Kurdistan – A Marxist-Leninist Framework Part Two

Preface

The intersection of the four countries of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria, lies in Kurdistan. As Kurdistan is within these borders, all these must be considered, in any sensible work on the Kurdish national movements. **Iran** and the Mahabad Republic, in relation to the Kurds, were discussed in *Part One*. Here in *Part Two*, we will focus upon **Iraq** and **Turkey**, highlighting history relevant to the Kurdish national movement. *Part Three* will focus upon **Syria**.

In assessing the Kurdish struggles, it is impossible to avoid the details of what now makes up the entire Middle East battle-ground. This term - 'battle-ground' - is not hyperbole. For the Middle East now embroils both major imperialists (USA, Russia), and the hitherto client states. The latter are now capable of exerting their own agency to varying extents. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Gulf States, Turkey – while generally subservient to a dominant state (For most of these it is the USA, or in the case of Iran and Syria, it is a co-equal status with Russia) – also have their own separate interests that they pursue. Disentangling these knots is difficult. Hence any history of modern day Kurdish struggles – appears to drown in details of the "Middle East".

We saw in *Part One* of this work, that the years up to 1946 were bitter for Kurds. But they were to be no less bitter, in the remainder of the 20th century. The prior era set the Ottoman, Russian Imperial and British Empires upon the Kurds. But after World War II, the full weight of the even more rapacious USA was laid on the Kurds. The Kurdish people died amidst a tragic and repetitive cycle of massacres such as Halabja, neglect, and betrayed promises. Even after the Kurds obtained a semblance of a 'homeland' – in the so-called **Safe Havens**, with USA aid – they were not secure. For the Kurdish national movements then became trapped in the Muslim sectarian, fundamentalist strife. Truly the Kurds were in the cockpit of the Middle East.

Who were the Kurdish leaders in this often-burning cockpit? Tragically, they were not up to countering the imperialist forces at play. Each of the three main parties of the Kurds, served comprador positions for various imperialisms, mainly that of the USA. Furthermore, each had serious problems. Despite tempering of the completely feudal character of the Kurdish chiefs, old feudal social ties dominated, in the **Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP)** and the **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)**. In *Part One*, we have already briefly discussed the KDP and PUK, but here we expand on their shabby history.

Finally, the third leading Kurdish party, the **Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK)**, fell into an early opportunism, and then most recently plunged into anarcho-naivete. In the final part here, of *Part Two*, we discuss the early history of the PKK. This is a preface to the episode of the Rojava Republic in Syria. The Syrian Civil War and the most recent

events in Iraq will be separately covered in a third and final part. Suffice a summary statement for now, that in Syria the Kurdish protagonists came to be the warriors for USA imperialism, yet again. This time in conflict with the rawest and most extreme Islamic fundamentalism.

Marxist-Leninists will see in this saga of the Kurds, the utter futility of relying on imperialism to obtain justice – or even nationhood. This is quite in keeping with the classics of Marxism-Leninism. But reciting these is not adequate. We prefer to show from the historical facts, that these classics are completely relevant today.

But, in order to do this, requires detail. Following the current-day contending fundamentalisms in the Middle East is bewildering. Especially, without a grounding in the history of Iraq. We argue that events in Syria today, can only be understood *after* first discussing **Iraq** between 1920-2003. We acknowledge that describing this adds both length and detail. Moreover, the Kurdish question itself, may seem at times to become drowned in a plethora of other Middle Eastern questions.

Nonetheless, in a Marxist-Leninist history of the Kurdish struggle, evaluating Iraqi history is necessary, for **four reasons.**

Firstly, Kurdish people and fighters died in their masses in *Iraq*, yet failed to establish a homeland. Only after the intervention of USA imperialism in the 20^{1st} century did a foothold of a nation get established.
What accounts for this failure, and the long and unremitting tragedy?
Further, once the Kurdish Safe Havens and the **Kurdish Regional Governmen**ts were established, with USA imperialist assistance, did that help the Kurdish people?
What bargains with the USA did the Kurdish Regional Governments make, and how did they fit into the plans of USA imperialism?

Secondly, The USA led invasion on Iraq was the ground where the ambitions of the dominant USA imperialists and their sub-imperial agents played out.
What was their intent in physically entering Iraq?
How and why did they inflame the sectarian antagonisms latent within the Iraqi people?
In a post-war Iraq, why did a resurgent Turkish state repeatedly try to shove its way in, clutching "their Ottoman history", to renew their repressions of Kurds?
Finally, did the USA achieve its goals and ambitions?

thirdly, the Kurdish story is bound up with the story of the **Iraqi Communist Party (ICP**), which carries important lessons on national liberation struggle.
Why could the ICP not 'solve' the Kurdish national problem, through solving the massive class contradictions in Iraq?
What were the failures of the ICP?

Finally, as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, all pointed out that nations both come into being and die. Iraq is a dramatic example. An astonishing feature of the Iraqi position of the Kurdish saga, is the Iraqi national history. Even though "Iraq" was a fiction of convenience to British imperialism, an **Iraqi consciousness** arose. It was first seen even under the comprador monarchy established by the British. For it formed the background of the struggles of the Iraqi CP. The Saddam Hussein era, brutal as it was – did further weld a common 'national' consciousness. Even more recent events firmly reinforce an 'Iraqi' view.

After the intense sectarian fire-storms set after the 2003 imperialist invasion of Iraq; the Iranian had effectively taken control of the Iraqi shell of a state. Iraq was now a neo-colony of Iran. But - a non-sectarian 'Iraqi' nationalism is reasserting itself.

How else can the events of November-December 2019 in Baghdad be viewed:

> "After weeks of mass protests in Iraq, there are signs that the government's patience is waning. Its current response — a mixture of spending and reform promises combined with violent security measures (at least 320 have been killed and approximately 15,000 injured) — has not placated the demonstrators. Scared by the threat to its interests, the political elite is shifting to sticks alone to quell the protests.
> "An incremental crackdown may temper protesters in the short term, but it is unlikely to break the spirit of Iraqi demonstrators. Something has happened in Iraq these past few weeks... Iraqis' patience with a self-serving, inept ruling elite is over. They are no longer scared to demand their rights, … As an Iraqi protester from Baghdad told Al-Monitor, it is a "wakeup call. And there are no more red lines."
> … In Baghdad's Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the demonstrations, where protesters have displayed their collective spirit and capabilities in ways that are quintessentially Iraqi….
>
> The demonstrators are showing they are a nation in search of a homeland, and in Tahrir Square, they have shown the world how they want it to be.
> While the streets of Baghdad are in disrepair, Tahrir Square boasts a trash service and volunteer street cleaners. Services that the Iraqi state has failed to provide comprehensively, despite multibillion-dollar budgets, have been established: health care, electricity and water. … Outdoor buffets offer free food, and the square has at least one newspaper that publishes the protesters' demands. Signs display an Iraqi humor that has persisted in the face of adversity. The scene has a carnival air similar to the amusement parks all over the country. People dance. They recite poetry and sing historic, patriotic, modern and religious songs. Nearly every wall is covered with murals and clever graffiti depicting protest scenes and slogans. Halls and paintings that have sat in disrepair for years have been brought back to life.

> This is rule by the people for the people. Protesters are seizing their country, which was wrenched from them by a corrupt government. In doing so they reaffirm their Iraqiness in the most positive ways. They have even set up reverse checkpoints that welcome citizens but exclude the armed forces. Communities intermingle; different sectors of society stand side by side. Patriotism is on full display. Iraqi flags are everywhere. Women are highly visible. There is a clear rejection of sectarianism, as "Iraqi" identity is emphasized. Everyone helps each other by whatever means — money, chaperones, medical care, internet. There is even a laundry service. And those who cannot or will not protest help in other ways, through donations and supplies.
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> … It is a show of what Iraqi society could be — al-Iraq al-Musagher (mini Iraq) set on an iconic roundabout. None of this comes as any surprise to those familiar with Iraq and its people.
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> …Despite their travails, most shared a deep patriotism, one that trumped the religious and communal identities that the mainstream political parties have deployed since 2003 to cement their power. "I never knew if I was Sunni or Shiite growing up" is a common refrain when identity is brought up in conversation." [*Footnoted #238: Christine McCaffray van den Toorn; "Iraq on display"; al-Monitor ; November 22, 2019;* https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/11/iraq-protests-government-leadership-crackdown.html#ixzz679Duh873   ].

In light of this, does a purely Kurdish national entity still have relevance?

All this must be considered in a relevant history of the Iraqi dimensions of the Kurdish struggle. If this then also becomes a synopsis of the history of the ICP, this is not a bad thing. The story of the **Iraqi Communist Party (ICP)**. is a potent reminder that revisionism carries consequences. In 1963, an Iraqi revolution was essentially destroyed and sabotaged. This failure ultimately led to Saddam Hussein's fascist state. Understanding the revisionism of the ICP, and what mistaken paths it took, and their consequences – is not idle academicism. While several histories events relate the Kurdish saga, we are not aware of any Marxist-Leninist analysis coupled to examining the failures of the ICP.

Iraqi history is like any other - complex, and requires dissection. To do this, we will start from the rise and fall of the British comprador Iraqi Monarchy. One critical question is: 'how did British imperialism weld a tribal based comprador class?' The class war on behalf of the urban and rural proletarians - the mud-hut dwellers (**shargiwiyyas**) and landless peasants, during this time - was led by a bold ICP. We examine why the ICP failed. This inevitably leads us to the attitude of the ICP to Iraqi nationalists and pan-Arabism. During this period the seeds were sown of the rise of the Ba'th state of Saddam Hussein.

We end the history of Iraq with the wars of the USA imperialists against their ex-comprador, Saddam Hussein. Previously we discussed and condemned the Iraqi wars

led by the USA coalition of imperialists. But here, since the social rubble of the Iraqi wars forms our current landscape, we examine the post-war descent of Iraq into civil war. The Safe Havens established by the USA for the Kurds became an embryo 'nation'. But it was far from secure, in the middle of the post-war sectarian strife – and with Turkey hovering at its Northern edge.

We also discuss in a little detail, **Turkey**. Naturally Turkish ruling class maneuvers were just as complex as in Iraq. Erdogan's Turkey viewed the so-called Safe Havens, as a grave threat. Indeed they became later the **Kurdish Regional Government** (KRG). Turkey as a regional capitalist power, was long subservient to either USA or latterly, to the EU imperialists. This had developed the strong link to Israel. But Turkey under its military, and then civil fascist leaders – especially **Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** – nurtured dreams of re-acquiring former Ottoman territory and power. Hence the Turkish ruling class voiced unhappiness and opposition to the Kurdish infant state of the KRG.

Turkish 'Ottomanite dreams', insisted that Kurdistan was only a part of Turkey. To the Turkish state, Kurds were not an independent peoples worthy of independence. This was a sophisticated position of the Turkish ruling class. They denied any distinct status to the Kurds, even their name. 'Kurds' were simply re-labeled "**mountain Turks**":

> "Iraq's assimilation policy does not include denying Kurdish ethnicity, or denying their land, or banning the Kurdish language— all of which takes place in Turkey. In the official language of Iraq— and also of Iran— the Kurdish-speaking population is called 'Kurds' and the territory where they live as a majority is called 'Kurdistan'. In Turkey, however, with more than half of the Kurdish population and homeland, they have been officially and 'scientifically' declared to be mountain Turks or a sub-branch of Turks, since the transition from the Ottoman state to the Republic of Turkey. Recently, they have even been 'recognized' as Turks of Kurdish origin. The territory they have inhabited for almost four millennia is strictly named 'Do ğ u' (East) or 'Güneydo ğ u' (South-east)—a way of denying them and their ethnic legitimacy." [1]

Hence both recent Turkish history, and post-war Iraqi history - are necessary to understand events regarding Kurdish national aspirations. But this is a complex story. What anchors, can help to avoid drowning in the facts and waves of events? We propose there are **three central anchors**.

First: There are some who insist that in the Middle East, religious labels are the *causes* of events. We believe these 'analysts' are misled by superficial symptoms, they avoid probing to the underlying causes. **Enver Hoxha**, and his **Party of Labour in Albania**, had to confront Moslem reactionaries. It is worth noting his comments:

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[1] *Özcan, Ali Kemal. Turkey's Kurds : A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan, Routledge, 2005; p. 4*

> "We Marxist-Leninists always understand clearly that religion is opium for the people. In no instance do we alter our view on this and we must not fall into the errors of "religious socialism", etc. The Moslem religion is no different in this regard. Nevertheless, we see that at present the broad masses of the Moslem peoples in the Arab and other countries have risen or are rising in struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism for their national and social liberation". [2]

Today, Marxist-Leninists and progressives should reject false charges that the 'primary' and 'insoluble' problems in Iraq or Syria, result from "Sunni and Shi'ia sectarianism".

These antagonisms are real, but they are not the cause of modern events. For example in the post-Iraqi invasion civil war, these antagonisms were deliberately fanned in Iraq and later in Syria. The simplistic allegations made conveniently ignore several firebrands who lit sectarian violence for their own ends. Firstly the role of **Saddam Hussein** and the **Assad** family; and later **George Bush** and **Paul Bremer**. All deliberately ignited these sectarian fires.

We do not ignore the parties of the Shi'ia movement, and in *Part 3 (forthcoming)* the many-headed hydra of the Sunni fundamentalists. But they must be placed *within* the picture, they are *not* the whole picture. How they arose in Iraq is key to how they then engulfed Syria. It is very relevant that today in Iraq, a wide-spread unity of Shi'ia and Sunni are fighting against sectarian labels and the post-war order imposed. This was imposed by both the USA and Iran.

A very important **second anchor**, we believe, can be found in the principles of the national liberation struggle. Therefore the history of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) is entirely relevant. For there was no consistent understanding by the Iraqi CP (or that of Syria and Lebanon) of the revolutionary tasks in colonial and semi-colonial type countries.
The ICP fell repeatedly into one of two polar extreme errors, shuttling between them. These two errors were:
An ultra-leftist refusal to join a United Front with revolutionary elements of the national democratic bourgeoisie; and,
The complete sublimation of their Communist goals at the service of the national democratic bourgeoisie and refusing to lead that struggle.

