ 1963 fī al-{c}Irāq*, pp. 169-170.

[8] Some of the officers, like Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, Ṣāliḥ Mahdī {c}Ammāsh, {c}Abdassattār {c}Abdallaṭīf, and Maḥmūd Shīt Khaṭṭāb, were given Cabinet seats; others were reinstated to fill high military posts. Staff Brigadier Ṭāhir Yaḥyā was appointed Chief of the General Staff, Colonel Rashīd Muṣliḥ Military Governor-General, Colonel Midḥat {c}Abdallāh Director of Military Operations, and Colonel {c}Ārif {c}Abdarrazzāq commander of the air force. {c}Abdarraḥmān Muḥammad {c}Ārif, President {c}Abdassalām {c}Ārif's brother, who had been retired before, was also recalled to service as commander of the fifth division. In KHADDURI, Majid: *Republican Iraq*, p. 199.

However, there were many unresolved conflicts amongst those who had carried out the coup. These differences were to some degree personal, made more rancorous by the narrow conspiratorial world of clandestine activity in the preceding years. They were also representative of opposing ideas about the identity and the direction of Iraq itself, many of which had been suppressed during the previous years for the sake of common opposition to ᶜAbdalkarīm Qāsim and the forces he was taken to represent. Once the *Baᶜthists* and pan-Arabs had achieved power, disagreements rapidly developed concerning the direction of the state. Unity of purpose gave way to rifts not only between *Baᶜthists* and non-*Baᶜthists*, but also among the *Baᶜthists* themselves as their differing views about Iraq's future and of their place in it became apparent.[9]

Appointed by the NCRC, most of the Cabinet members were nominated at the instance of *Baᶜthist* leaders.[10] This trend was also noticeable in the composition of the NCRC and in the distribution of high ranking posts. The Cabinet, like the NCRC, was composed on the whole of young men in civil or military ranks. There were possibly more *Shīᶜī* and Kurdish ministers than before.[11] The NCRC's powers were confined to legislation and decisions relating to general policy. Apart from legislative power, a difficult problem arose concerning decision-making, namely whether the Cabinet would merely implement decisions by the NCRC or had the power to make decisions independently. The decisions of the NCRC were communicated to the Cabinet by Anwar ᶜAbdalqādir al-Ḥadīthī, the officer who acted as secretary and served as a link between the NCRC and the Government.[12] Most of the members were

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[9] TRIPP, C. *A History of Iraq*, p. 171.

[10] The members of the Cabinet were: Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, Prime Minister; ᶜAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saᶜdī, Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior; Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ᶜAmmāsh, Defence; Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shabīb, Foreign Affairs; ᶜAbdassattār ᶜAbdallaṭīf, Communications; Dr. ᶜIzzat Muṣṭafā, Health; Mahdī ad-Dawlāᶜī, Justice; Staff Brigadier Maḥmūd Shīt Khaṭṭāb, Municipalities; Bābā ᶜAlī, Agriculture; Dr. Abdalᶜazīz al-Wattārī, Oil; Dr. Ahmad ᶜAbdassattār al-Juwarī, Education; Ṣāliḥ Kubba, Finance; ᶜAbdassattār ᶜAlī al-Ḥusayn, Settlement; Shukrī Ṣāliḥ Zakī, Commerce; Dr. Saᶜdūn Ḥammādī, Agrarian Reform; ᶜAbdalḥamīd al-Khalkhāl, Social Affairs; Dr. Muṣāriᶜ ar-Rāwī, Guidance; Dr. ᶜAbdalkarīm al-ᶜAlī, Planning; Brig. Nājī Ṭālib, Industry; Brigadier Fu'ād ᶜĀrif and Ḥāzim Jawād, Ministers of State. On 13 May Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr formed a new Cabinet, making these changes: ᶜAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saᶜdī became Minister for Presidency and Guidance, Ḥāzim Jawād for Interior, and Muḥammad Jawād al-ᶜUbūsī for Finance, replacing Ṣāliḥ Kubba. Muṣāriᶜ ar-Rāwī, relinquishing Guidance, became Minister of State for Union Affairs. In: KHAYŪN, ᶜAlī: *Thawrat 8 shubāṭ 1963 fī al-ᶜIrāq*, p. 149; BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, pp. 1004-1007.

[11] There were five *Shīᶜī* ministers: Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shabīb, Ṣāliḥ Kubba, ᶜAbdalḥamīd al-Khalkhāl, Nājī Ṭālib, and Ḥāzim Jawād. The Kurdish ministers were Bābā ᶜAlī, Shukrī Ṣāliḥ Zakī, and Fu'ād ᶜĀrif. In KHADDURI, Majid. *Republican Iraq*, p. 198.

[12] It is said that even the Ministry of Finance, which had to pay the salaries of the Council, was ignorant of the composition of the Council and Anwar ᶜAbdalqādir al-Ḥadīthī had to collect the salaries and hand them over personally to the members. In KHADDURI, Majid. *Republican Iraq*,

very young, either in their 20s or early 30s, and inexperienced in public affairs. Moreover, these young men represented the radical elements of the new generation and almost all came from poor classes. During the first two months, the *Ba'th* exercised greater influence in decision-making, but later the non-Ba'thist members began to assert their influence and dominate the NCRC.

In addition to the army, one of the pillars of the *Ba'th* regime was the National Guard (al-Ḥaras al-qawmī), a civil militia designed to secure public support for the Ramaḍān revolt and to guard against the elements opposed to it, in particular, to counter Communist attacks on pan-Arabs and other sympathizers with the new regime. It was established on the same day as the military uprising (8 February) by the second proclamation of the NCRC to the Iraqi people.[13] Staff Colonel 'Abdalkarīm Muṣṭafā Naṣrat was appointed its first commander only to be few weeks later replaced by Colonel Mundhir al-Windāwī. Initially, all factions could agree on the need to eliminate the supporters of the previous regime and a savage campaign of arrests, torture and execution was unleashed chiefly against the *Iraqi Communist Party* and its sympathizers. At its most ferocious in the early weeks following the coup when the *Ba'thists* feared a communist challenge, the campaign continued remorselessly for much of 1963, claiming an estimated 3,000 victims. The relatively public nature of the Communists and communist-inspired activity during the five preceding years, and the array of their enemies, ranging from *Ba'thists* to Arab nationalists to the emerging Islamist organizations, made the party and its sympathizers highly vulnerable.

The National Guard was formed to check the power of the Communists and other opponents of the *Ba'th Party* on the streets. It had been issued with weapons during the coup d'état and grew rapidly into an armed militia numbering over 30,000 members, accountable only to the leadership of the *Ba'th Party*.[14] Some of the *Ba'th* leaders tried to use the National Guard as an agent of their party to spread its propaganda rather than to perform police functions. They saw in the Guard's assault on the Communists and their supporters the grave danger of discouraging liberal elements sympathetic with socialism from co-operation with the *Ba'th*. When the Regional Command drew the attention of the NCRC to this situation, it was too late to do anything about it. Cases occurred of innocent persons, who had nothing to do with politics, being arrested for personal reasons, and of females allegedly suspect of

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p. 197.
[13] AḤMAD, Ibrāhīm Khalīl and ḤUMAYDĪ, Ja'far 'Abbās. *Tārīkh al-'Irāq al-mu'āṣir*, p. 222.
[14] On the day of the coup (8 February) this force counted no more than 5 000 men, but in May it had grown to 21 000 and by August to 34 000. In BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, pp. 1011-1012.