Both these errors were performed by the ICP, which proved fatal to events in Iraq between 1924-1963. They led to the massacres of the best elements of the Iraqi and Kurdish peoples. A substantial ICP had once exerted considerable influence, but it was destroyed *before* the Ba'thist state take over following the 1963 coup. After this the ICP

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[2] *Enver Hoxha, January 1980; Extract from Political Diaries, "The Events Which are taking place in the Moslem countries must be seen in the light of dialectical materialism" In 'Reflections on the Middle East"; Tirana 1984; pp. 358; 5-392.*

was largely physically destroyed as a major functioning force. It is likely that the lack of a principled Kurdish leadership might have been solved through a strong Marxist-Leninist presence. As it was, the ICP was unable to assist the Kurds in solving the national problem.

The reader can likely guess the ending of this article. Undoubtedly the presence of a solid Marxist-Leninist party in Iraq or any of the four countries encircling Kurdistan, would have benefited the Kurdish people. But there was no effective communist party in the Middle Eastern cockpit. This is not to deny the intense sacrifice and heroism of many of its leaders, or that of the masses. Nor do we minimize the difficulty of finding the correct path in the heat of the battles.

To follow the contours of Iraqi struggles, the ICP must be considered in detail. One guide is the fascinating account of **Hanna Batatu** in two separate books, one on Iraq and one on Syria [3]. We do not eschew other sources, but these two sources are illuminating. Both books resonate with Batatu's sympathy for the masses, and *shargiwiyyas* (the 'easterners' of Baghdad, the mudhut dwellers). He was not a Marxist-Leninist. But he does locate the vacillations in the ICP.

As well as the ICP, the **Ba'th Party** must be considered in detail. Again, Enver Hoxha closely followed events in the Middle East. He offered this:

> "A somewhat more advanced and revolutionary uprising against the monarchy took place in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq in 1958. It ended with the killing of King Faisal and his prime minister Nuri Said. The 'communists' took power there together with General Qaseem, a representative of the liberal officers. Only five years after however, in 1963, there was a coup d'état and Qaseem was executed. He was replaced by another officer, Colonel Aref. In 1968 General Al-Bakr came to the head of the state and the Baath party, a party of the reactionary feudal and comprador bourgeoisie, returned to power." [1]

Hoxha's parade of Iraqi Generals, is revealing. But it misses adequate detail on the Ba'th. This is forgivable in a summary. But in fact the Ba'th Party went through several phases. Fuller analysis shows that the Ba'th displayed quite different class characteristics at different times. We show this in *Part 2*, but it is explored more fully in the Syrian development of the Ba'th *Part 3* (forthcoming).

Discussing the Ba'th, means to confront **Pan-Arabism**. We note that communist Parties did not confront Pan-Arabism, only when **Michel 'Aflaq** raised the issue. 'AFlaq started the Ba'th Party in Syria in the 1930s. But Marxist-Leninists first met an earlier version of

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[3] *"The old social classes and the revolutionary movements of Iraq: a study of Iraq's old landed and commercial classes and of its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers"; Princeton; 1978; and* *"Syria's peasantry, the Descendants of its lesser Rural Notables and Their Politics"; 1999; Princeton*

Pan-Arabism as first raised by **Sultan-Galiyev**, in the USSR. This was reviewed by **W.B.Bland**. [4] The essential tenets of Sultan-Galyev-ism were:

> "A belief that Muslim people are 'proletarian peoples', so that national movements among them are movements of socialist revolution", and that "in areas inhabited by Muslims, the Communist party 'must integrate with Islam". These were coupled with Sultan Galiyev's wish of a "pan-Turanian ambition… to create a cast Tartar-Turkish state stretching from the Volga over Central Asia". [5]

Pan-Arabism was rejected by the communists of the CPSU(B) in the 1920s. Even so, it retained appeal to some democratic forces in Syria, Iraq and Egypt. The ICP however, never developed a consistent Marxist-Leninist relationship to pan-Arabism. This reflects its vacillations on the approach to the national democratic revolution.

The third anchor to steady us in the details, is the strategic aim of the USA. The ever-present interference and provocations of the imperialist powers from the Sykes-Picot Agreement onwards, made their calculations imperative. The Rogers Plan of 1970 was the prelude to a major shift in the Middle East, whereby the USA would wean over client states away from the USSR. But it was in 1979, that many USA plans came together. For example, finally installing Saddam Hussein into sole power in 1979, was USA work. The USA came to this, because of the removal by the masses of the Shah of Iran, and the emergence of Iran as an anti-Western theocracy. This change of guard, blew a blast that surged through the Middle East, making 1979 a pivotal year.

Another example is the invasion of Iraq to then remove Saddam Hussein, in 2003. Simply put, the USA wanted to redraw the Middle East map, dating from the First World War imperialists. The new USA ambition aimed at no less, than a so-called "**New Middle East**", which was casually revealed by 2006 Secretary of State, **Condolezza Rice**:

> "What we're seeing here [*in regards to the destruction of Lebanon amidst Israeli attacks on Lebanon*], in a sense, is the growing—the 'birth pangs'—of a 'New Middle East' and whatever we do, we [*United States*] have to be certain that we're pushing forward to the New Middle East [*and*] not going back to the old one." [6]

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[4] *W.B.Bland, 'The Case of Sultan-Galiyev"; for the ML Research Bureau Report No.3. December 2002; Reprinted Alliance ML 51; at: http://ml-review.ca/aml/MLRB/Sultan-Galiyev-FINAL.htm*
[5] *Edward H. Carr: "The Interregnum: 1923-24"; London; 1954; p.289; cited by Bland WB Ibid.*
[6] *Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Special Briefing on the Travel to the Middle East and Europe of Secretary Condoleezza Rice (Press Conference, U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C., July 21, 2006). Mahdi Nazemroaya, "Plans for Redrawing the Middle East: The Project for a "New Middle East"; Global Research;* https://www.globalresearch.ca/plans-for-redrawing-the-middle-east-the-project-for-a-new-middle-east/3882

This plan matured, before, during and after the invasion of the USA imperialist led the infamous "Coalition of the Willing" into Iraq. The USA and their long-time partners Israel and Saudi Arabia, tried to re-draw the map of the Middle East to their own favour.

Some progressives minimize or deny this aspect of the Gulf Wars, that culminated in the 2003 invasion. For example, **Muhammed Idress Ahmad** proposes a narrower neo-conservative game. He argues that the Israeli state 'played' the US state. [7] But this makes the tail wag the dog. Undeniably the Israeli state manipulated sections of USA leadership (and does today). But this manipulation was never unknowingly, or simply 'accepted' by the USA ruling class. The USA ruling class was never 'played'. The dice were always played loaded to the benefit of the USA.

Perhaps, at the start of the Iraqi wars, the end-game was not entirely clear to the USA ruling class itself. However the strategy of "re-drawing the map" of the Middle East quickly emerged. Whether this was a pre-planned deliberate policy, or whether it evolved out of a mix of incompetence, some imperial insights of a 'divide and rule' mentality, or sheer inability to control events, will continue to be debated.

At the very least, USA role in reigniting sectarianism cannot be denied. It was this that would put Iraq into a deep civil war. It is entirely possible that the full extent of the demons this USA policy would raise were not understood. However in due course, the demons emerged as ISIS. This is all reminiscent of the fueling of the Afghanistan Taliban by the USA. Then the USA used the Taliban as a spear against the revisionist USSR.

How did the USA operationalize its strategy? How after the USA led invasions of Iraq, and the fall of Saddam Hussein, did the USA inflame sectarian tensions between Sunni and Shi'ia in Iraq?
Even more pertinently, did the USA succeed in its strategic aims?

For the USA - as for the earlier Vietnam war – Iraq was a failure.
In fact the USA was forced by its weakness, to cede Iraq as a neo-colony to Iran.

This debacle for the USA evolved as the civil war in Iraq became too intense to allow the USA to remain so visible an occupying force.

Iran also wished to splinter the Iraqi state. But ultimately Iran saw a virtue in retaining single state, within which shell all meaningful power was exerted by the Shi'ia compradors it had nurtured.

Moreover, the USA had raised the demons of fundamentalism which rebounded on Western imperialist countries.

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[7] *Muhammed Idris Ahmad "The Road to War: Making of a Neocon War"; London 2014.*

Finally, the USA saw the renewed influence of the Russian state.

In fact *however it maneuvered*, the USA could not win the sole imperial authority it desired in the Middle East. This remains so now.

Understanding this context, makes 'sense' of the subsequent sordid war of the Assad fascists upon the Syrian revolution. In this, the nascent Syrian revolutionary movement from below, was first marginalized, then butchered. As the medieval reactionary fundamentalists were deliberately enabled by outside imperialists, they swarmed and suppressed the revolutionaries. In fact as we show, they were first set on their way by sectarianism in Iraq in the post-invasion period. Thereafter, the Syrian state released imprisoned fundamentalists into the fermenting violence, to attack the Syrian anti-Assad revolutionaries.

Into this maelstrom, were drawn inexorably, other contending powers.
Both Turkey and Iran had already been drawn into the Iraqi civil war.
But now into the Syrian mess would enter a newly resurgent, revanchist Putin-ite Russia.
We cover the Syrian revolutionary civil war in *Part 3.*

The final somber conclusion for Marxist-Leninists, is that unless there are united communist parties free of revisionism, the peoples of Iraq, Kurdistan, Iran, Syria and Lebanon - will not be able to resolve their anguish. The formation of these parties is an urgent task.

Format of this article
As in *Part 1*, we drastically compress key events into theses. We recognize this is not a leisurely style for readers. Furthermore, since this is not a standard history, there will likely be some gaps and discontinuity felt by readers. However, we hope that Marxist-Leninists may find this summary of key points, potentially helpful.

Spelling
Several alternatives of key words are used in differing texts.
We try to be consistent and stay with Ba'th (rather than Baath or Ba'ath); Shi'ia (Rather than Shia).

References
We cite sources by footnote-referencing. We appreciate that this runs a risk of 'academicism', but we prefer to verify statements. So we will minimize these footnotes.

For Iraq we follow several sources. As in Part One, of especial note are the already mentioned two invaluable works by **Hanna Batatu.** [3] In *Part Two* we primarily use the first of these. The second on Syria, is used extensively in *Part 3.* We make no apology for liberal use of these works. The detail of Batatu's work, do defy simplistic attempts to distill. We also again cite the history of the Kurds by **Malcolm McDowall**. In addition,

while **Patrick Cockburn** has received invective from some Marxists on Syria. However his journalistic reporting of modern day events in post-war Iraq are valuable.

The politics of Turkey are important here. We are fortunate to have detailed analyses by the late, veteran Marxist-Leninist, **Garbis Altinoglu.** [8] Yet we will miss his close eye on this work – as he died before a draft was complete. We also cite here works by the **Communist League**, and **Alliance North America**.

Naturally, several other sources are referenced, of which a few are singled out here. The work of the defunct '**Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq**" (**CARDI**) published in London in 1989, is an especially valuable multi-author volume. Writings by the late **Peter Sluglett** and **Marion Farouk-Sluglett** were also helpful. The Slugletts rebuke the simplistic tendency to lay all blame for puzzling events on a purely "Shi'i-Sunni sectarianism". [9] Regardless of their academic links, their insights are valuable.

This article follows conventional terminology for the parts of Kurdistan, as being: southeastern Turkey (Northern Kurdistan); Northern Syria (Rojava or Western Kurdistan); Northern Iraq (Southern Kurdistan); and Northwestern Iran (Eastern Kurdistan).

Finally we thank 'Espresso Stalinist', for having stimulated this work.

Update *October 2019*:
Having almost completed this present article, a Turkish invasion of Rojava and border areas of Syrian Kurdistan, was greenlighted by the USA President **Donald Trump** administration. This is only the latest tragedy on its peoples, one incurred by Kurdish leaders, as a penalty for attaching their wagon to the war machine of the USA. However the tragic outcome was entirely predictable – opportunistically relying on imperialism for progressive agendas does not work. Hence the overall thrust of this article did not need to be changed. The most recent events merely emphasize the opportunism of the Kurdish leaders, and the callous calculations of the USA imperialists, and Turkish Erdogan fascists.
The third and final part of this set of 'Theses on Kurdistan" will be web-published shortly. It will deal with the events in the Syrian Civil War, especially those relating to the Kurds.

Dedication to Garbis Altinoglu
While this work - *Part Two Theses on Kurdistan* - was being completed, the sad news came of the death of Garbis Altinoglu, a veteran Marxist-Leninist. He died as an exile in Antwerp in October 2019. We dedicate this work to his memory.

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[8] *In particular "Turkish Expansionism And Us Aggression Against Iraq;' Alliance Number 49; Special War Issue ; September 2002*
Http://Ml-Review.Ca/Aml/Allianceissues/Turkishexpansionismusagressionagainstiraq.Htm.
[9] *'Some reflections of the Sunni/Shi'I Question in Iraq"; Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies; Volume 5, No 2; 1978); pp.78-87*

Garbis was born an Armenian. He became closely associated with the revolutionary movement of Turkey. His career began as a follower of Mao. After close scrutiny he became aware of Hoxha and the Albanian struggle against Soviet revisionism. Garbis became an anti-revisionist of Hoxhaite persuasion. Coming to fascist military attention, he was imprisoned ten years of prison.

Garbis was taken under custody on December 31st, 1981 in Istanbul, where he was subjected to various torture methods for more than a month. Later he was taken to the city of Maraş, i.e. to the infamous torture chambers in the Maraş prison. There he spent an entire week inside of a then-newly invented torture device called "the turtle cage" as its very first subject. When he was taken out of the cage in which he could not move any of his muscles, he had become hunchbacked and was almost unable to walk. Such details have come to the surface a few years later via the confessions of a police officer who participated in the torture sessions. Garbis was sent from one prison to another upon custody. During and after every transfer to a new prison during his detention, he was subjected to lethal tortures and cell confinements. Between 1982-1983, he almost died due to severe tortures in the L-Type-Prison in Antep. The prison administration was obliged to airlift him to the Adana Cukurova University Hospital upon verdict. After receiving a long-term treatment there, he had once again narrowly escaped death.

After a while, he was transferred to the Sinop Prison, a city in the north coast of the country. In 1987, he spent 204 days in the underground cells that were infamously called "prison inside the prison". These cells were pitch-dark, completely closed and freezing-cold in winter with the extreme humidity of the coastal climate. His lawyer was able to visit him occasionally, therefore these inhumane conditions were brought to the public attention via media coverage with his lawyer's help. Subsequently, there was a national and international awareness campaign with the name "***the prisoner who shared his bread with rats***", through which Garbis' name became known to the Western European revolutionary and democratically minded people.

He withstood torture inside the Turkish fascist jails. He went on to play important roles in welding a Marxist-Leninist unity in Turkey. Although the latter part of his life was spent in exile in Belgium, he remained active and important in Turkish movements.

Dedicating this work to Garbis is particularly fitting since his pithy analyses of Turkey, are fundamental to this *Part Two*. He had closely read and corrected some historical errors in the draft of *Theses Part One*. His death preceded the completion of *Part Two*, which would have benefited from his vigilant eye. However – that was not to be. Nonetheless *Part Two* incorporates Altinoglu's analysis of Turkey and the war, the establishment of the Safe Havens, and the disruptive role of the PKK in Turkish revolutionary politics.

We believe that he would have agreed on the essential points in this report. Moreover,

he would approved of the intent – to provide progressives and Marxists with a clear history of these complex recent events in the Middle East. Altinoglu's life will be more fully commemorated elsewhere. Many of his articles are already on the Alliance web-site, and are referenced extensively in this work. For posterity, a page of Garbis Alintoglu articles has been placed on the **Marxist Internet Archive**, eventually that will archive all his available English translated works.

Table Of Contents

vii) Saddam Hussein's fascist dictatorship in Iraq over-reaches– The Iraq-Iran War; and the Halabja Massacre

6. The Overall 21ˢᵗ Century USA Strategy: To Redraw Middle Eastern Borders
Map 2: Proposed re-drawing Map of Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Peters (U.S. National War Academy).
7. The Gulf Wars
i) The Gulf Wars Against Iraq Start With The Kuwait Invasion – leading to the third USA Broken Promise to the Kurds
ii) Creation of the Safe Havens – a nidus of a Kurdistan or a USA outpost?
iii) Turkish plans to remove the safe havens
iv) Preparing the actual invasion of Iraq

8. The geopolitical stance of Turkey and its internal politics up to the Gulf Wars [10]
i) Turkish ruling class attitudes to the Kurds Since the First World War

ii) Moving towards fascism under Erdogan from 2002 onwards
iii) Initial Reluctance of the Turkish ruling classes to join the USA led Gulf Wars
iv) Increasing class warfare inside Turkey up to the invasion of Iraq
v) Playing The Turkoman Card – A Play For Mosul

9. The Iraqi puppet regime - US imperialist policy post-war
i) USA Identifies compradors early on, to form the later Iraqi Interim Government
ii) Step One: Ensuring a civil breakdown
iv) Step One: Ensuring a civil breakdown
v) Step Two: Enabling Shi'ia militia rule
vi) The Sunni Fundamentalists organise resistance
vii) Other Local State Involvement: Iran and Syria
viii) The Interim Government – the USA and Iran 'negotiate'
ix) Constitutional wrangles
x) The first elections of January 2005
xi) The second elections

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[10] *This section directly follows Garbis Altinoglu, and includes much verbatim quotation; see footnoted reference 12 (p.8). As well, we use these texts with modification (by shortening) direct quotations: Altingolu "Blood thirsty puppets of blood thirsty masters', for the Progressive Documentation and Information Center 2000;   " at http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/HIZBULLAHGA2000.HTM;*
Altınoğlu, "An Assessment of the Istanbul Bombings"; 2003; The original version is at "Turkish Marxist" at: http://www.turkishmarxist.dds.nl/english/articles.html; and at http://ml-review.ca/aml/PAPER/NOVEMBERDECEMBER2003/IstanbulBombings.htm
Altinoglu, "Notes On The History Of MLKP And The Revolutionary Movement In Turkey"; 2003 at: http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALL35MLCP%28TURKEY%29GA2000.HTM;
Altinoglu; "As Clouds Gather: Turkey and Kurdistan on the Eve of the US War with Iraq"; 2003; at http://ml-review.ca/aml/PAPER/March2003/KURDISTAN.html;

10. The PKK ('Workers' Party of Kurdistan')
i) Early opportunism
ii) The capture of Ocalan and his public recantation – call it treason
iii) The PKK Complicity with the USA Iraq war aims
iv) Turkey and PKK inside the 'Safe Havens'
v) Continuing Kurdish kow-towing to the USA – the Kurdish Regional Governments as 'outposts' of the USA

11. Conclusions

"Mother why have you brought me forth for injustice?
Except for me, the rain comes without clouds."
"Quoted in a communist Manuscript that was seized by Iraqi police in 1954 in Ba'qubah prison, Iraq. (Batatu; Ibid; p. 141)

Concerning the many taxes and dues made by the Iraqi shaikhs upon the peasant:
"And at the door of the peasant's hut, the dog of the sheikh is barking:
"Where is my right?"
(**Poet Muhammed Saleh Bahr-il 'Ulum,** *cited by Batatu, Ibid p. 144*).

1. Summary of the Major Relevant Parties in Iraq and the Kurdish Movement

i) The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) Up to 1948
We wish to provide detail to understand the heroic battles of the ICP cadre; in particular as it related to the battle for Kurdistan. We will examine a repetitive theme, the relationship of the communist party to the national bourgeoisie. This relationship dictates how to move from the first phase of the democratic revolution, to the subsequent second stage. Therefore we will outline the important organisations of the national bourgeois class. We will discuss in considerably more detail, the **Ba'th Party**.

1.   The earliest Middle Eastern attempts to organize communists are traced to **Joseph Rosenthal** who went to Egypt in 1898. [10] The 1917 Bolshevik revolution, had given momentum to Iraqi progressives, as elsewhere. **Husain al-Rahhal** returned to Iraq from Europe, and set up in December 1924, a journal called *al-Sahifa*.[4] It developed a Marxist-feminist critique of the 'veil' and the 'harem' for the first time in Iraqi circles, and introduced Marxism and Leninism into Iraq. Till then, workers and loose socialist movements had been subterranean and secret. Such as the 'Robin Hood-like' **al-Hizb as–Sirri al-Iraqi** (The Iraqi Secret Society) of 1922.[10] For safety, many early leftists worked within the developing national democratic parties (see #4). Initial open Marxist party forming steps, were disorganized and divorced from daily peasant and working class lives. But many later key founders (including Yusuf Salman Yusuf), were trained. The professional Assyrian revolutionary **Pyotr Vasili** was sent by the Comintern. He worked as a tailor, while secretly building the movement. [10]

2.   The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the **Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon (CPSL)** overlapped in activity. For example, the Lebanese paper As-Shams (The Sun), inspired, the founding of the first communist front organisation in Basra in 1926 - **Al-Hizb al-Hurr al-Ladini** (the Anti-Religious Liberal Party). [10] Khalid Bakdash was the leader of the CPSL, and tried to dominate the ICP, but was resisted (# 91-97). We will focus on the ICP. Several other intensely anti-British. progressive associations were formed as radical democratic parties. Communists worked inside them, for cover. For example, an early communist front was the Association of Liberals (**Jam'iyyat al-Ahrar**) in Basrah and Nasiriyyah, which raised the slogan "Regard all Arab countries as one country." [10] (*See also #90-92*).

3.   Communists became popular during the spurt of the working class between 1920-1923. The Iraqi working class formed in British industries during the Mandate. It was based in the railways, Basra port and the Iraq petroleum industry. Strikes in the Basra port were violently suppressed as early as in 1918. By 1927 the railway workers organised to demand a Labour Law and freedom for trade unions. The rail union evolved into **Jam'iyyat Ashab al-Sana'a** (Artisans

Association set up by **Muhammed Salih al-Qazzaz**). [11] This worked with the weak and vacillating, bourgeois nationalist parties – **Hizb al-Ikha' al-Watani (Party of National Brotherhood) and the Iraqi National Party (**led by **Jafar Abu t'Timman)**.

4.   The national bourgeoisie class threw up several parties. But most bourgeois democratic parties opposed to the British collapsed after 1920. But new parties sporadically re-rose. For example, the National Party was closed in 1922, but it restarted in 1928; only to shut down again in 1930.[10]. Later on, some national bourgeois parties capitulated and joined the cabinet, after Iraq obtained membership of the **League of Nations** in 1932. Indeed Hizb al-Ikha' al-Watani pledged to respect "international commitments" instead of abolishing the supine pro-British 1930 treaty. Another, the Hizb al-Watani al-Iraqi, suspended itself from any political activity.

5.   More resolute figures, remained active, including Timman. New formations arose: the **Muthana Club**, the **Independence Party**, the **Ahali group**, The **Association of People's Reform**, and the **National Democratic Party** – which continued to push a national bourgeois line. [10] They were closely allied to members of the Iraqi Army, such as **Bakr-Sidqi**, and later, **Colonel Sabbagh**, and the so-called **'Four Colonels".** These elements largely came from a mercantile background (*chalabi*, *see # 55*), or a professional or 'old' official aristocracy. [10] The most consistent organisation was the **National Democratic Party** (formed in 1946) which its leader, **Husain Jamil,** saw as "Carrying Iraq to the capitalist stage". [10]

6.   But by 1926, bourgeois democratic parties offered only limited 'cover' to communists. This political vacuum for progressives, meant more open communist organizing. Popular unrest was exacerbated by the international economic crisis. By 1929-1930 commodity prices of Iraqi dates, grains, and oil had depressed by 30%. [10] In 1930 popular revulsion rose against the British puppet Hashemite monarchy who signed a supine '**Anglo-Iraqi Treaty'.**

This fueled a general strike in 1931. The treaty obliged Iraq to:
"1. Consult closely with Britain in all matters of foreign policy...
2. To extend to Britain in times of war or threat of war..
3. To admit the importance of protecting Britain at all times..
4. To permit Britain to occupy two airbases... and turn over the Ports and Railways to private corporations under the control of Britain".
Police repression did not prevent wide working people's unrest, from Baghdad to Basra and the smaller towns of the Middle Euphrates. But after heavy suppression, attempts were made to set up yellow trade unions

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[11] *Hannah Batatu; Ibid; p. 295-8; 305; 372-74; 389; 393; 404-7; 411-12; 429-30; 819*

7.   Early efforts to establish a party in 1927 failed. But **Yusuf Salman Yusuf (**or '**Fahd'** meaning the 'Leopard' – first a clerk, then mechanic, miller, and ice-seller) succeeded in Basra and Nasirya.[4] Fahd was repeatedly arrested, from 1933. He worked with the slave **Ghali Zuwayyid, Sami Nader Mustafa**, and **'Abd-ul-Hamid al-Khatib** (trained in Moscow at KUTV). On 23-24 December 1932, Fahd issued the statement "Long live the Union of Workers and Peasants Masses of Arab Countries". This signaled a new communist party. By 1933, Basrah had 60 members.[10] Separate groups in Baghdad arose led by **Asim Flayyeh** (A graduate of Moscow based KUTV), **Qasim Hasan, Yusuf Usma'il, Zaki Khairi.**

8.   The Yellow Unions (*See #3*) were defeated by a strike wave, after which a **Workers Trade Union Federation** formed in December 1933. A huge boycott of the British Baghdad Electric Light and Power Company, lasted until January 1934, leading to banning of the union, and arrests. [12] **Hasan 'Ayyash**, a worker leading the Basra strikes, was poisoned in prison. It emerged that **'Abd-ul-Hamid al-Khatib** had betrayed both the trade unions and the fledgling party. [10]

9.   Finally the ICP took real shape. In its first manifestation, the ICP took an anti-imperialist form: **Lajna Mukafahat al-'Isti'mar was al-'Istiqlal** (Committee for Combatting Colonialism and Exploitation*)*, formed on 31 March 1934. By the 14 June 1935, it had renamed itself '**The Iraqi Communist Party**', and published **'Kifah-ush-Sha'b'** (The Struggle for the People). Its slogans in a manifesto of August 1935 called for:
"Abolition of the 1930 Treaty; the elimination of British military bases; the distribution of land among peasants; the enactment of a Labour Law and an 8 hour working day; the granting of democratic freedoms; the *Kurdish people's rights to independence*; the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies and the holding of genuinely free elections"; and "the launching without delay of the social revolution in all other areas of life and the liberation of the people from manifold subjections." [13]

        Quickly an early **'Pan-Arabism'** showed itself in the first 'auxiliary organisation' formed by the ICP – **Jam'iyyat al-Ahrar** (The Association of Liberals". Here the 1929 programme included the following: "To regard all Arab countries as one country". Moreover its members had to swear on "the honour of Arabism". [14]

10.   By 1935 however, many cadre were arrested and its press seized. Those left soon <u>correctly</u>, worked with the **Ahali** democrats. In October 1936 coup of **General Bakr Sidqi** bought a coalition to power of liberal democrats led by the

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[12] *U.Zaher; 'The Opposition'; In CADRI 19 1989; p.140; and Batatu Ibid p. 436*
[13] *U.Zaher; 'The Opposition'; In CADRI 19 1989; p.141-2*).

[14] *Batatu Ibid; p. 819*

Ahali. Sidqi's government was to last for four and half years. The Ahali had formed a new front, called the '**Association of People's Reform'**.

The ICP supported this coalition, and fomented strikes calling for an improved Labour Law. It also joined a newly formed **Popular Reform Society**, which called for:

"State ownership of certain public resources and institutions; the distribution of land to the peasants; the protection of rights of workers by limiting working hours; and the legalization of trade union organisations". [15]

In the General elections of 1936-37, the reformists only won twelve of the total 108 seats, and the communists two.

11.   <u>Such cooperation at this time, of the communists with the national bourgeois democrats was correct</u>.

But the relationship between the national bourgeoisie and the communist party remained a source of confusion for the ICP. It oscillated between supporting them to not supporting them.