Communist leanings being raped.[15] These outrages disgraced the organization and reflected on the integrity of *Ba'th* members.[16] The damage had already been done, since ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī, to whom the Guard's command was ultimately responsible as Minister of Interior, had unwittingly let the Guard loose on the Communists, although he later discovered his error and tried unsuccessfully to reconcile *Ba'thists* and Communists.

The *Ba'thists* soon showed their ruthlessness in rooting out supporters of ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim and persecuting the Communists. The property of almost a hundred of ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim's followers was frozen, and many of his ministers were arrested. Almost all of the former ministers and leading government officials were rounded up and interned pending trial for irregularities or corruption.[17] Their personal assets were confiscated or taken in custody, and some of them served short or long-term imprisonment. Personnel known for outspoken leftist views suffered not only the loss of their posts, but also internment and persecution by the National Guard. The execution of Communists continued for most of the *Ba'th* regime's existence. Communists were unofficially sought out in their neighbourhoods, arrested, and sometimes assassinated. These actions, which continued a vendetta begun earlier by the Communists, boded ill for the conduct of politics in the future.[18] The persecution of Communists also caused a sharp deterioration in relations with the Soviet Union. The Soviet media attacked the *Ba'th Party* with *Pravda* describing a "wave of terror" in Baghdad.[19] Soviet economic aid slowed to a trickle. Arms deliveries virtually ceased, a factor that hampered the party in its subsequent war with the Kurds and helped weaken the regime.

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[15] *Niḍāl al-Baʿth. Al-muʾtamar al-qawmī ath-thāmin, nīsān 1965*, Vol. 9, p. 68.

[16] In April, Michel ʿAflaq privately reprimanded the Baʿth leaders in Iraq for deviating so far from the party's approved doctrine of "positive neutralism and for following "a policy of murder and torture". In *Arab Political Documents 1963 – 1965*. 3 vols, p. 26. Official criticisms of the National Guard's excesses see *Niḍāl al-Baʿth. Al-muʾtamar al-qawmī ath-thāmin, nīsān 1965*, Vol. 9, p. 68.

[17] On 9 February 1963, while fighting between Baʿthists and ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim's forces was still going on, ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim's leading ministers were arrested and interned in ar-Rashīd Camp pending trial. Preliminary cross-examination showed no personal irregularities, although the personal estates of some ministers, like Muḥammad Ḥadīd, Minister of Finance, were confiscated. All ministers and high-ranking officials, however, were in due time released. Some remained under arrest from 3 to 6 months, especially those close to ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim, like Muḥyiddīn ʿAbdalḥamīd and Muḥammad Ḥadīd, but others, like Muṣṭafā ʿAlī, who had resigned from the Cabinet, were released after one month's internment. Even after their release, these ministers were subjected to police surveillance for another 3-5 months. Cit. in KHADDURI, Majid. *Republican Iraq*, p. 200.

[18] BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, pp. 982-991.

[19] LENCZOWSKI, G. *Soviet Advances in the Middle East*, p. 137.

The Ramaḍān revolt was quickly identified as a *Baᶜthist* Revolution, although its leaders tried to give the impression that it was a vindication of the July Revolution. Some of the *Baᶜthist* radicals openly made it known that they wished to carry out the *Baᶜth* aims of Arab union, popular democracy, and socialism at the earliest possible moment. These objectives became clear when the National Command of the *Baᶜth* sent congratulatory messages from Damascus stressing *Baᶜth* principles. In his message to President ᶜAbdassalām ᶜĀrif on 12 February 1963, Michel ᶜAflaq, leader of the *Baᶜth Party*, expressed the hope that the new regime, "the daughter of the July Revolution", would achieve the aims of that Revolution. Encouraged by this message the *Baᶜth* radical members sought to transform the Ramaḍān revolt into an Arab Socialist Revolution.[20] However, some, especially those who assumed Cabinet responsibilities, saw grave danger in embodying all the goals of the *Baᶜth* in the Government programme and advised patience until the regime could be consolidated. They were particularly concerned about the wisdom of carrying out socialist measures which might arouse the hostility of conservatives with vested interests. Differences of opinion called for a discussion of the matter at a meeting of the Regional Command at which Michel ᶜAflaq, who visited Baghdad in the middle of February, took an active part. A compromise seems to have been reached in which the goals of the party – Arab unity, freedom, and socialism – were reaffirmed in principle; but it was agreed that a transitional programme (al-minhāj al-marḥalī) should be adopted which would prepare the country for the acceptance of *Baᶜth* principles.[21]

The transitional programme, announced to the public on 15 March 1963, centred on the theme that the Ramaḍān revolt was to fulfil the goals of the July Revolution which ᶜAbdalkarīm Qāsim had abandoned under the influence of reactionary and opportunist elements. The *Baᶜth* principles, which the Ramaḍān revolt intended to carry out, it was held, could not be achieved at once, but only step by step. In particular the principle of socialism, the most controversial of all, was a case in point, but measures beneficial to workers and peasants would be considered. The industrialization and economic development of Iraq should be stressed first, in which the role of the middle class – the national bourgeoisie – was to be recognized.[22] This step, it was argued, might help towards an

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[20] KHADDURI, Majid. *Republican Iraq*, p. 201.

[21] AḤMAD, Ibrāhīm Khalīl and ḤUMAYDĪ, Jaᶜfar ᶜAbbās. *Tārīkh al-ᶜIrāq al-muᶜāṣir*, p. 223.

[22] The best thing for the patriotic bourgeoisie to do today [stated the transitional programme] is to join with the people according to the principles of the popular democratic Revolution and sacrifice its own interests to the interests of the Revolution. The logic of history and the higher interest of the nation make this an absolute duty. The patriotism of the bourgeoisie will be measured by the extent to which it fulfils this inevitable duty, supports the Revolution and relinquishes all its pretensions to the leadership of the country. Cit. in KHADDURI, Majid. *Republican Iraq*, p. 202.

eventual establishment of socialism. By such an approach the *Ba'th* leaders sought to appease their opponents until the regime could be consolidated. The transitional programme, therefore, grew essentially out of a realization of the practical difficulties involved rather than necessarily out of a desire to abandon basic principles in order to remain in power. Personal differences, to be sure, may have encouraged some to follow this line of reasoning; these differences, however, were not the real cause of internal schism, concerning which more will be said.[23]

Some members of the Regional Command pressed for an immediate adoption of socialistic measures regarded as essential to the party, and issued slogans which conflicted with the interim programme. The contradiction between official acts and public statements had the apparent effect of creating confusion and gave the impression that the *Ba'th* Government had not yet made up its mind as to what it wanted, but in reality the causes went deeper than that. No less significant was the lack of co-ordination among *Ba'th* members who held responsible positions.[24] More specifically, the *Ba'th* officers, who had been instrumental in carrying out the Ramaḍān revolt, remained out of touch with the party leaders. Moreover, the military officers who had been included in the NCRC were neither elected by the *Ba'th* officers nor by the Regional Command, but by an invitation of one or two of the civilian leaders. Many non-*Ba'thist* officers were appointed to important military commands.[25] The *Ba'thist* officers naturally resented the manner in which they were ignored and their dissatisfaction discouraged them from continued support of the *Ba'th* Government.