A USSR critique of the ICP position, allowed some uncertainty. The **'Scientific Research Association for the study of National and Colonial Problems' (NIANKP**) in the USSR, criticised the move (January 1936), saying:

"While they speak of the elimination of exploitation in general, they mean the elimination of one definite exploitation, namely feudal exploitation".

Furthermore, NIANKP doubted whether even if the programme was fully eliminated that it would completely do away with feudal exploitation.

But it acknowledged this was a difficult task. [16]

Navigating the shoals of the two-stage National Democratic Revolution was to remain an on-going major problem for the ICP. [15]

12.   In fact both reformists and the ICP had over-estimated the 'progressive' nature of Colonel Sidqi. On 17 March 1937 Sidqi viciously attacked the ICP, and many progressive steps.

Yet Communists (Ghali Zuwayyid and Zaki Khairi) and leftists of the Association of Peoples Reform ('Abd-ul-Qadir Isma'il and Salih al-Qazzaz), roused the workers of Basrah and Baghdad into defence of progressives.

A huge strike wave was launched from March to April. Poverty was endemic, the port loading workers for instance, the '*masalikh'* (naked ones) earned as little as 45 fils (11 pence) for a 14 hour workday. [10] Leaders were arrested amid general repression, as communists and reformists withdrew from any governmental post or support. The communists went underground and the 'Association of People's Reform' was abolished. [10]

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[15] *U.Zaher; 'The Opposition'; In CADRI 19 1989; p.143*
[16] *Revolutionnyi Vostok, No 1(41); 1937; pp88-89); cited by Batatu Ibid pp.440-442; 444-446*

13.   When Bakr Sidqi was assassinated by a pro-British agent in August 1937, parliament declared communism illegal. The party ICP leadership headed by Khairi went underground, who was arrested. The ICP turned to new tactics. In especial it penetrated the army, making links with disaffected high and middle ranking army officers. By November 1937, there were over four hundred army ICP organisers, but many were discovered, jailed or executed. New laws made dissemination of Bolshevism in the armed forces or police a capital offense.

14.   Once more, the ICP resurrected itself, in a hydra-like fashion, repeated several times over the next 20 years. **'Abdallah Mas'Ud** began to organise cells. Yusuf Salman Yusuf (Fahd - *#6*), sent to the Soviet Union for training, returned to Iraq in January 1938, and took the Mas'Ud cells to a higher level. But in 1941 Mas'Ud was arrested, and Fahd ('the leopard') was elected general Secretary of the ICP.

15.   Now "Four Colonels" or the "Golden Square" - **Colonel Salah al-Din al-Sabbagh, Colonel Kamil Shabib, Colonel Fahmi Said,** and **Colonel Mahmud Salman** - took charge. These army officers were pro-Nazi compradors, cultivated by the German ambassador **Fritz Grobba**. They conspired to overthrow the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq and expel British forces. The British intervened and three plotters, and many supporters, were executed. Later, another Nazi supporter - **Rashid Ali al-Gayanli -** overthrew the government in 1941. He established links to the German Nazis, as the Second World War loomed. In a British short-lived war, he was removed. During this episode, the ICP unwisely supported him; and sought his aid.[17]
We characterise this move as an <u>opportunist, incorrect and anti-Soviet action</u> on the part of the ICP. The British re-invaded the country and after a war lasting only 28 days, re-installed their Regent 'Abd-ul-Illah.

16.   During World War Two, both the ICP and its General Secretary Fahd became popular. In February 1944, the First Party Conference drafted the **National Charter.** This proclaimed the party's opposition to imperialism and foreign exploitation and advocated the establishment of a democratic form of government.
In regard to the Kurds it "stressed the equality of the rights of Kurds and Arab peoples and the national rights of the Kurdish people… and stipulated the formation of a branch under the name, the Kurdish Branch of the ICP." [18]

17.   In September 1945, the ICP established the **'Anti-Zionist League'**.
Fahd had <u>correctly</u> attacked the government's stand on **Zionism**:
"The Iraqi government is attempting to hide the real cause of the catastrophe suffered by the Arab people of Palestine. It wants to cover up for British colonialism and to hide Zionism… Thus it portrays the Arab Jews, who have no

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[17] *Batatu Ibid p. 453-458*
[18] *Zaher Ibid; p. 143; 144*

connection whatsoever with colonialist Zionism and with whom we have lived together for many generations without conflict, as if they were its cause, and it therefore directs the peoples wrath against them." [19]
Yet the actions of **Gromyko** at the UN supporting the establishment of the state of Israel hurt the prestige of the ICP considerably. [20]

18.   In Iraqi Kurdistan, the first communist cells were established in 1941-42 in Arbil and Sulaimanya. The first Kurdish language paper of the ICP was **Azadi (Salvation)** in 1944. But a major blow to the ICP was the capture of Fahd and several other leaders in January 1947 (*see below*). Although he was sentenced to death, upon international pressure this was amended to life imprisonment. Nonetheless, despite these set-backs the ICP became the main political force of the **January 1948 national uprising** known as **al-Wathbah** ('**the Leap').**

19.   The 1946 June 28 demonstrations against government massacres at Gawurpaghi, had signaled a coming overt class war. But the precipitating event of the 1948 Al-Watabh, was the Monarchy's attempt to revise the Anglo-Iraqi 1930 Treaty. This **Portsmouth Agreement,** extended the 1930 treaty.
To make it appear more palatable, the Sunni PM signator of the 1930 treaty (**Nuri as-Said**) ensured the Shi'ia **Salih Jabr** would be prime Minister.
At a secret meeting, the Iraqi cabinet agreed to the terms of the Portsmouth Agreement. When this became public, the **Independence Party** called demonstrations on 6th January. The ICP were slow to endorse these, but by 15 January a letter from the imprisoned Fahd ensured mobilization. Again at this time the <u>correct</u> policy was to work with the democrats in a United Front, was adopted.

20.   The terms of the Portsmouth Treaty were essentially the same as those of the discredited 1930 Treaty. Wide spread anger fueled protests, now firmly led by the ICP. The ***shargiwiyyas*** (the 'easterners', or the **mudhut dwellers**) and the Schalchiyyah rail workers joined. Police fire murderously suppressed the demonstrations on January 20th. But furious protests forced the Regent 'Abd-ul-Illah to rescind the treaty. This appeased the Independence Party, but the ICP and the masses surged further.
<u>It was then that the party could have, and should have broken with the democrats – who had stalled.</u>

21.   However the ICP did not challenge the Monarchy, instead merely calling for separation of the Monarchy and regent from the British.

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[19] *U.Zaher; 'The Opposition'; In CADRI 19 1989; p.144.*

[20] *For details see Alliance Number 30, "Marx, Lenin and Stalin on Zionism"; October 1988; at http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/All30table.htm*

In fact the ICP <u>explicitly reneged</u> on the masses who were moving forward, while the ICP instead reassured the ruling powers that "there was no danger of a 'civil war' or of 'a communist revolution'. [21]

Even as the ICP held back the masses, the latter pushed forward, although leaderless. They were brutally put down by machine gun fire. The numbers of dead are estimated at between 300-400. Admittedly the ICP was severely hampered by many of its leadership being in jail.

<u>Nonetheless, the ICP had</u> <u>blinked</u> at a moment when it could have carried the momentum. Despite its reneging on the masses, the ICP experienced a great growth in its membership thereafter. Throughout the spring, up to May major marches and student and worker strikes took place.

But by summer the Leap had stalled.

22.   This flinching of the ICP from taking revolutionary command, reflected an internal inconsistency, or wavering in the line of the ICP.

In pubic its statements in February 1948, were correctly <u>guarded</u> about the national bourgeoisie, and <u>negative</u> about any potential leading role for the national bourgeoisie.

It <u>correctly</u> stated that the current stage of the "democratic bourgeois revolution" was "under the leadership of the proletariat", and that the Iraqi "national bourgeoisie was "weak politically and... apprehensive" of "the growing over of the democratic into the socialist revolution"; and "disposed to come to terms with the imperialists at the expense of the masses". [20]

But at the same time, it made other conflicting statements.

For instance, Fahd, in prison letters was much more <u>positive</u> about the national bourgeoisie, saying:

the "unity of the ranks in the national movement" should be safeguarded;

"no partial difference should be allowed to develop into a total difference… It is necessary to turn to account all patriotic elements, whatever their social inclinations, that are willing to come along even if half of the way". [20]

23.   In later statements from the summer of 1948, the ICP once again deferred to the national democrats of the front. However, the democrats of the Cooperation Committee *refused* to work with the ICP.

By the summer of 1948, the revolutionary thrust had ended, and the ICP was isolated. Worse, the party cells were destroyed, its registers, ciphers and correspondence seized by the police. This was traced to the informer '**Abd-ur-Razzaz** of the Central Committee.

24.   Three Central Committee members, **Fahd, Zaki Basim and Muhammed Husain ash-Shabibi** were executed by public hanging in February 1949.

This grave loss, left the party in the hands of extremely inexperienced youth. The

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[21] *Batatu Ibid p. 553-555; 559; 561-562; 564; 642; 461; 664; 667-70;666-670; 680-689; 710.*

leadership of **Shlomo Dallal l**ed the party into an <u>ultra-left, virtual annihilation</u>, calling for a "<u>decisive battle</u>".

By June 1949 five warring factions of the ICP were organised into groups. Effectively the party was rendered unimportant for a few years.

From its start of around 60 members in 1933, it had grown to more than a 1000 by 1942. At its pinnacle it was 3000-4000 in 1948, when in comparison the largest legal Democratic party (The National Democratic party) numbered 6,961. But by end 1949, the ICP was a "a few hundreds" in size. [19]

25.   The rebuilding of the party is credited to **Bah'-u-d-Din**, a Kurd. The ICP remained confused about the relationship of the national democratic struggle and the role of communists within it.
      For now, the ICP "comingled" with the National Liberation Front, which "led to the clouding if not the "breakdown of membership standards", as an internal party critique later put it". [20] Given how it had waned, it should have engaged in a united front. But the breakdown of a separate communist identity was incorrect.

26.   Effectively the ICP had thrown away the leadership role in the democratic liberation. By this stage it had become quite tail-ist.

      But it grew again. Both the "government by starvation" in the cities, and the agrarian discontent of the Shi'ia tribe of Al-Azairiju and in the Erbil Kurd tribe of Diza'l – refueled the ICP. [20]
      By November 1952, an **Intifadah** rose, led by a United Front of the democrats and the ICP. However the leadership was firmly in the hands of the national bourgeois ex-premier **Taha al-Hashiumi.**
      The ICP led the street in rebellion, but the actual slogans raised were for **Khamil ach-Chadirchi**, leader of the **National Democrats**. Martial law and a military government took over, and suppressed the street. With new waves of arrest, Bah-U-d-Din was taken.
      The new Leader of the ICP was **Hamid Uthman**, who continued a severe <u>ultra-left, adventurist turn.</u>

27.   A series of individual mutual pacts (Turkey and Pakistan; Iraq-USA; Turkey-Iraq; Iraq and Britain) collectively made up the so-called **Bagdad Pact** of 1954-55. The monarchist, very pro-British Prime Minister **Nuri-as Said** agreed to them. Collectively, these mutual Pacts enabled imperialism to enchain Iraq, more than the Portsmouth treaty had.
      <u>The masses were seething</u>.
      Yet the weak ICP was *incapable* of reacting vigorously, and the people of Iraq had been put down so often recently, that they did not take to the streets.

Despite their weakness, the <u>ICP mistakenly *refused* </u>to join in United Fronts against the Baghdad Pact. The Democrats approached the ICP to do so, but their proposals were rejected in harsh language towards ach-Chadirchi.
In fact the ICP now characterised the <u>entire national bourgeoisie</u> as having deserted the revolutionary front, or "neutralist". [13] Yet the objective circumstances of the now much weaker ICP, did not support their rejection of a united front. Confusingly, as the individual Baghdad pacts got signed, the ICP changed its mind and approached the Democrats it had previously vilified.

But in a new National Front, the ICP were simply side-lined in preparations for new elections. The National Front democratic members were successfully elected, but parliament was suspended. [19]
In reaction, rash and suicidal – but weak - open street battles were launched by the ICP. These resulted in the physical destruction of the ICP membership, who had no support in the streets.

In the post-mortem, ultra-leftist Uthman was removed (he joined the Kurdish Democratic Party). At the request of the ICP, the **Tudeh** (Communist Party of Iran) investigated the splinters of the ICP, and concluded that "<u>There was no genuine Marxist-Communist party in Iraq</u>"; [19]

28.   Any assessment of the ICP must account for its hesitation on the brink of the first stage of the national democratic revolution during the Leap – or al-Wathbah. The ICP might have moved the revolution into the second, socialist stage then.
But having blinked, it then compounded its error, by moving first to a rightist slavishness to the national bourgeoisie.
And, then it swung into an ultra-left rejection of any united front at all.

It is true that the ICP had huge problems when Fahd and others were imprisoned and then executed. However underlying its swings, was a more fundamental problem.
This was it never applied consistently the Marxist-Leninist theory of the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries, and it clearly did knot understand it.
This led to an oscillation on this matter, back and forth.
Complicating all this was the remarkable interference of **Khalid Bakdash** *(see #91-97)*.
We will return later, to the ICP to examine its policies during the Qaseem period. It was during Qaseem's rule that the ICP was to repeat the great error they had made in the al-Wathabh.

29.   Nonetheless, despite its setbacks, the ICP changed the language of societal debate. This is small comfort for Marxist-Leninists, or more acutely for the people of Iraq. But, as the Slugletts point out:
"Although the Party… never held power, it had sufficient impact to ensure that its

various rivals have found it necessary to grant elements of Marxist economic and social thought onto their nationalists or Ba'thist ideologies: every government which has come into power since1958 has had at least to pay lip-service to ideas of economic and social reforms in order to achieve some degree of legitimacy". [22] Under the later murderous Ba'th regimes, the members of the ICP were viciously eliminated, leaving the ICP incapable of any major role.