Although one of the principles of the *Ba'th* constitution was socialism, its first actions in government appeared relatively conservative.[26] No socialist measures were passed. On the contrary, Prime minister Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr assured business interests that the government did not intend to nationalize any industries. *Ba'th* foreign policy was equally moderate. Relations with the West, specifically the USA, were strengthened, and ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim's policy toward the UAR (which no longer included Syria) and Kuwait was reversed. Many suspected the USA and Kuwait of having encouraged the coup – the former because of ʿAbdalkarīm Qāsim's Communist proclivities; the latter because of his Kuwaiti stand.[27] At any rate, the *Ba'th* described his attitude

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[23] The rest of the programme dealt with internal reforms, especially gradual industrialization of the country and agricultural reform. In foreign policy, it stressed positive neutrality. Arab union was, of course, regarded as overriding in principle. In AHMAD, Ibrāhīm Khalīl and ḤUMAYDĪ, Jaʿfar ʿAbbās. *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq al-muʿāṣir*, p. 223.

[24] KHAYŪN, ʿAlī: *Thawrat 8 shubāṭ 1963 fī al-ʿIrāq*, p. 155.

[25] DEVLIN, J. F. *The Ba'th Party. A History from Its Origins to 1966*, p. 260.

[26] MARR, P. *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 186.

[27] Al-Ahrám, Cairo, 27 September 1963.

toward Kuwait as erroneous, and in October, Iraq recognized Kuwait's independence. A few days after the revolution, Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shabīb, Iraq's foreign minister, travelled to Cairo for talks with the Egyptians and Syrians on federation.

Arab union was one of the foremost articles in the *Baᶜth* programme, but the first proclamation of the new Government made no specific commitment to Arab union save the denunciation of ᶜAbdalkarīm Qāsim's isolationist policy which separated Iraq from the "procession of Arabism". Ṭālib Shabīb, Minister of Foreign Affairs, made the more explicit statement in a press conference that Iraq was ready to co-operate in achieving union with other Arab states that had similar goals. The reference to states having similar goals was construed to mean the UAR, although Ṭālib Shabīb made it clear that Iraq had not yet entered into negotiations with any Arab country.[28] It was not until ᶜAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saᶜdī, Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior, went to Egypt to participate in the anniversary of the establishment of the UAR that a public statement about Iraq's willingness to join with Egypt to achieve Arab union was made. Jamāl ᶜAbdannāṣir welcomed Iraq's willingness to join the UAR, but he seemed to have been in no hurry to bring Iraq into the framework of a union with Egypt, nor was the Iraqi *Baᶜth* Government ready to enter into formal agreement before it had consolidated its position within the country.

However, all this changed with the *Baᶜthist* coup d'état in Syria. On 8 March the Syrian *Baᶜth* was elevated to power by a group of army officers who had been opposed to Syria's secession from the UAR through a military coup. It issued a proclamation denouncing secession and called for "putting Arab Syria back on her true way – the way of union, freedom and socialism".[29] Two days later an Iraqi delegation, led by ᶜAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saᶜdī, arrived in Damascus for an exchange of views on possible co-operation between the two branches of the *Baᶜth Party* and the UAR Since the *Baᶜth Party* was now in power in two Arab countries, it was not expected that its leaders, who had voiced grievances against Jamāl ᶜAbdannāṣir's authoritarian rule, would join Egypt in a union without an assurance of obtaining greater participation in the central government. Their views on union stressed federalism, freedom, and socialism.[30] However, though Jamāl ᶜAbdannāṣir regarded the Syrian March Revolution of 1963 as a victory of the advocates of union over those who supported secession, he made no statement welcoming Syria back into the UAR, because some of the *Baᶜth* leaders, especially Ṣalāḥaddīn al-Bīṭār, Syria's

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[28] KHAYŪN, ᶜAlī. *Thawrat 8 shubāṭ 1963 fī al-ᶜIrāq*, p. 159.

[29] *Niḍāl Ḥizb al-Baᶜth al-ᶜarabī al-ishtirākī, 1943 – 1975. Dirāsa tārīkhīya taḥlīlīya mūjaza*. [The Struggle of the Baᶜth Arab Socialist Party. A Concise historical analytical Study], p. 97.

[30] KERR, M. H.: *The Arab Cold War. Gamal Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958 – 1970*, p. 49; KHAYŪN, ᶜAlī. *Thawrat 8 shubāṭ 1963 fī al-ᶜIrāq*, pp. 158-159.

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new Premier, had supported the advocates of secession in 1961. Thereupon, Syrian and Iraqi delegations went to Cairo in mid-March to persuade Jamāl ᶜAbdannāṣir to negotiate a new scheme of Arab union which would incorporate Egypt, Iraq, and Syria. The government entered into a tripartite commitment to unification with Egypt and Syria in April 1963, despite the fact that this complicated relations with the Kurds.[31] More seriously for the fate of the Iraqi government, entanglement with the new regime in Damascus embroiled the Iraqis in the barely suppressed power struggle in Syria between the National Command of the *Baᶜth Party* (personified by the party's founder-leaders Michel ᶜAflaq and Ṣalāḥaddīn al-Bīṭār) and the Syrian Regional Command of the party.

The unity talks between the delegations of Syria, Iraq and the UAR were held in three stages from 14 March to 14 April. The three delegations first met to exchange ideas on the subject before formulating a final scheme of union.[32] The conversations reflect the divergent views of three leading Arab countries on Arab union. The main points of difference were the issues of the presidency and the existence of political parties. The Iraqi delegation acted as mediator between the Syrian and Egyptian delegations. The Syrian delegation, composed mainly of *Baᶜthists*, was insistent on a "collegiate presidency", maintenance of local autonomy, and freedom to organize political parties. President Jamāl ᶜAbdannāṣir, however, demanded that the people decide by a plebiscite whether the presidency should be collegiate or individual. Certain of his popularity among the masses in Syria and Iraq, Jamāl ᶜAbdannāṣir insisted upon this point and a deadlock seemed inevitable. The deadlock was circumvented by the presentation of a new draft by the Iraqi delegation and the three governments finally agreed on the formation of a federal union with one president and a federal council.[33] However, the agreement was of short duration and ended in a deep rift between the *Baᶜth* and the UAR. Jamāl ᶜAbdannāṣir seems to have reluctantly agreed on a scheme of union acceptable to the Syrian and Iraqi leaders, because authority in the new structure of Arab union was to be exercised by "collective leadership" rather than by one responsible leader, although he was to be the head of the "collective leadership". An agreement on tripartite union was signed on 17 April 1963.