30.   There also existed a "pro-Albanian" communist group of Kurdish origin. This group, which called itself **Kawa** followed a similar political evolution during the second half of the 1970's. A section of Kawa accepted the theory of "Three worlds" and took the name **Denge Kawa** ('Voice of Kawa'); but was dissolved before 1980. A comparatively strong organization in Turkish Kurdistan, Kawa itself was almost totally dissolved after the military coup d'etat of 12 September 1980, due to a liquidationist trend and lost most of its following to the PKK. Toward the end of 1980's Kawa slowly began to reconstitute itself and took the name **Yekitiya Proletaryaye Kurdistan ('Proletarian League of Kurdistan')** and held a congress in 1992, where it adopted a semi-revisionist, semi-Trotskyite, anti-Stalinist and nationalist stand. This ideological retrogression prevented Kawa from becoming a real force and joining in the discussions for the "Unity of communist forces" that began at the end of the 1980's. This stand also faithfully reflected the reformist and liquidationist political and organizational line of Kawa leadership, which has converted Kawa into a shadow of its former existence. [23]

ii) The Kurdish Nationalist parties

31.   **Mulla Mustafa Barzani** gained tribal leadership of the Barzanis, following his father, **Sheikh Mahmoud**. The latter led Kurdish struggles against the British mandate. Following the fall of the **Mahabad Republic**, the Iranian Army executed its leaders including **Gazi Muhammed**, in 1946 (*Theses Part 1*). After the fall of the Mahbad Republic, Mulla Mustafa escaped, leading the Barzani fighting force of tribesmen into the USSR sanctuary. Mulla Mustafa's leadership was taken over in 1975, by his son, **Massoud Barzani**.

32.   The origins of the **Kurdistan Democratic Party** (**KDP**) lie in Barzani's years in the Mahabad Republic. In 1946 Mulla Mustafa Barzani (1903-1979) was appointed commander of the army of the Mahabad Republic. Tensions between Barzani and the leader of the Mahabad republic - **Gazi Muhammed** were inevitable. Gazi Muhammed had always insisted that only the rule of the **Iranian**

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[22] *Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett:'"Conflict and Communism in Iraq"; Gazelle Review of Literature on the Middle East, Gazelle Review, No 8, 1980; p.17; cited by U.Zaher; 'the Opposition'; in CADRI Ibid*

[23] This is taken verbatim from Garbis Altinoglu; "Notes On The History Of MLKP And The Revolutionary Movement In Turkey';http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALL35MLCP%28TURKEY%29GA2000.HTM

Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) – established by himself with Soviet guidance - should operate in Mahabad.

Mulla Mustafa therefore maneuvered to establish an Iraqi KDP, and became the KDP's president at its founding congress in Baghdad in 1946. But this of necessity confronted prior Iraqi Kurdish organisations. But as seen, after the fall of the Mahabad Republic, the Iranian Army executed its leaders including Gazi Muhammed, in 1946.

33.   Up till the formation of the KDP, the Iraqi Kurdish nationalist forces were to be found either inside the **Iraqi Communist Party (ICP)**, or working with it. These Kurdish forces included **Darkar** (woodcutters) later becoming **Hiwa** (Hope); and **Komali Brayathi** (Brotherhood Society); and the Kurdish section of the ICP, known as **Shurish** ('Revolution', originally known as **Rizgari Kurd** or, Kurdish Liberation). **Ibrahim Ahmad** was the representative of the (KPDI) in Iraq, and resisted Barzani's moves.

34.   Barzani wished to dissolve the existing Iraqi Kurdish forces, into an entity which he could dominate. Therefore Barzani sent **Hamza Abd Allah**, a member of '*Shurish'*, to propose to "merge all Kurdish organizations in Iraq". [24] At that time the ICP stated in its journal *al Qa-ida,* a support for the 'right of self-determination for every community and nationality.' [25]

35.   But Kurdish autonomy had not been a consistent policy in the ICP. This allowed Barzani as chief of the tribal elders, to gain support from members of the ICP. Moreover both '*Rizgari'* and '*Shurish'*, were under intense repression from the British, and therefore dissolved themselves.

Therefore, the **Kurdish Democratic Party,** later the **Kurdistan Democratic Party** (**KDP**) was formed in 1946.

When Mulla Mustafa Barzani led the Barzani fighting force of tribesmen into the USSR sanctuary, he remained President-in-exile of the KDP. Later his leadership was taken over in 1975, by his son, **Massoud Barzani**.

36.   The new KDP of Iraq held its first congress in Baghdad on August 16, 1946. The 32 delegates elected a central committee with Hamza Abd Allah as secretary-general, **Shaykh Latif** and **Kaka Ziyad Agha** as vice-presidents, and Barzani as president-in-exile.

The party demanded only an autonomy for Iraqi Kurdistan, stating that the political and economic situation of the Kurds in Iraq was different from that of Iran. Of itself, this position <u>weakened moves to a pan-Kurdish state</u>.

Moreover, the party programme was not specific about any social or economic content, so as not to alienate the highly conservative tribal chiefs and landlords. However at the 3rd Congress, it called for agricultural reform and labour and

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[24] *McDowall D, 'A Modern History of the Kurds; Ibid; p.296*
[25] *McDowall D, 'A Modern History of the Kurds; Ibid; p.294-296*

peasant rights. Even so, it avoided advocating open class struggle.

37.   The **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan** (PUK) was formed and led by **Jalal Talabani** (1933-2017). But it was set up later than the KPD, after a major defeat for Kurdish forces (Following the Second betrayal of the Kurds by the USA – see below). It was set up in Damascus, in June 1975. [12]
Just like the KPD, the PUK is not a modern bourgeois party. The party was formed from splits within the KDP dating from 1963 (*see # 142*). The PUK was an umbrella for two Iraqi groups: *Komala*, a grouping led by **Nawshirwan Mustafa Armin** which adopted some Marxist-Leninist positions; [26] and the *Socialist Movement of Kurdistan (KSM)* led by **Ali Askari**.
In practice the PUK has often taken a position in defence initially of Syrian Ba'thists, and later on, of Iranian and Turkish bourgeois policies.
As shown by the later negotiating positions taken to the formation of the post-Iraq invasion Interim Government – the PUK were largely comprador agents of the Iranian state (*see #40*).

38.   Other less significant forces in the Kurdish movement which cannot be discussed here, included:
The Kurdistan Popular Democratic Party (KPDP)
The PASOK formed in 1959, later to reform itself as 'The Kurdish Socialist Party' (KSP).

39.   Both KDP and PUK parties are based on the semi-feudal authority of warlords. Neither are modern bourgeois parties. Rather they are based on the semi-feudal authority of warlords and represent the traditional leaderships of different and often feuding clans and tribes, who speak different dialects of the Kurdish language. They represent the traditional leaderships of different and often feuding clans and tribes, who speak different dialects of the Kurdish language. Officially, both have rejected the break-up of the Iraqi state, and instead they demanded autonomy inside the borders of "a democratic and federal Iraq". As justification they cited the unfavorable balance of forces.
They in effect, rejected the *right* of the Kurdish nation to secede and form an independent state.
Yet, reflecting their base of the semi-feudal Kurdish landlords and bourgeoisie, rather than those of workers and peasants, these parties almost incessantly fought against each other.

40.   They both adopted comprador positions, and placed hopes for a national state of Kurdistan upon external powers. At different times, the two parties, placed their hopes for a national state of Kurdistan upon one or other of the local oppressing states (i.e. Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria) or of the dominant imperialisms. They

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[26] *McDowall D; Ibid; p. 343*

pandered to USA imperialism, and to Israel who began to assist the KDP in 1966. [27] Furthermore, largely, with the instigation of the Turkish military, the KPD and the PUK both fought against PKK forces**.**

41.   The **PKK** ("Workers Party of Kurdistan") was formed in 1978. **It was first known as the Kurdistan Devrimcileri** (Kurdistan Revolutionaries). After this it had several more name changes. Following the capture of the organization's leader **Abdullah Öcalan**, "the movement eventually converted itself from a 'party' to a 'congress' in its 8th ordinary congress, which ended in April 2002. The PKK became **KADEK** ("Freedom and Democracy Congress of Kurdistan"; Kongreya Azadîya Demokrasîya Kurdistan). [28] Since the 1980s and especially in the wake of the start of guerilla warfare in Turkish (that is, Northern) Kurdistan in 1984, it had taken refuge in Southern Kurdistan establishing bases and mass support there. We will discuss the PKK in more detail below (*See Chapter 10*).

iii. Shi'ia based parties

The divisions in Muslim theology between Sunni and Shi'ia have been discussed previously *(#7-10, Part One)*. In Iraq, the differences _within_ the Shi'ia movement, became potent sources of political division, in post-invasion Iraq (*See #214-218*).
Hence some understanding of the sectarian differences within the Shi'ia traditions in Iraq (and Iran) is relevant to Marxist-Leninists.

42.   The Shi'ia in Iraq were forcedly converted to Shi'ia-ism by the **Safavids** of the 16th century. As we discussed *(Theses Part One)*, the Safavids were chronically at war with the Ottomans.
Since 1501 in Iran (Persia) the clergy formed a part of the state apparatus, since Shi'ia became a state religion.
However in Iraqi (formerly Ottoman) territory, the Shi'ia were subordinated to those following the Ottoman Sunni faith. Therefore, in these Sunni areas, the **ulema** (clergy), developed in a distinct and separate path from the State.
The power of the ulema was vested in the *mujtahids* (qualified interpreters of Sharia law). Their leaders most well regarded, were the **Marj'iyyah**, with their supreme religious leader being the **Marji' al-Taqlid**.

In Iraq, the Shi'ia clergy were located around the shrines of **Kerbala, Samarra, Khadamiyah, Kufa and Najaf**. These shrines surround the sites of massacres of Shi'ia. Of these the most important was in AD 680 of Shi'ia martyrs **Imam Hussein** (grandson of the Prophet Mohammed and son of Ali), and his half brother **Imam Abbas**. Kerbala was where they were killed.

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[27] *McDowall Ibid; p.320*
[28] *Özcan, Ali Kemal; "Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan"; Routledge, 2005. p.53.*

Yearly a great procession of Shi'ia commemorates this in the **Arba'in**, which often became in recent years a political force.

Historically in these shrine cities the ulema actively converted the Bedouin tribes. The practice arose as these holy cities were vulnerable to attacks from the anti-Shi'ia Wahhabi from Arabia. They were repeatedly targeted and sacked in the years up to the 1800s. The Southern location of the shrines explains the domination of the Shi'ia in Southern Iraq, and the Sunni in the North *(#56; Map 1)*.

In a pattern that extended to today, clerics critical of the Iraqi regime tended to live in Qom (Iran); and, those critical of the Iranian government live in Najaf.

When the Iranian revolution broke out, and seized power in December 1978 – January 1979 (*see #146*), it came to be dominated by the Khomeini Shi'ia reactionary clergy.
Following this all Shi'ia clerics in Iraq – had to take a position on Iran.

Two tendencies within the **Marj'iyyah** existed:
Taqqiyya ('quietism') –a dissimulation and evasion by the faithful to avoid confrontation with secular power. It emphasized only a 'pure' religion.
This was preached by the Iraqi **al-Khoei** clerical family, and that of **al-Sistani**. [29]

And:
Wilayat al-Faqih (a Learned Jurist). This preached a political activism where an overt political role was played by the Marji' al-Taqlid (supreme leader). This included the head of governments, in a rule exerted by the 'Learned Jurist'.
This school was preached by the **al-Sadr** family of clerics. It was also followed by **Ayatollah Khomeini**. [29]

The al- Da'wa (the Call)

43.   In 20th century Iraq, as secular parties (nationalist and communist) gained traction, the power of the Shi'ia clergy waned. The Shi'ia **hawza** (A Shi'ia seminary) was once a sought out destination. But these declined as the clergy became perceived as irrelevant. At the same time, the great pilgrim processions of the Najaf and Kerbala shrines dwindled. Together, this lowered donations (*khums*) to the hawza, and correspondingly the salary to the ulema and their retinues.
Some clerics saw a need to organise parties, in order to keep the clergy relevant.

The family of **Mohammed Baqir al-Sadri** claim a lineage back to the Prophet Mohammed. His father had preached against the 1920 British occupation.
Baqir al-Sadr started the party **al-Da'wa** (The Call) in Najaf in 1957; which was

supported by the **Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim.** [29]
It can be seen that an affinity for political activism made Baqir al-Sadr a cleric
following the **Wilayat al-Faqih** variant of Shi'ia-sm.

Nonetheless, as we shall see, Baqir al-Sadr came heavily under attack from
Hussein. Finally around 1980, Baqir forbad students of the seminary (Hawza)
joining al-Da'wa, in an attempt to divert Hussein's attacks.

Thereafter the al-Da'wa was controlled by **Abu al Qasim al-Khoei**.
It took on the positions thereafter of a pro-Iranian comprador party.
It had close relationships with the SCIRI and Badr also (*see below #45*).

44. General Qaseem's coup of 1958, improved conditions for Shi'ia in Iraq. But the
     Ba'ath military coup of 1963, and 1968, reversed these.
     While al-Da'wa was focused on resisting secularism, it also developed activist
     social relief efforts in the poorest of the Shi'ia community.
     Iraq-Iran tensions began to grow larger under Ba'thist rule.
     Saddam Hussein in 1969, tried to deport all Iranian nationals in Iraq, many of
     whom were Shi'ia clergy. These moves were resented by the Shi'ia community,
     and huge religious gatherings took on the form of protests.

     When Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim's died in June 1970, his funeral
     gatherings drew masses. Such massive shows of political opposition worried the
     Saddam Hussein security state. His successor as Grand Ayatollah, was **Abu al
     Qasim al-Khoei**.

     In contrast to Mohammed Baqir al-Sadr's activism, Khoei adopted the 'quiet-est'
     line (**Taqqiyya** *See #42*). But correspondingly, Da'wa's influence on disaffected
     Shi'ia grew, in turn leading to Da'wa's suppression. Al-Khoei adopted a non-
     committal position as regards the Iranian Khomeini government. He was guarded
     but not openly critical of the Iraqi Hussein regime.