Following the overthrow of ᶜAbdalkarīm Qāsim, the Kurds found themselves trying to negotiate with the NCRC and the government. On 10 February the *KDP* formally welcomed the coup and sought a ceasefire, the release of prisoners of war, compensation for the injured, the removal and punishment of those responsible for torturing Kurds, and an official declaration

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[31] McDOWALL, D. *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 313.

[32] For text of the proceedings, see *Maḥāḍir Jalasāt Mubāḥathāt al-Waḥda*. For a critical study of the Cairo conversations, see KERR, *The Arab Cold War*.

[33] ABU JABER, Kamel S. *The Arab Baath Socialist Part*, p. 70.

of autonomy. In the Kurdish issue the *Ba'thist* leaders faced grave difficulties, because of their pan-Arab policy. Initially, the *KDP* had been in touch with the *Ba'th* and had agreed to support the coup in return for a promise of autonomy.[34] Shortly after the coup, contact between the Kurds and the government was established. From the first, the issue at stake was just how much self-rule the new government was prepared to offer the Kurds to achieve peace in the north, especially as the *Ba'th*, unlike their predecessors, were eager to achieve some kind of Arab unity.[35] The more extreme Arab nationalists considered Southern Kurdistan as Arab land inhabited by a non-Arab minority. But for the regime as a whole, the question of Kurdish autonomy was a side issue to the central preoccupation of the *Ba'thists*: the real interest lay in the question of future Arab unity. The civilian *Ba'th* had not forgiven the Kurds for their part in the events in Mosul in March 1959. But it preferred to undermine the Kurds non-violently, by "infiltrating or splitting the Kurdish movement",[36] perhaps making a few cultural concessions in the process.

While the anti-communist campaign was continuing, the government turned to the other pressing legacy of the regime of 'Abdalkarīm Qāsim: the unstable situation in the Kurdish areas of Iraq. Mullā Muṣṭafā al-Bārzānī had declared the promised cease-fire and the new government entered into negotiations with the *Kurdistan Democratic Party.* 'Alī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa'dī spoke of national reconciliation, two Kurds were appointed to cabinet positions, the economic blockade of the north was lifted and government forces withdrew from some areas. However, negotiations proceeded slowly because the government was prepared to offer only a limited, administrative form of self-rule.[37] To show its goodwill, in early March a delegation went to visit Mullā Muṣṭafā al-Bārzānī in the stronghold from which he had been unwilling to descend. However, he demanded an immediate and formal recognition of Kurdish autonomy, and that this should cover virtually the whole of the old vilayet of Mosul including the Kirkūk oilfields, excluding the city Mosul itself.[38] Finally, he warned that fighting would recommence if the government did not accede to his demands within three days; in fact, he had already ordered his guerrilla forces back to their battle positions. This was well beyond the concessions the *Ba'th* were

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[34] GHASSEMLOU, Abdul Rahman. *Kurdistán a Kurdovia.* [Kurdistan and the Kurds], p. 174.
[35] MARR, P. *The Modern History of Iraq,* p. 187.
[36] The words of 'Alī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa'dī, the Secretary-General of the Iraqi Ba'th at the time. In: JAWAD, Sa'd. *Iraq and the Kurdish Question, 1958 – 1970,* p. 37.
[37] TRIPP, C. *A History of Iraq,* p. 172.
[38] Among his demands was an insistence on the creation of a separate Kurdish armed forces, and that autonomous Kurdistan should receive two thirds of the national oil revenue, a proportion justified by the location of the oilfields in territories he claimed. In McDOWALL, D. *A Modern History of the Kurds,* p. 314.

prepared to make.[39] On 7 March the government persuaded Mullā Muṣṭafā to compromise based on "recognition of the national rights of the Kurdish people on the basis of self-administration".[40] But on the next day he once more raised his demands. The government concluded that no agreement with him was possible, but it needed time to prepare the army for another round.

The *KDP* was naturally extremely uneasy about the prospect of the Kurds becoming part of a larger Arab entity. They felt compelled publicly to welcome it but pointed out that the proposed union of Iraq with the UAR made the question of Kurdish autonomy that more pressing.[41] It was a moot point whether Jalāl aṭ-Ṭālabānī's inclusion in the Iraqi delegation that went to Cairo towards the end of the month was merely to demonstrate Kurdo-Arab amity or to define Kurdish rights as the *KDP* hoped. In fact Jalāl aṭ-Ṭālabānī found Jamāl ʿAbdannāṣir a good deal more forthcoming than his co-delegates on the question of autonomy. His anxieties were well founded, and he handed them a document setting out alternative Kurdish demands that depended on whether Iraq remained separate or sought a federal or integrated union with the other Arab states.[42] When Iraq, Egypt and Syria finally issued a formal agreement to form a federal Arab Republic in mid-April, neither the Kurds nor their rights were mentioned. The disparity of opinion in Baghdad, however, was not over whether to concede autonomy but over what method should be used to reduce the Kurds.

The *KDP* submitted a detailed autonomy plan in late April, one which would give the Kurds freedom over virtually all matters except foreign affairs, finance and national defence.[43] It also required inclusion of the Kirkūk, Khānaqīn and north-west Mosul oilfields within the autonomous region, and a proportionate share of their revenues.[44] Such demands went far beyond what the government was willing to accept as it was a demand of a binational state. The Kurds had made it clear that if Iraq were to join an Arab federation they would demand greater autonomy.[45] From here on, relations with the Kurds rapidly deteriorated. The key reason lay with the oilfields, but the government could also point to the 1947 census which indicated that Kurds comprised only 25 per cent of the population of Kirkūk town, and only 53 per cent of the province. By May it was clear not only that there was stalemate in the negotiations but that a resumption of hostilities was almost inevitable. Ever since March Mullā

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[39] Ad-DURRA, Maḥmūd. *Al-Qaḍīya al-kurdīya*. [The Kurdish Question], pp. 308-309.

[40] GHASSEMLOU, Abdul Rahman. *Kurdistán a Kurdovia*. [Kurdistan and the Kurds], p. 175.

[41] McDOWALL, D. *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 313.

[42] Ad-DURRA, Maḥmūd. *Al-Qaḍīya al-kurdīya*, pp. 316-317.

[43] Ad-DURRA, Maḥmūd. *Al-Qaḍīya al-kurdīya*, pp. 318-324.

[44] ADAMSON, D. *The Kurdish War*, pp. 208-215.

[45] SCHMIDT, D. A. *Journey Among Brave Men*, pp. 253-265.

Muṣṭafā had repeated threats of a renewal of war. Now Baghdad took up the challenge.[46] The armed forces, which ascribed their poor showing to ᶜAbdalkarīm Qāsim's inept direction of the war, favoured a military solution which would defeat the Kurds once and for all.