     Saddam Hussein attempted to co-opt Mohammed Baqir al-Sadr, but he was
     rejected. Shi'ia discontent was suppressed, but it broke out during religious
     processions. In 1977 spontaneous, mass processions by pilgrims took part in the
     annual Arba'in Procession. This was the 40th day of mourning for Imam Hussein's
     martyrdom. On this occasion, pilgrims spontaneously raised open and vehement
     anti-Hussein slogans. State helicopter and ground attacks killed 16 pilgrims. By
     1979, Hussein had seized absolute power, and he now moved to attack
     members of al-Da'wa. As we saw at this stage, Baqir al-Sadr removed himself
     and his students from al-Da'wa.

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[29] *Patrick Cockburn, "Muqtada al-Sadr: The Shia Revival & the Struggle for Iraq"; New York;
2008; p 27-57; 50; 89; 103*

However, since Baqir openly supported Iranian **Aytaollah Khomeini**, he was bound to be a target. Indeed, Baqir was executed by Hussein in 1980, becoming the First Martyr, or Sadr I.

Attempting to control the Shi'ia, Saddam Hussein seized the nomination process for Shi'ia leaders. He chose in 1992, **Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr**, as a state sponsored appointee for the new Marji' al-Taqlid. Sadiq al-Sadr was the cousin, and student of the murdered Baqir al-Sadr.

While Sadiq al-Sadra was more circumspect than his murdered cousin, he shared most of the dissident views on the social activism of the **Wilayat al-Faqih** strand *(see #42).* Crucially, he turned away from the support of Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini. He objected to Khomeini claiming a single ruler status (*learned jurist status*), over all Shi'ia everywhere in every state. When Sadiq al-Sadr proclaimed his own leadership over Iraq's Shi'ia, he was repudiated by the Iranian clergy, and the Iranian offices of al-Sadr were closed. [29]

Sadiq al-Sadra resurrected public Friday prayers, which had been frowned on by Saddam Hussein. Sadiq intended to use them as a political tool to counter Saddam Hussein's propaganda. He turned the Friday prayers into potent anti-Hussein expressions. [29] In his resistance he was courting reprisal of course. Finally, he and two of his sons were killed by Saddam Hussein in February 1999. He is also thus known as the Second Martyr, or Sadr II.

Later, his surviving youngest son, the cleric **Muqtada Sadr**, would head a militia. But this now took an anti-Iranian position, as well as an anti-USA position. The later political influence of Muqtada Sadr, derives in large part from his family relationship to the Sadr Martyrs I and II.

The Supreme Council for Islamic revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).

45.   As the Da'wa was driven underground the Shi'ia masses became leaderless. The **Organization for Islamic Action (OIA)** sprouted out of the Lebanese Shi'ia **Amal** miltia. They started bombing in Baghdad, which was followed by more Shi'ia repressions. Many Shi'ia clergy fled to Iran.
There in November 1982, **Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim** (a son of the dead former Grand Ayatollah) formed the **Supreme Council for Islamic revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)** – to unite the Dawa and the OIA. The Iranian state funded SCIRI, hoping to use it during the Iraq-Iran War. Its armed wing was the **Badr Organisation,** commanded by an Iranian Colonel. This drew many recruits from Iraqi refugees and Iraqi prisoners of war during the 8 year long Iraqi-Iranian war. Its sectarian activities became part of the start of the post-invasion Iraqi Civil War (*See #215*).

Effectively –the Da'wa, SCIRI and Badr were pro-Iranian comprador forces.

2. The British Mandate and Monarchy in Iraq

46.   Between 1920-1930 Iraq was a colony of the British, by virtue of the League of Nations Mandate of 1920. The colony, was ruled for the British, by the compradors of the Monarchy, the shaikhs and the **mallaks** (landlords).

> "From the period of the monarchy in 1921, power in Iraq was.. shared in various degrees by the British, the king, the ex-Sharifan officers-turned-mallak, bureaucrat-mallak, and shaikh-mallak families. The British had.. the paramount hand until the conclusion of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty in 1930. Thereafter the other elements were largely left in control of Iraq's internal life". [30]

> In 1932 a nominal independence was given to Iraq. Between 1932-1958, it was a semi-colony ruled by the monarchy with the landlord class, on behalf of Britain. Throughout this period the class exploitation of the peasants became more intense. Starving peasants moved to the towns and cities occurred, and the working class grew. It grew in tandem with its nemesis – the capitalist class. In Iraq the capitalists took the form of a national capitalist class. They were constrained by British imperialism and its compradors, including the Monarchy.

Attempts by the national bourgeoisie, under Sidqi, to wrest a control of the state, ultimately failed. However the Sidqi attempt historically, can be seen as a rehearsal for the much later successful Qaseem.

i) British and the Lure of the Oil of Mosul, the Mandate Period

In *Part One Theses on Kurdistan*, we pointed (*Theses #56-61*), [31] that the promises of the **King-Crane Commission** to the Kurds for a national homeland were betrayed by the imperialists. This was the **First Imperialist Betrayal of the Kurds.** Moreover, we noted (*#50*) that under the **Sykes-Picot Agreement** the French and British had clashed over future reserves of oil. Both the Mosul vilayet and Kirkuk, were known to harbour oil:

> "the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) between Britain, France and Imperial Russia… planned… France was to obtain the vilayet of Mosul, and the Arab Territories were to be split between France and Britain. But the British later simply unilaterally seized the prized Mosul four days after the 1918 armistice, forcing the Turkish commander to sign terms relinquishing Mosul."

And this antagonized the newly emerged state of Turkey under **Kemal Attaturk**:

> "But by January 1920, the 'National Pact' under Kemal, had made clear Turkish intent towards the former Ottoman provinces. This stated that "all the districts

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[30] *Batatu Ibid p. 439*
[31] *http://ml-today.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/theses-on-kurdistan.pdf*

inhabited by a non-Arab Muslim population were to be an integral part of Turkey" – meaning the Mosul vilayet."

Also, in part One, we discussed that after World War One, the **League of Nations Mandate of 1920** gave Britain a "mandate for Iraq". This enabled it to continue to occupy the contested oil rich area of **Mosul**. The focus of many machinations was the **Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC)**.

47.   Even before World War One, the British were anxious to ensure an oil supply. **Winston Churchill,** then First Lord of the Admiralty, said to the 1912 Royal Commission investigating the British navy's oil needs:
       "We must become the owners or at any rate the controllers at the source of at least a proportion of the oil which we require." [32]

48.   In 1912, an international consortium of several companies (Anglo-Dutch Shell, the British owned National Bank of Turkey, German Deutsche Bank, and an individual Ottoman - C.S.Gulbenkian) combined to form the **Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC)**. TPC was given a concession to explore for oil in the Baghdad and Mosul vilayets. A few days before the start of First World War One, the British Government purchased 51% of the shares of the **Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOI)**. Since the APOI already had a 50% ownership of the TPC, this gave the British Government the major stake in the TPC. To block USA entry into the oil fields, the British promised that no oil exploration would occur in the Middle East (bar Egypt, Kuwait and 'transferred territories' on the Turco-Persian border). But this was misleading, since surveys by 1919 had already shown the presence of a major oil supply.

49.   After the end of the War, but before signing the **Treaty of Versailles** (April 1919), the British and French tried to settle the 'ownership' of Mosul between themselves, *without* the USA:
       "a provisional oil agreement had been signed by the British and French petroleum Ministers, Long and Bérenger. The French had handed over Mosul to Britain in December 1918 (it had been designated as part of the French sphere under the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement) and had not received anything in return: the Long-Bérenger agreement solved the problem by making over the Deutsche Bank's former 25% share in the Turkish Petroleum Company, (confiscated during the war by the Custodian of Enemy Property) to French interests. This action was formalized a year later in the **San Remo Oil Agreement.** [33]

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[32] *Sluglett P, 'Britain in Iraq: 1914-1932'; London, 1976'; Cited in: "The Primacy of Oil in Britain's Iraq Policy", Global Policy Forum, at:*
https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/169/36381.html
[33] *Sluglett P'; Cited in "The Primacy of Oil in Britain's Iraq Policy", Global Policy Forum, Ibid*

50.   Unsurprisingly, the USA complained about being shut out of the Middle East on
        pretexts, and fought back:
        "However the USA objected about the exclusive nature of the deal, and they
        alleged the original concession to the TPC was not in any case a true legal
        concession by the Sultanate. Finally they objected to a clause in the San Remo
        Agreement that the "company working the Iraqi oilfields should be under
        permanent British control. The US State Department pointed out that the
        agreement was in clear breach of the 'Open Door', the principle that all countries
        had equal rights in former enemy territories." [34]

51.   But besides the USA, Turkey was angling for Mosul, since it argued, it 'owned'
        Mosul. Indeed the USA favoured Turkey in opposition to the newly emerging
        British colonial state of Iraq. **Churchill** pointed out in 1922:
        "There is some reason to believe that neither the United States nor France would
        be sorry to see the Turks back in Mosul in a position to give to their nationals the
        oil concessions which are at present claimed by H.M. Government for the Turkish
        National Petroleum Company". [35]

52.   But in addition - the Kurds also claimed Mosul was heavily Kurdish, and
        'belonged' to Kurdistan.
        In a short term 'resolution' of the rival conflicts, the British bought off the French
        (with a 25% of future oil revenues), and the USA (by a 20% stake in the British
        owned Turkish Petroleum). The 1923 **Lausanne Conference** settled these bills,
        but rejected any equity share of the oil companies to the Faisal Iraqi government.
        Instead Faisal's government were given pitifully low royalties.

ii) British create a colony and Alter Land Tenure to Empower their comprador Shaikhs

When the British took control of Iraq, they performed a survey of the population. This
census of 1918 estimated that the Shi'a formed 53% of the population. A later and more
accurate one in 1947, found that Shi'ia Arabs were 51.4% of the population, as against
Sunni 13.7%, and Sunni Kurds being 18%. [36] (*See #56, and Map 1*)

The Iraqi peoples were mainly peasants, dominated by tribal chiefs, or landowner
shaiks. The British wanted to bolster their colonial penetration into Iraq. To form a
comprador class, the British reversed Ottoman land tenure.
The latter wanted the shaikhs weak. Actually the Ottomans changed land tenure
precisely to reduce shaikhly power, who had never fully bowed to the Ottomans.

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[34] *Sluglett P'; Cited in "The Primacy of Oil in Britain's Iraq Policy", Global Policy Forum, Ibid*
[35] *Sluglett P; Cited in "The Primacy of Oil in Britain's Iraq Policy", Global Policy Forum, Ibid*
[36] *Patrick Cockburn, "Muqtada al-Sadr: The Shia Revival and the Struggle for Iraq"; New York;
2008; p. 26*

53.   Under the Ottomans, all land was **miri** land (belonging to the state) apart from some **mulk** (absolute private property) and **waqf** lands (land for some pious purpose, or for the benefit of the descendants of the original owner).
        The **dirah** (communal lands of the tribes) were habitually occupied by the whole tribe, if it could be defended by the tribe. But the dirah was continually being expropriated by shaikhs. Moreover as noted, the shaikhs never acceded fully to the Ottomans.

54.   Therefore, in 1858, Ottomans altered land tenure in Iraq to introduce **tapu** lands. This allowed all the miri land to be dispensed only by the Ottomans, to new, smaller land owners. This undermined the tribal leadership and shaikh landlords. Furthermore, the Ottomans changed tax law. Previously tribesmen paid taxes to the tribal chief, who paid the central Ottoman officers on behalf of the tribesmen. This empowered tribal chiefs (aghas or shaikhs), who could call in their tribesmen to fight off Ottoman power.
        The Ottomans _weakened_ this bond by compelling tribesmen to pay tax directly to government. The changes allowed a new power to emerge, of the sub-shaikhs – called **sarkals**.

55.   Such decreased dependency of the tribesmen, accentuated effects of the Suez Canal opening in 1869. Because the Suez Canal consolidated a market orientated economy, it completely upset the prior subsistence economy. Now production for a market – rather than a subsistence ecnomy could come about. This change, on top of the Ottoman land-tenure change, enabled a new sub-power of _sarkals_ – or sub-shaikhs. They now challenged the rule of the shaikhs:
        "The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the development of powered river transport on the Tigris and Euphrates led to an 18-fold increase in the volume of Iraq's international trade between 1870 and 1914. Agricultural commodities, chiefly grains were exported; Western manufactured good were imported. Demand for Iraq's grain exports compelled mobilization of 'surplus' labour and land, and a profound shift occurred from tribal subsistence agriculture to production for the external markets of British India and Europe. Many sarkals or sub-shaikhs became more or less free agents with work-gangs of cultivators and succeeded into detaching themselves from the shaikhs, paying their taxes direct to the Ottoman government". [37]

        "In the countryside in the late nineteenth century, and especially in the south, most of the land was owned by the Ottoman state, large parts of Iraq forming part of the Saniyya, or Crown Lands, of 'Abd al-Hamid. Apart from the date groves of Basra, parts of the Shamiya and other areas in the vicinity of towns, private ownership of land by individuals was just beginning. Most land was occupied by tribes, who were either nomadic or beginning to sedentarize for gradually

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[37] _Fran Hazelton, 'Iraq to 1963"; In "CARDI' Report; Ibid; p. 1-2_

increasing periods. At this time, the tribal leaders depended on their tribesmen for their position, since they needed the tribesmen to defend the tribal area, either against the centralizing efforts of the Ottoman state, or the encroachment of neighbouring tribes… The logical extension of a situation where shaikhly power was declining was that by the end of the nineteenth century many sarkals, or sub-shaikhs, had succeeded in detaching themselves completely from their senior sheikhs since they were paying taxes direct to government, and not via the shaikhs." [38]

56.   But the British needed _compradors_.
Hence the British **reversed** this decline of the shaikhs. As the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Forces entered into Iraq, they applied lessons from their rule in India. The British re-appointed (or made new) shaikhs and invested them with considerable power:
"When the British occupied Lower Iraq, one of their first priorities became to "rationalize" the system of tenure in favour of cooperative shaykhs and landowners, and thus to create a class of loyal "feudatories," who owed their position first to British and then to Iraqi government recognition. In addition, through the Tribal Criminal and Civil Disputes Regulation , a piece of British-Indian legislation imported in 1916, certain shaykhs were officially recognized by the government and given absolute judicial power over their tribes." [39]

All this succeeded in creating a dependency upon the British.

"In the countryside, the British occupation and mandatory administration had wide-ranging, cataclysmic effects, which derived originally from the necessity of creating a social base for a regime which had no local roots and which had been imported en bloc from outside. As the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force marched towards Baghdad, individuals were picked out by the British intelligence services to act as tribal sheikhs, and were officially invested with juridical, and later financial, authority over their tribes. Many of these men were indeed 'tribal sheikhs', but, as has been explained, the authority of such a position had waned considerably by the time of World War I. Many of them: 'were small men of no account until we made them powerful and rich' or, as Edmund Leach said of the Rowanduz Kurds in 1939:
'Government support for the chief frequently gives that individual a tyrannical authority quite foreign to the ordinary tribal system of government. '
The implications of government backing for the shaikhs percolated very rapidly through rural society. Those sarkals, or sub-sheikhs, who had been more or less

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[38] _Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett; "Some Reflections on the Sunni/Shi'i Question in Iraq"; Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies), Vol. 5, No. 2 (1978), pp. 79-87_
[39] _Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett; 'Labor and National Liberation: The Trade Union Movement in Iraq, 1920-1958'; Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring 1983), pp. 139-154_

free agents with work-gangs of cultivators, now became legally subordinated to their sheikhs, whose economic position, through their tax-collecting responsibilities, was greatly enhanced". [40]

Shaykhly power was renewed, and became tyrannical again:
"The possibilities for the abuse of shaykly power were clearly considerable, and the rural risings of 1920, 1935, 1937, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, and 1956 were essentially short or long term consequences of the overall effect of British-sponsored land and tribal policies. As one authority wrote in the context of northern Iraq in the late 1930s:"Government support for the sheikh frequently gives that individual a tyrannical authority quite foreign to the ordinary tribal system of government." [41]

By 1958 the intense class oppression of the peasant-fellahin had reached a revolutionary point. This is seen in the extreme concentration of land:

"The net result of the whole system of land tenure and the alliance between the government and the major landowners on which the whole state system depended was in in 1958, 2,480 landowners or 1% of the total, owned 55 per cent of all agricultural land, and ran their vast holdings as semi-feudal estates. Out of a total rural population of 3.8 million, around 0.6 million heads of households were completely landless, and 64 percent of landowners held only 3.6 percent of all cultivated land"; [42]

The poorer peasants were in a pitiable condition. Many now drifted to the towns, and Baghdad grew. A peasant song collected by Batatu (1958) from an ex-villager, who became a doorkeeper in Baghdad, tells the story:

> *"O Lord, my condition is without meaning,*
> *I toil and others gather the fruits.*
> *I wish to escape to Baghdad from this tribe*
> *Which succours not its afflicted nor has pride.*
> *I wish to escape to Baghdad from this cultivation*
> *Which appeases no hunger nor gives repose.*
> *Clap – palm and palm - time passes, passes*
> *And I run and I am tired. But what I earned is gone". [43]*

iii) The Monarchy and The Class forces of Iraq in 1920

57.   In 1920, the League of Nations **British Mandate** in Iraq began. This provoked the **1920 Revolt**, or the "first major manifestation of a form of Iraqi national

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[40] *Slugget P; 'The Trade Union Movement in Iraq, 1920-1958' Ibid;*
[41] *Marion Farouk-Sluglett; Ibid*
[42] *Marion Farouk-Sluglett; Ibid*
[43] *Batatu Ibid; p.142*

identity". [44] Although 1920 started initially as a Shi'a Uprising, it drew in much Sunni support also. Many Arab officials administering Damascus and Baghdad, known as **Sharafians** also joined the Uprising. These were former Ottoman officers of Iraqi origin, who had fought with Husain Sharif of Mecca in the Arab Revolt against the Turks, and were given false promises by the British - of a later independent Arab state. Many Shariafians were previously members of the pre-war nationalist party **'Ahd al-Iraq.** The 1920 Uprising caused 453 British deaths, despite British use of air strikes and poison gas. [45] The **Cairo conference** of March 1921, resolved to ensure the British Royal Air Force would "control Iraq". [46] This was the first air war, and when launched against the tribes, it broke their revolt.

58.   The contours of the new entity of Iraq covered **three distinct areas** – which mapped out religious and Kurd populations. This can be seen in **Map 1** - showing the Sunni central area, the Northern Kurdistan area (also Sunni but with a strong Sufi trend), and the Southern Shi'ia area. [47]
As we saw, a 1918 census found the Shi'a formed 53% of the population. But this was heavily concentrated in the South. How had this developed historically? The Shi'ia Southern predominance is explained by the shrines of the Shi'ia, and the closeness to Shi'ia Persia:
"The one obvious factor making for the perpetuation of Shi'ia influence was the presence of the Shi'ia sanctuaries at Najaf and Karbala, and of Shi'ia schools at Najaf and Hillah. Another factor was the commercial and religious intercourse that the Shi'ia of Iraq maintained, if interruptedly, with Shi'ia Persia. At work also was... the contagion of the environment. Bedouin tribes moving into the Shi'ia zone – and Islam itself lightly on Bedouins, tended in time.. to adapt themselves to its beliefs and practices." [45]
"The process was in the Shi'ia zone assisted by the missionary zeal of the mumans... Itinerant men of religion." [45]

Butatu asks how could conversions take place under "the nose of the Sunni Government?":
> "The explanation is simple, During the greater part of the Ottoman period, the writ of the authorities ran precariously outside the main towns, so that the mobile tribal confederations were in the countryside more often than

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[44] *Slugget P; 'The Trade Union Movement in Iraq, 1920-1958' Ibid;. Also see Part 1; Thesis Number 63-66*
[45] *Said K Aburush, 'Saddam Hussein – The Politics of Revenge', London 2000; p. 5-6*
[46] *Fran Hazelton Ibid; p. 5*

[47] *Hanna Batatu; "The old social classes and the revolutionary movements of Iraq: a study of Iraq's old landed and commercial classes and of its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers"; Princeton; 1978; map p.38; and see pp. 41-42; 44-47*

not a power unto themselves".
"The government accorded the Shi'ia full liberty to make their devotions in their own manner in the places that they considered sacred, apparently because it stood to gain from the flow of pilgrims to Iraq. But in all other places, such as Basra or Baghdad proper they were denied the free exercise of their religion". [45]

The relationship between religious sect and class, was not identical.
Nonetheless the *poor peasant was likely* to be Shi'ia.
Later as the working class developed in the towns, from the displaced peasantry, the poorer sections were also likely to be Shi'ia.
By and large the Sunni *tended to be richer* and dominant:

> ".. the most influential <u>mallaks</u> (or landlords) of the province of Basrah were, with one exception Sunni, while the cultivators of their palm gardens were overwhelmingly Shi'ia… The leaders of Arab society in Basrah city itself were also Sunni. The Shi'ia divines however occupied a position of no little importance." [45]

> "Sunni social dominance had its immediate roots in the preceding historical situation. In some rural areas, as in the countryside of the Muntafiq, it derived from the dominance of Sunni tribal warring *People of the Camel* over Shi'ia tribal peasants or *Marsh-dwellers,* or *People of the Sheep*. In the towns it flowed from Sunni Ottoman political dominance." [45]

In fact the Shi'ia became synonymous with being an 'under-dog', which paralleled its religious history, and embraced by its adherents:
> "At the same time it should be pointed out that Shi'iasm , as an ideology and its practical form had a natural appeal to underdogs that stemmed from its preoccupation with suffering and form the centrality of the passion motif in its Islam." [45]

But in Kurdish Northern country, class position was indicated by *race* rather than religion, such that the Turkomans were dominant:
> "If in the South of Iraq religious and class divisions coincided to a certain extent, in the north… the distinction between classes was, often times, concomitantly a distinction between races. Thus the district of Arbil embraced 65 villages populated entirely by Kurds, but no fewer than 45 of these villages were owned by one or other of the Arbil notables, who were moistly Turkoman by race… (belonging) to the wealthy stratum… Landed Kirkuklis, who in their upper ranks were mainly Turkmen or Kurds who regarded themselves as Turkmen owned much of the agricultural country in the Malhah region… but their ploughs and sheep were tended by Arabs". [45]

MAP 1
Religious Map
of Iraq
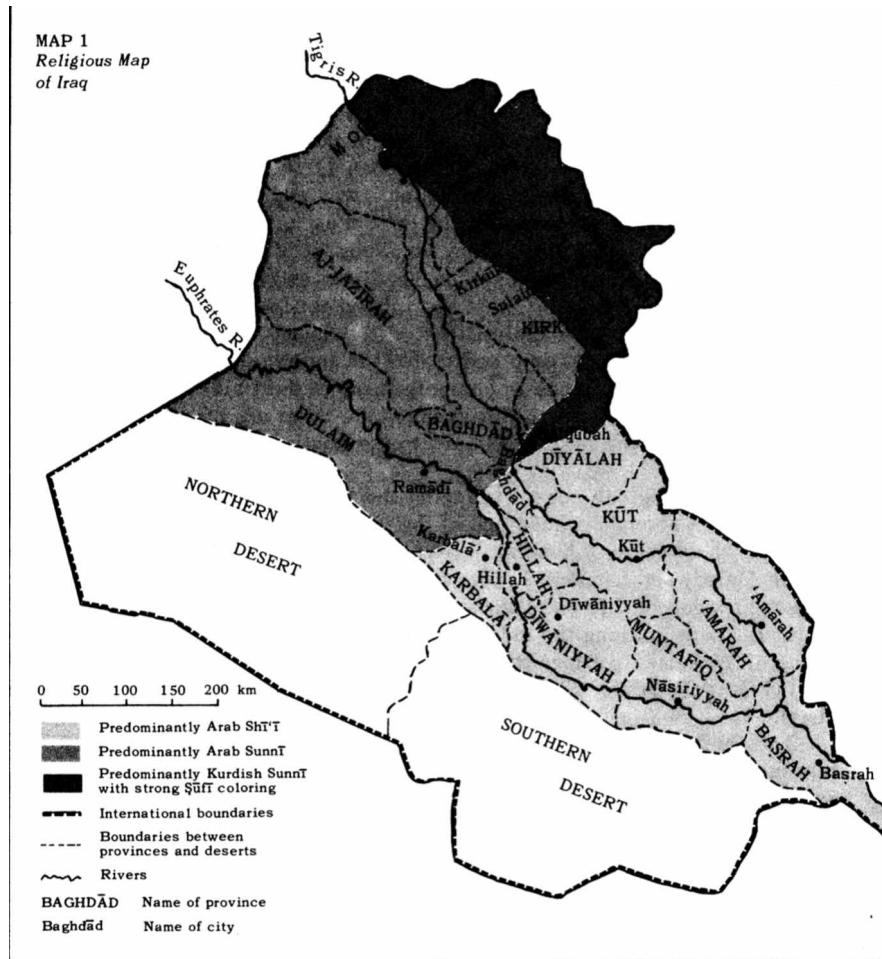
MAP 1: The Geographical Distribution of the three main communities in Iraq

59. In 1921 the British appointed the puppet, **Faisal 1**, to be the **Hashemite** King of Iraq, who was crowned in August 1921. He had never been to Iraq prior to his appointment. He himself said he was 'no more than an instrument of British policy'. [48] He was both an outsider (a 'non-Iraqi'), and a Sunni, yet Iraq was predominantly Shi'a, especially in the South. The British dropped the inflammatory word '**mandate'** in a new Anglo-Iraqi treaty of the League of Nations negotiated by August 1922. But they retained **colonial rights**. Unexpectedly, Faisal tried to delay acceptance of the treaty, but finally had to capitulate. The state sponsored landlords (mainly Sunni landlords, but also Shia tribal leaders), were a comprador feudal base for the British neo-colonial state.

60. Despite the religious sect and class divide, the Sunni and Shi'ia communities were not at this stage hostile to each other. In fact, a movement began where

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[48] *Said K Aburush, 'Saddam Hussein – The Politics of Revenge', London 2000; p. 5-6*

they viewed themselves as united in forming a 'country', especially spurred by the British invasion of 1914-1918:
"Sociopolitical integration of Shi'ia and Sunni.. attained its highest point in the armed rising of 1920 (provoked by the British)… For the first time in many centuries, the Shi'ia and Sunni pulled together .. Unheard of joint Shi'a Suni celebrations were held at Baghdad in all the Shi'a and Sunni shrines in turn: special *mawlid* (Sunni observances of the Prophet's birthday) were succeeded by *ta'azi* (Shi'a lamentations for the martyred Husayn). With the bond..(there was) an imperceptible.. fitful growth of an Iraqi national community." [49]

Yet this process was cheek-by-jowl against older tribal structures:
"nationalism did not displace the old loyalties (i.e tribal and religious). Although it grew at their expense, it existed side by side with them corroding them, but at the same time absorbing some of their psychological elements.. expressing itself within the emotional and conceptual patterns of the Islamic religion". [47]

So, despite a movement to a sense of a united country ('the Iraqi nation'), latent tribal and religious tensions remained. These remained as a recurrent source of chafing over the years. Naturally at times, they were deliberately rubbed into a sore. For example by Saddam Hussein and then the compradors for the USA, such as Maliki. As we saw in *Part One*, the process of *tribal change into class change* – was incomplete, and tribal authority was deliberately re-established.