The situation in the north was serious. The Kurds had control of the entire northern region bordering Iran, and Mullā Muṣṭafā al-Bārzānī was receiving considerable aid from the Iranian Kurds. This enabled his forces to circumvent the blockade previously imposed on the Kurds by the Iraqi government; neither the Iranian nor the Iraqi army was capable of enforcing border control. Meanwhile, co-operation between the Iranian and Iraqi Kurds intensified.[47] By the end of April, aircraft and troops were deployed northward, and on 5. June government troops surrounded Sulaymānīya, imposed a curfew and began rounding up wanted men. When martial law was lifted three days later the population found the streets littered with dead people and a mass grave containing 80 bodies. Many others had also disappeared. On 10 June Baghdad issued a communiqué accusing Kurdish *peshmerga* forces of numerous violations of law and order since the coup.[48] It arrested Kurdish delegates in Baghdad and the same day launched a three-pronged offensive towards the Kurdish heartland.

The government, wary of a frustrated officer corps, decided to recapture Kurdish territory by crushing the Kurdish movement if possible, and launched a strong offensive. Iraqi forces bombarded villages with tanks, heavy artillery, and from the air; they bulldozed Kurdish villages under their control; and began arabization of strategic areas.[49] In August the Iraqi army captured Bārzān and by September it could control the area around Sulaymānīya. At first it looked as if the Kurdish resistance might be crushed, but in fact the rebels bided their time beyond the reach of the Iraqi army. As army commanders slowly realized, only the easiest parts of Kurdistan had been captured. The Forces of Mullā Muṣṭafā al-Bārzānī and the *Kurdistan Democratic Party* remained active, benefiting from their mastery of the inaccessible mountain country along the Turkish and Iranian borders, which allowed them to establish *de facto* autonomy in large areas of the north.[50] The *Baᶜthist* government thus found itself presiding over a demoralizing and expensive war, undermining confidence and generating dangerous resentments within the officer corps.

The *Baᶜth* policy was far from successful and moderates in the army and a number of ministers began to turn against it. The *Baᶜth* inability to either find a

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[46] McDOWALL, D. *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 314.
[47] MARR, P. *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 187.
[48] Ad-DURRA, Maḥmūd. *Al-Qaḍīya al-kurdīya*, p. 155.
[49] KUTSCHERA, Chris. *Le Mouvement Nationale Kurde*, p. 237.
[50] TRIPP, C. *A History of Iraq*, p. 172.

solution to the Kurdish problem or win a military victory hastened its downfall. Had the Kurds been united they might have fared better in the first round of war. But whatever trust had existed between Mullā Muṣṭafā and the *KDP* had evaporated during the ceasefire. There was now little love lost between the northern and southern camps of Kurdish resistance. Mullā Muṣṭafā, jealous of the standing of *KDP* and its leading negotiator, Jalāl aṭ-Ṭālabānī, had openly criticized the Kurdish trip to Cairo and had tried to undermine Jalāl aṭ-Ṭālabānī's position as "the representative of the Kurds", since it clearly undermined his own position.[51]

Young and inexperienced, members of the Iraqi Regional *Baʿth* Command had long been engaged in opposition against former regimes and virtually none had held an important administrative job or a post with public responsibility of any significance. The circumstances, under which the party functioned before, had required some talent for secrecy and conspiracy.[52] So they scarcely had the time to plan for the future. When they suddenly found themselves in power, they had to co-operate with others in order to carry out the business of Government. The feelings had, in any case, been exacerbated by the turmoil within the *Baʿth Party* itself during the course of the year. The party's advocacy of pan-Arabism and social welfare under the slogan "Unity, Freedom, Socialism" had always allowed for wide interpretation. Much of the trouble of the regime could be explained by its lack of a considered programme.[53] In Iraq, as elsewhere, people joined the *Baʿth Party* for a variety of reasons. Consequently, the Iraqi section of the party comprised a number of disparate factions, identified as much by the individuals who headed them as by the "line" that they followed.

ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī and his associates had built up the clandestine party and now believed that they had a chance to exercise real power. However, the conspirational capacities were now of substantially less value, for the party had need of people with administrative talents and broad political vision, something few of its leaders possessed. They organized the National Guard not only against the Communists, but also potentially against the pan-Arabs with whom the party was presently allied. They may also have seen the National Guard as a bulwark against the take-over of the party by *Baʿthist* military officers. In addition, ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī aligned himself publicly with the more radical socialist tendency in the emerging struggle within the *Baʿth Party* in the region.[54]

The Regional Command of the *Baʿth* explained the application of some

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[51] McDOWALL, D. *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 315.

[52] DEVLIN, J. F.: *The Baʿth Party. A History from Its Origins to 1966*, p. 259.

[53] BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 1013.

[54] TRIPP, C. *A History of Iraq*, p. 173.

basic principles, as stated in the transitional programme which the Prime Minister had broadcast on 15 March 1963; but even when some of these principles have been explained in terms of their application, a certain vagueness remained which gave rise to differences of opinion. The principal issue, of course, concerned socialism. The transitional programme stated that socialism could not be fully realized before the achievement of Arab union; but it was also pointed out, that certain socialistic measures necessary for workers and peasants could be carried out only gradually.[55] It was unclear what the measures were that merited immediate implementation and what were those that should be postponed. Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shabīb, Minister of Foreign Affairs, could afford to speak in favour of postponement of socialist measures because he was not directly concerned with their implementation; but ᶜAbdalḥamīd al-Khalkhāl, Minister of Social Affairs, with whom workers were in close touch, was bound to listen to them and to press for swift implementation. These and other issues by their very nature caused differences of opinion among leaders, and the urgent necessity for decisions exhausted the patience of those concerned.[56] Coming to the party from a different direction, and seeing it as the vehicle for a rather different programme, were people such as Ḥāzim Jawād and Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shabīb who were both members of the NCRC. Although labelled by ᶜAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saᶜdī as "rightists", their differences were less ideological than strategic and, to some degree, personal. They had close links with the non-*Baᶜthist* pan-Arab faction and knew the importance of maintaining that alliance, given its influence in the officer corps.[57] They were consequently aware of the alarm caused in these circles by the increasing radicalism of ᶜAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saᶜdī and the growth of the National Guard.

In addition to these two developing factions within the civilian wing of the party, different groupings existed among the *Baᶜthist* military officers, respectively, with Brigadier Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, General Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ᶜAmmāsh (Minister of defence) and General Ṭāhir Yaḥyā (Chief of the general staff). All had been members of the Free Officers' movement and had cultivated their own followings within the armed forces and the party. These were based upon their powers of patronage and, in the case of Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr at least, upon common provincial backgrounds and clan relationships, rather than on any clear ideological affinities. As a group, they did not represent any very obvious tendency within the party, but as military officers they were also aware of the need for *Baᶜthists* to co-operate with that section of the officer corps

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[55] KHAYŪN, ᶜAlī. *Thawrat 8 shubāṭ 1963 fī al-ᶜIrāq*, p. 154.

[56] KHADDURI, Majid. *Republican Iraq. A Study in Iraqi Politics since the Revolution of 1958*, p. 208.

[57] GOMBÁR, E. *Revolučně demokratické strany na Blízkém východě.* [Revolutionary-democratic Parties in the Middle East], p. 50.

which cohered around President ʿAbdassalām ʿĀrif.[58] Before the Regional Command could intervene, an acute struggle for power raged between ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī, leader of the left, and Ḥāzim Jawād and Ṭālib Shabīb, representing the right. Ḥāzim Jawād and Ṭālib Shabīb offered to resign in June 1963, but they were persuaded not to resign. ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī sought to strengthen his position by an appeal to the masses and ideological groups, and tried to use the National Guard as a means of gaining popular support. Ḥāzim Jawād and Ṭālib Shabīb enlisted the support of nationalist army officers, but their move proved detrimental to the party, because these officers were not interested in either group but in precipitating the fall of the party from power.[59]

The Iraqi *Baʿth* leaders were divided into three groups. The right-wing group consisted of Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shabīb, Ḥāzim Jawād, Minister of State, Ḥardān ʿAbdalghaffār at-Tikrītī, commander of the air force, Ṭāhir Yaḥyā, Chief of the General Staff, and ʿAbdassattār ʿAbdallaṭīf, Minister of Communications. This group was less doctrinaire and did not want to risk the turmoil that was certain to follow any forcible attempts to impose socialism in Iraq.[60] They advocated co-operation with other nationalist elements, especially in the army, whom they thought might eventually become members of the party and strengthen its position in the country. They therefore pressed for the postponement of the implementation of radical principles, especially socialism, until the time had come when the country was ready for them. The left-wing group consisted essentially of ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī, Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior (later Minister of Guidance), Muḥsin ash-Shaykh Rāḍī, Ḥamdī ʿAbdalmajīd, Hānī al-Fukaykī, and Abū Ṭālib al-Hāshimī. This group insisted on the implementation of basic principles, especially socialism, on the ground that socialism would secure the support of the masses and of the new generation.[61] They warned the right wing against their dependence on nationalist army officers, especially those in the N.C.R.C., who had failed to become members of the *Baʿth*. These officers, the left-wing group held, had been working against the Baʿth and were eventually responsible for its fall from power. Between these two extremes there was a centre group, composed of Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, Prime Minister, and Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh, Minister of Defence.[62] The centre tried to reconcile the two extreme groups, hoping that solidarity might be maintained if both were induced to co-operate on certain

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[58] TRIPP, C. *A History of Iraq*, p. 173.
[59] KHADDURI, Majid. *Republican Iraq. A Study in Iraqi Politics since the Revolution of 1958*, p. 210.
[60] DEVLIN, J. F.: *The Baʿth Party. A History from Its Origins to 1966*, p. 259.
[61] *Azmat al-Baʿth al-ʿarabī al-ishtirākī min khilāl tajribatihi fī al-ʿIrāq*. [The Crisis of the Arab Socialist Ressurrection /Baʿth/ Party Resulting from its Experience in Iraq], pp. 92-93.
[62] KHADDURI, Majid. *Republican Iraq. A Study in Iraqi Politics since the Revolution of 1958*, pp. 209-210.

matters acceptable to them, but Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr and Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh did not carry enough weight to be able to prevent the party from breaking asunder.

These differences reached a dramatic climax due to a sequence of events which developed initially on the broader stage of the Arab world. As in 1958, so in 1963, the new regime in Baghdad was immediately faced with two questions in Arab politics which were seen by many as tests of pan-Arab commitment. The first concerned relations with the dominant figure of Jamāl ʿAbdannāṣir. Initially, the new regime proclaimed a desire for unity with Egypt. Little of substance followed, but it helped to placate the pan-Arab members of the NCRC, like ʿAbdassalām ʿĀrif, who were admirers of Jamāl ʿAbdannāṣir. The Baʿthists themselves were more ambivalent about the Egyptian leader, given the party's experiences in Syria during the period of the UAR. ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī was also aware of the delicacy of the question of unification at a time when he was negotiating with the Kurds.[63]

After a prolonged struggle for power between pro-Nāṣirists and anti-Nāṣirists in May and June, a Nāṣirist attempt in Syria at a coup d'état on 18 July 1963 was unsuccessful, and as a result the 17 April unity agreement became a dead letter. On the occasion of the anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution on 22 July, Jamāl ʿAbdannāṣir delivered an angry speech in which he concentrated his attack on the Syrian Baʿth leaders.[64] This was construed to mean withdrawal from the scheme of union, and the Syrian and Iraqi leaders began to consider a bilateral arrangement for union. In Iraq this struggle polarized pro- and anti-Nāṣirist sentiment both within the Baʿth Party and within the pan-Arab movement more generally. In the streets of Baghdad clashes erupted between detachments of the National Guard and the pro-Nāṣirist "Movement of Arab Nationalists" (Ḥarakat al-qawmīyīn al-ʿarab).[65] ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī lost his position as minister of interior, but successfully resisted the demand from Iraq's senior military officers to dissolve the National Guard. In September 1963 he reasserted his own control of the Iraqi branch of the Baʿth Party and chose this moment to announce his support for Marxism. He may have hoped thereby to persuade the USSR to resume the military and development aid which had been suspended during the savage anti-communist campaign of 1963. It also aligned him with the radical socialist faction of the

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[63] TRIPP, C. A History of Iraq, p. 174.

[64] Al-ḤAWRĀNĪ, Akram. Mudhakkirāt Akram al-Ḥawrānī. (Memoirs of A. Ḥ.). Vol. IV, pp. 3200-3201.

[65] Members of the "Movement of Arab Nationalists" (Ḥarakat al-qawmīyīn al-ʿarab) were commonly called (al-Ḥarakīyīn). In BATATU, H. The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq, pp. 1014-1015.

Ba'th Party in Syria which was in the ascendant in Damascus.[66]

Political developments in the period between February and November 1963 were extremely confused, and consisted largely of different groups struggling for power. However, by June, ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī had lost the Ministry of Interior, his faction had quarrelled with both Jamāl ʿAbdannāṣir and the Iraqi *Nāṣirists*, and fighting had broken out again in Kurdistan. He now faced increasing hostility both from other *Ba'thists* in the army and from his *Ba'thist* colleagues in Damascus, who were also becoming increasingly critical of some of his methods. In order to counter this, he suddenly announced that he and his group were "Marxists" and "leftists", attempting to assert, in the style which *Ba'thists* were often to adopt in the future, his own ideological purity over his opponents, who were now dubbed "rightist" and "reactionary".[67] ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī was a man of violence rather than an ideological activist and his "socialism" was more a bid to gain support among particular factions within the National Command of the Party in Damascus than a change of political line. Thus Devlin's claim that "Sadi and his supporters were eager to spread socialism in Iraq" or that their views "harmonized with the extreme socialist views held by a group of party members in Syria" cannot be taken seriously.[68]

On 13 September 1963, seven months after the Ramaḍān revolt, the Iraqi *Ba'th* Regional Conference was convened and the differences among the leaders were thrown open for discussion. The faction of ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī, in addition to securing an overwhelming majority on the Regional Command elected at that Conference, also provided a majority of the 25 Iraqi delegates to the Sixth National Congress. This faction joined with the extremist socialists from Syria and Lebanon to push through a series of resolutions which substantially altered the rather mild socialism that the party had been preaching for years.[69] Michel ʿAflaq arrived from Damascus and used his personal influence to reconcile differences. He tried to support the right-wing group on the ground that differences among leaders had essentially been reduced to personal rather than to ideological differences. In the elections to the Regional Command, however, a compromise was reached when all groups were represented and ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī and Ḥāzim Jawād received an equal number of 27 votes in their election to the Regional Command. ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī, though supported by the Regional Conference, lost much of his influence in the Cabinet.

The Sixth National Congress held in Damascus from 5 to 23 October 1963 was a major event in the history of the party.[70] It was preceded by regional

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[66] TRIPP, C. *A History of Iraq*, p. 174.

[67] *Niḍāl al-Ba'th. Al-mu'tamar al-qawmī ath-thāmin, nīsān 1965*, Vol. 9, p. 60.

[68] DEVLIN, J. F.: *The Ba'th Party. A History from Its Origins to 1966*, p. 259.

[69] *Arab Political Documents 1963 – 1965*. 3 vols, pp. 450-451.

[70] ABU JABER, Kamel S. *The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party*, p. 80.

conferences in both Syria and Iraq where a new leadership was elected and recommendations for the national congress passed. Chief among the recommendations was the desire to conclude union between Iraq and Syria, to unify the *Baʿth Party's* organization in the two countries, and to attempt to clarify the vague points of the ideology.[71] The most important decisions of the Congress were connected with the establishment of a federal union between Syria and Iraq, the economic policy of which would be based on socialist principles emphasizing collective farming and a policy of austerity. Finally, it agreed on the principle of positive neutrality coupled with an attempt at strengthening ties with the "Socialist camp".[72]

The Sixth National Congress was a landmark in the ideological evolution of the party, as the tone and the text of its decisions pointed left. The party's newly elected leadership were of the younger generation, more dogmatic than the party's older leadership. ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī ranged himself against Michel ʿAflaq and Ṣalāḥaddīn Bīṭār, who were consequently voted out of office. In the party he was able to win victory for his radical platform and ousted Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shabīb and Ḥāzim Jawād from the National Command. This development and ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī's apparent monopoly of power within Iraq itself seems to have encouraged his opponents within the Iraqi *Baʿth* to try to remove him and his clique from office; as his gangs had more or less succeeded in eliminating the influence of the Communists, they were becoming increasingly redundant.[73]

On 1 November Mundhir al-Windāwī was dismissed from his post as commander of the National Guard, but refused to budge. Upon their return to Baghdad, the Ḥāzim Jawād-Ṭālib Shabīb faction began to rally their own forces, especially among *Baʿthist* army officers.[74] This faction had little confidence that regular party elections would benefit it, because of power distribution among the membership. A call for an emergency meeting of the Regional Command was issued ostensibly to iron out differences, but in reality to elect new members for the enlarged Regional Command. On 11 November, when the Iraqi *Baʿthists* were holding an "Extraordinary Regional Conference" ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī and his companions tried to expel the "rightists" (Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, Ḥardān at-Tikrītī, Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh, Ṭāhir Yaḥyā and their friends) from the Party. These developments spurred the more conservative Ḥāzim

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[71] *Niḍāl al-Baʿth. Al-muʾtamarāt al-qawmīya as-ṣabaʿa al-ūlā, 1947 – 1964.* Documentary Record. Vol. 4. [The Struggle of the Baʿth. The First Seven National Congresses, 1947 – 1964], pp. 223-224.

[72] The complete text of the Congress decisions see ABU JABER, Kamel S. *The Arab Baʿth Socialist Party*, pp. 157-165.

[73] SLUGLETT, M. F., SLUGLETT, P. *Iraq since 1958. From Revolution to Dictatorship*, p. 93.

[74] DEVLIN, J. F. *The Baʿth Party. A History from Its Origins to 1966*, p. 270.

Jawād and a number of the rightist military Ba'thists into action and they carried out a coup with the assistance of military officers.[75] Under duress a new Regional command was elected, composed in the main of right-wing members headed by Ḥāzim Jawād himself. The left-wing leaders were expelled, and five of them – ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī, Ḥamdī ʿAbdalmajīd, Muḥsin ash-Shaykh Rāḍī, Hānī al-Fukaykī, and Abū Ṭālib al-Hāshimī – were taken directly from the meeting to the airport and sent abroad as exiles.[76] On the next day the National Guard came out on the streets of Baghdad in protest.

On the morning of 13 November the newly elected Regional command published the names of all its members and called upon the people to protect the socialist revolution from imperialist and reactionary dangers.[77] In this impasse the military Ba'thists Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr and Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh, seized the initiative and invited members of the National Command to Baghdad to help sort out the internal Ba'thist conflict. On the evening of 13 November Michel ʿAflaq, Amīn al-Ḥāfiẓ, Ṣalāḥ Jadīd and a number of other Syrian and Lebanese National Command members came to Baghdad. A joint meeting of the National and Regional Commands was held on 14 November.[78] Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr and Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh privately met Michel ʿAflaq, who presided over a meeting of the National Command, to try to save the situation. It was decided to expel the right-wing leaders and purge the party of the two extreme camps since reconciliation was no longer possible. Thus Ṭālib Shabīb and Ḥāzim Jawād and some others were promptly deported to Beirut on the following day. The eight National Command members in Baghdad issued a statement with which they managed to alienate Ba'thists and non-Ba'thists alike by suggesting that they would now be taking charge of Iraqi affairs.[79]

A temporary Regional Command had been set up, presumably to represent

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[75] Niḍāl al-Baʿth. Al-mu'tamar al-qawmī ath-thāmin, nīsān 1965, Vol. 9, pp. 61-62.

[76] They were carried by a military plane directly to Madrid, and their passports were withdrawn from them to prevent their return to Iraq. In KHADDURI, Majid. Republican Iraq, p. 213.

[77] These sixteen members were: Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Bakr, Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ʿAmmāsh, Ṭāhir Yaḥyā, ʿAbdassattār ʿAbdallaṭīf, Muḥammad al-Mahdāwī, Mundhir al-Windāwī, Ḥāzim Jawād, Ṭālib Ḥusayn Shabīb, Ṭāriq ʿAzīz, ʿAlī ʿAbdalkarīm, ʿAbdassattār ad-Dūrī, Karīm Shintāf, Fā'iq Bazzāz, ʿAlī ʿAraim, Ḥasan al-Ḥājj Waddā'ī, ʿAdnān al-Qaṣṣāb, Fu'ād Shākir Muṣṭafā. In: BATATU, Hanna: The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq, p. 1023.

[78] AḤMAD, Ibrāhīm Khalīl and ḤUMAYDĪ, Jaʿfar ʿAbbās. Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq al-muʿāṣir, p. 225.

[79] The decisions were: 1. to consider the Regional Conference held in Baghdad on November 11 as illegal and to dissolve the Regional Command which it elected; 2. to dissolve the Regional Command which was in power when the Conference was held; 3. to invest the National Command with all prerogatives of the Regional Command of Iraq; 4. to investigate mistakes ...; 5. to restrict the power of passing sentences on Iraqi Party members to the National Command; 6. to hold Party elections in the Iraqi Region (Quṭr) and to hold a Regional Conference for the election of a new Regional Command within a period of four months. In Arab Political Documents 1963, pp. 471-472.

moderate elements and to bolster up the centre group until a new Regional Command was elected. Michel ʿAflaq seems to have advised the centre group to co-operate with the non-*Baʿthist* military members of the NCRC, since the *Baʿth Party*, purged of extremists, had become acceptable to moderates in civil and military ranks.[80] The extremists began to attack the *Baʿth* National and Regional Commands, on the ground that they ignored their party's goals for political reasons. This accommodation was only a temporary arrangement, for the action of the National Command did not help even the centre group, and real leadership passed to the military who had little or no sympathy with the *Baʿth Party*.[81] On 17 November the cabinet posts of five deported ministers were handed over to five acting ministers and the Arab press brought reports that the Iraqi army was becoming restless at the impasse between the *Baʿthists* and the military leaders.

After some days of uncertainty, President ʿAbdassalām ʿĀrif decided to act and quickly seized the opportunity by rallying the military to his side. In concert with Brigadier ʿAbdarraḥmān ʿĀrif, his brother and the commander of the Fifth Division; Staff Brigadier ʿAbdalkarīm Farḥān, the commander of the First Division; Colonel Saʿīd Ṣulaybī, the commandant of the military police; *Baʿthī* Staff Major General Ṭāhir Yaḥyā, Chief of the General Staff, and *Baʿthī* Air Staff Brigadier Ḥardān ʿAbdalghaffār at-Tikrītī, commander of the air force, among others, he took action.[82] The army rolled into Baghdad in response to an order by the President and Commander in Chief of the armed forces "to assume full control of the capital ... and to crush all resistance seeking to oppose the regime and harm the interests of the people and the state". The second paragraph of the President's proclamation announced that the National Guard was to be dissolved immediately, that every member of the guard was to surrender his arms, ammunition and equipment to the nearest army unit or to be considered a traitor who could be executed on the spot.[83] At daybreak airplanes from ar-Rashīd base bombed the headquarters of the National Guard in Baghdad. Tanks and motorized infantry swiftly joined in. Simultaneously, attacks were launched throughout the country. Within hours the President had established his control.

On 18 November, while Michel ʿAflaq and Amīn al-Ḥāfiẓ were still in Baghdad, the forces loyal to the President placed the National and Regional

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[80] *Azmat al-Baʿth al-ʿarabī al-ishtirākī min khilāl tajribatihi fī al-ʿIrāq.* [The Crisis of the Arab Socialist Ressurrection /Baʿth/ Party Resulting from its Experience in Iraq], p. 117.

[81] *Niḍāl al-Baʿth. Al-muʾtamarāt al-qawmīya as-sabaʿa al-ūlā, 1947 – 1964.*Vol. 4, pp. 258-260.

[82] BATATU, H. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 1025.

[83] DEVLIN, J. F. *The Baʿth Party. A History from Its Origins to 1966*, p. 272.

Commands of the *Ba^cth Party* under arrest.[84] A day later Michel ^cAflaq and Amīn al-Ḥāfiẓ were allowed to return to Damascus. Ṭālib Shabīb and Ḥāzim Jawād, who had been deported to Beirut, declared their support of ^cAbdassalām ^cĀrif. The National Command held a meeting in Damascus at which Ṭālib Shabīb and Ḥāzim Jawād were expelled for their conspiracy with "reactionary elements" to destroy the party. These internal dissensions, though a manifestation of broader conflicting social factors, caused not only the fall of the *Ba^cth* Government in Iraq but also the demise of the *Ba^cth Party*. No longer could this party command the respect it had before its brief tenure of office.[85] Iraqi President ^cAbdassalām ^cĀrif, who was not a *Ba^cthist*, was able to get rid of the *Ba^cth* leaders in November 1963, to the satisfaction of Jamāl ^cAbdannāṣir.

Within the nine months in power in Iraq, the *Ba^cth Party* had demonstrated that it was less a party than a confederation of cliques. Some of these cohered for ideological reasons, some for professional reasons and some by virtue of the common origins of their members. These same reasons, which created solidarity amongst the cliques and factions within the party, also turned them against each other at critical moments.[86] In particular, the ambiguity of factions of the party towards the primacy of the Iraqi state made them particularly suspect in the eyes of those who were more firmly rooted in the administrative apparatus of the state, particularly in the armed forces. These men found the reality of pan-Arab decision making considerably less alluring than the ideal. Their power was framed within the military structures of the Iraqi state and founded on the hierarchies of Iraqi society that gave them an advantage.[87] Both of these

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[84] *Niḍāl Ḥizb al-Ba^cth al-^carabiī al-ishtirākī ^cibra mu'tamarātihi al-qawmīya, 1947 – 1964.* Documentary Record. [The Struggle of the Ba^cth Arab Socialist Party Through its National Congresses, *1947 – 1964*.], p. 260.

[85] It is of interest to give a brief account of ^cAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa^cdī who, alone of the Iraqi Ba^cth leaders, continued to agitate after his fall from power. Returning from Spain to Damascus, he incited the Syrian Regional Command to expel Ṣalāḥaddīn al-Bīṭār, who had blamed ^cAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa^cdī for the fall of the Ba^cth in Iraq in January 1964. Upon Michel Aflaq's intervention, it was now ^cAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa^cdī's turn to be expelled from the Regional Command, but he remained a member of the National Command. ^cAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa^cdī called a meeting of the Lebanese Regional Command in February 1964, and Michel ^cAflaq was censured for his attack on ^cAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa^cdī. The National Command in Damascus, under the influence of Michel ^cAflaq and Ṣalāḥaddīn al-Bīṭār, expelled ^cAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa^cdī from the Ba^cth Party. ^cAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Sa^cdī returned to Iraq in March 1964, to form a new party called the *Arab Socialist Revolutionary Party*, based on Ba^cthist and Marxist ideologies; but no great response seemed to have been aroused by this new venture. In: ABU JABER, Kamel S.: *The Arab Ba^cth Socialist Party*, pp. 87-88. For a critique of Ba^cth rule by a member of the National Command. In Ar-RAZZĀZ, Munīf. *At-Tajriba al-murra.* [The Bitter Experience].

[86] TRIPP, C. *A History of Iraq*, p. 175.

[87] Al-FUKAYKĪ, Hānī. *Awkār al-hazīma. Tajribatī fī Ḥizb al-ba^cth al-^cirākī.* [Nests of Defeat. My experience in the Iraqi Ba^cth Party], pp. 285-293.

structures seemed to be under threat from the radical turn of ʿAlī Ṣāliḥ as-Saʿdī and from organizations such as the National Guard. When a coalition of factions within the armed forces acted decisively against the *Baʿth Party* in November 1963, it demonstrated that the key to the armed forces was still the key to power, regardless of the forms of civilian organizations that had emerged under the two preceding regimes.

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