61.   At first Faisal tried to conciliate non-Sunnis. For both Shi'ia, and Kurds, for example, he enabled positions within government. [40]
        But Faisal was hampered in welding such a 'national community'. In fact the British deliberately hampered any national consciousness from developing. The British ensured the Monarchy was weak, and constrained by the opposing tribal chiefs.[50] The empowered shaikhs did _not_ defer to Faisal.
        The British refused Faisal's wish to build an Iraqi army, together with the ex-Iraqi officers in the Ottoman army who had abandoned the Ottoman cause (the '*Sharafians'*). Yet Faisal was acutely aware that the shaikhs had more power, lamenting he had fewer rifles than they did: "in the country there are more than 100,000 rifles whereas the government possesses only 15,000". [47]

62.   When finally the army formed, it contained the seeds of a sectarian-class divide that would later be explosive:
        "In the Iraqi army of the thirties, the officers were Sunni but the rank and file they

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[49] *Hanna Batatu: "Iraq's Shi'a: their political role and the process of integration into the community"; p. 206. In Barbara Freyer Stowasser ed: "The Islamic Impulse"; Washington DC 1987;*
[50] *Hanna Batatu; "The old social classes and the revolutionary movements of Iraq: a study of Iraq's old landed & commercial classes & of its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers"; Princeton; 1978; p.26-33; 22; 97-102; p. 32; 34; 45-50*

commanded was drawn… from the agricultural Shi'ia tribesmen of the south. In brief, the Sunni-Shi'ia dichotomy coincided to no little degree with a deep-seated social economic cleavage." [48]

iv) Growth of the national bourgeoisie and working class

63.   Paradoxically, as the army became established, contrary to Faisal's original intent, it developed into a core of opposition to the monarchy. Despite his original wishes to have a national army, Faisal's view of the army changed into wariness and distrust.

In fact the army became penetrated by the weak **national bourgeoisie** who were resolutely anti-British. They were led by men such as **Ja'far Abu-t-Timman** (leader of the **National party** from 1928-1933, advocating Shi'ia and Sunni unity), **Husain ar-Rahhal** (the first Marxist in Iraq), and **Muhammed Mahdi Kubbah** (on the Central Committee of the National Party, then from 1935-1941 of the pan-Arab **Muthanna Club**, and finally the chairman of the **Independence Party** from 1946-1959). [51]

64.   Many leaders of these parties were of **chalabi** origin (meaning 'gentlemen' or 'merchant', or merchants and pre-capitalist industrial owners).
They were to become a weak national bourgeoisie.
Originally traders, they slowly accumulated a manufacturing base in "consumer goods such as textiles, beverages, soap, vegetable oil, cigarettes; or of building materials such as cement, bricks and tiles". [49]

They were mainly of Sunni families, and possessed a concentrated wealth:
"Between them the 23 families held on a conservative estimate, 30-35 million dinars, in assets of all sorts, that is, an amount equaling... 56-65 % of the entire private corporate commercial and industrial capital".

Yet their wealth paled in comparison to that of the foreign (British) and non-Arab (Jewish) capital:
"The entire Iraqi private corporate industrial and commercial capital in 1857 amounted to only 53.3 million dinars whereas the state's receipts from oil alone stood at 79.8 million dinars… Oil... was making the state more and more economically autonomous from society".

65.   As class forces realigned against them, the monarchy and the shaikhs placed their comprador interests together:
"The tie up with the shaikhs… was reflected in the solicitude of the monarchy for the interests of the shaikhs, and.. the intensification of the practice of settling land

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[51] *Batatu Ibid pp. 292-293; 271-292*

settlement laws in their favour. Vast expanses of customary tribal land and of the best state land were by this means allowed to pass into their exclusive possession. By thus increasing their essentially non-productive grasp over agriculture, and... keeping their villages barren of governmental controls, the monarchy enabled them to weigh more and more heavily on a peasantry now reduced in many regions to a status akin to serfdom…. In other words by its alliance with the shaikhs, the monarchy ceased to play a unifying social role." [49]

Behind the previous ties of tribe and religion, class relations now began to dominate.

66.   The consolidation of ruling class ties between monarchy and shaikhs, was spurred by the urban working class rebellions of the 1948 **Wathaba** and the **Intifadahs** of 1952 and 1956 (*see # 18-21*).
The working class was growing, because:
(i) the state machinery was getting larger - including the police, the government administration, the number of employees of the ports and railways;
(ii) the peasantry was increasingly impoverished, and moving more into the cities;
(iii) The oil companies had increased the Iraqi oil capacity.

The oil companies decided to 'reward-bribe' the Iraqi Monarchy for <u>not</u> following Iran's path. In Iran a national bourgeoisie was attempting to nationalize oil. By 1954:
"The overflow of royalties made the state - from the economic standpoint - dangerously dependent upon the oil companies: in 1954 receipts from oil formed 65.7% and in 1958 61.7% of its total revenue". [48]

v) The National bourgeoisie short lived state control under Bakr Siqi

67.   Faisal's son, **Ghazi,** acceded to the throne after his father's death in 1933. But in contrast to his father, Ghazi took an explicit anti-British nationalist stand, allying himself with **General Bakr Sidqi** (*see #10-12*).
To remove illusions, neither Ghazi or Sidqi, were consistent progressives. In August 1933, Sidqi's forces destroyed the village of Simele (near Mosul) and its 3,000 Assyrian civilians for "militant separatism". Later in 1935, Sidqi brutally suppressed Shi'ia in the **Rumaytha** and **Diwaniyya revolts.**
These Shia tribal uprisings in the mid-Euphrates region, rose against Sunni dominated authority. In addition, the Shia tribes of the mid-Euphrates felt unrepresented, because they were excluded from the 1934 Iraqi parliamentary elections. The rebellion, was defeated within a single week.

68.   Nonetheless, <u>Sidqi was anti-British</u>. To counter him, the British engineered further tribal revolts. Finally Sidqi was murdered while on a state visit to Turkey, in August 1937, possibly in a British backed assassination. Later in 1939, Ghazi

was murdered, this was very likely by British inspired agents.[52]

The British comprador **Nuri al-Said** again took power (in one of 14 periods in which he was either Foreign or Prime Minister). But this heightened anti-British sentiments.

The trusted British comprador **Prince Abdul Illah** became Regent, on behalf of Ghazi's son, the under-age **Faisal II**. The Monarchy now worked even more closely with the landed shaikhs, to thwart nationalist elements, including those in the army.

69.   We discussed the movement of the 'Four Colonels', during the build-up to the Second World War (*See # 5*). These Colonels were under the sway of the German Ambassador. **Rashid Ali** seized power, on behalf of the German and Italian imperialists. A short lived war waged by the British unseated him in 30 days in May 1941. British troops re-entered Iraq formally, and re-installed the Regent of Iraq – 'Abdul Illah.

vi) Rising class war, and increasing land concentration

70.   In 1947, **Saleh Jaber** Prime Minister, renewed British supremacy with the **Portsmouth Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1948,** and later the **Baghdad Pact** of 1955. These provoked the riots of the al-Wathab Leap, and annulment of the treaty. But, the feudal comprador state character remained intact. The British-Monarchy continued to work through the rural landed notables (aghas, landlords and tribal chiefs).

These leading rural landed notables were not confined to one sect:
"Of 46 magnate families in Iraq owning over 30,000 dunums (7,500 hectares) 11 were Kurdish". [53]

Only 1-3% of the entire population owned 55% of farmland. [53]

The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) confronted the aghas with peasant mobilisations in Arbil, Kirkuk, and Arbat near Sulaymaniya. As the first struggle of the peasants against the aghas, these were landmark struggles, even though they were defeated. [28] The KDP and the ICP effectively worked together to jointly stand electoral candidates, and called for "an alliance with the socialist camp". The KDP in 1953 called for "oil nationalization and Kurdistan's claim to a fair share of oil revenue and heavy industry". [54]

71.   In the midst of intensifying class contradictions, in 1953, **Faisal II** ascended to be monarch. But this was short lived, he was deposed and killed by nationalist

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[52] *Arburush Ibid; p. 30*
[53] *McDowall, D; Ibid; p.297-8; Arburush Ibid; p. 27*
[54] *McDowall; Ibid; p. 299*

forces in the 1958 coup.

By the end of the Monarchy in 1958, despite the hurdles they faced (for example in the army) the Shi'ia had made great gains. This was especially so in the agricultural landowning classes:

"Shi'ite families in the upper income brackets accumulated considerable economic power.. Their advance .. was encouraged.. because it suited the balance-of-power interests... of the English and the monarchy."

At least by the end of the monarchy the <u>division by class</u> – rather than one by religious sect - was the most important divide in Arabic Iraqi society:

By 1958:

"Out of Iraq's 7 biggest landowners - that is owners of over 100,000 dunums of land, six were Shi'ia. In the same year of the total of 49 families owning more than 30,000 dunums or an aggregate of 5,457,354 dunums, 23 were Shi'ia Arab, 14 Sunni Arab, 11 Kurdish and 1 Jewish. The Shi'ia alone possessed 44.3 % of the whole area. The others held 30.8%, 24.1 %, and 0.8 % respectively." [48]

Emphasizing that class divisions were key rather than religious ones, was the miserable state of the poorest. This was equally terrible for Shi'ia and Sunni:

"If in 1958, the richest of the rich were often Shi'ia, so were also predominately the poorest of the poor, notably the one hundred thousand or so *Shurugis* ("The Easterners") the migrants from the Amarah tribal country – whose *sarifas* (mud huts) dotted the landscape of Greater Baghdad". [48]

"There were always very poor Sunnis, they and the Shi'ia poor were brethren in adversity... Baghdad - no less than the rest of Iraq, in both its Shi'ia and Sunni domains, was under the monarchy, as it had been in the middle ages: *For the rich a vast habitation and for the poor a dwelling of constraint and distress*", said the Muslim Judge **Abu Muhammed 'Abd-ul-Wahhab**. [48]

72.   By 1958, an extreme polarization of land ownership had occurred. Only a minority of Mallaks or Landlords owned the vast proportion of land: "In the Iraq of 1958, inhabited by about 6.5 million, there were 253,254 landowners with legal rights over 32.1 million agricultural dunums. Most Mallaks were very small proprietors... 72.9% of all landholders possessed less than 50 dunums, and only 6.2 % of the total area." [48]

3. Pan-Arabism

i) The Syrian Origins of the Ba'th Party, Nasserism – and the national bourgeoisie

Even before the 20th Party revisionist Congress of the CPSU(B) (February 1956), where Marxism-Leninism was openly vilified, Khrushchev's revisionist policies were being forced onto communist parties. After the 20th CPSU(B) congress, the attitude of the **Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) to Pan-Arabic nationalism**, became fawningly servile in its positivity. Pan-Arabism was represented in the Middle East by the Ba'th Party, and by

Gamel Abdul Nasser. The 'ideology' of Pan-Arabism, became central as the **Suez Canal Crisis** of 1956 developed.

73. Ba'th means '*re-birth*', and the name signified the renaissance of the Arab movement . The Ba'th came to wield decisive power in Syria during the late 20th and early 21st century, but in reality it's path wound through several re-births. To understand its relationship to Iraq, we describe the origins of the Ba'th in Syria.

74. Originally formed in 1943, the **Arab Ba'th Party** (or Baath), was secretly created out of two small groups. The legal establishment of the Ba'th Party in Syria was in 1947, after the French military departure of 1946. It was meant to weld a progressive party for Arab nationalism, which avoided Marxism-Leninism.

Its essence was a completely reactionary Islamism - a mystical **Pan-Arabism**. This appealed to the petit bourgeoisie, and the traders. The party was led by Damascenes **Michel 'Aflaq, Salh al-Din Bitar** and **Midhat al-Bitar;** joining with **Jalal as-Sayyid** from the nearby trading center Dayr az-Zur.
They were all either sons of the urban small traders and merchants, or traders themselves:
"Born to wholesale grain dealers (**bawaykiyyah)** in the outlying Damascus quarter of **al-Maydan**, the chief center for the grain trade of Southern Syria… the world of merchants. From the standpoint of this class, the fragmentation after 1917 of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire constituted an abiding hindrance to the old trade channels and the free flow of commerce. It members resented being confined within narrow borders and favoured large and expanding markets, unhindered by tariffs and custom duties or by a multiplicity of economic rules and regulations. In brief, to no other element of the population was a pan-Arab horizon more natural...
scions of some of the mercantile families who were or had been involved in long-distance trade.. gravitated towards the Ba'th Party in the 1940s, when it had not yet shifted to a pronounced 'leftist' orientation." [55]

These merchants were interested in re-establishing good *trans-Arabic commerce*:
"urban bawaykiyyah – or whole sale grain dealers.. fostered receptivity not only of the urban intelligentsia but also of the mercantile class, to whom the break-up after 1917 of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire entailed a grave impediment to the free flow of native commerce." [55]

The future Ba'th leaders were intellectuals, and mostly educated in Paris. Importantly, they repudiated Marxism, and were explicitly anti-communist. Instead the Ba'th movement adhered to a religious interpretation dominated by the Sunni sect. This alienated some non-Sunni Muslim Arabs.

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[55] *Batatu; 'Syria'; Ibid; p.134; p.325; 134; 325; 23;*

However the Ba'th ideology was *supposed* to be secular and based itself on *all Arabs irrespective of sect of Islam*, or even of Islam itself. 'Aflaq viewed Ba'th nationalism as comprising 'Unity, Freedom, Socialism'. [56]

Shortly afterwards, the **'Alawi** dominated **Arab Nationalist Party** (formed 1939 by **Zaki al- Arsuzi**) merged into the Ba'th, having been brought over by **Wahib al-Ghanem**. Then, the active members were largely urban intelligentsia, schoolteachers and physicians, with a large student base.

The Ba'th Party was intended to embrace all Arab countries, not just Syria. In the first **pan-Arab Congress** of 1947, the programme called for land reform and nationalisation of major parts of the economy, and a constitutional democracy:

> "In Damascus… delegates from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Morocco adopted a constitution and a programme. The party's basic principles were described as: the unity and freedom of the Arab nation within its homeland; and a belief in the 'special mission of the Arab nation', the mission being to end colonialism and promote humanitarianism. To accomplish it the party had to be 'nationalist, populist, socialist and revolutionary'. While the party rejected the concept of class conflict, it favoured land reform; public ownership of natural resources, transport, and large-scale industry and financial institutions; trade unions of workers and peasants; the cooption of workers into management, and acceptance of 'non-exploitative private ownership and inheritance'." It stood for a representative and constitutional form of government, and for freedom of speech and association, within the bounds of Arab nationalism." [57]

75.   The appeal of the Ba'th Party was mainly to sections of the urban petit-bourgeois, but it wished to widen its appeal. Thus the mass peasant base of the **Arab Socialist Party** was attractive. This Arab Socialist Party had been formed and led by, **Akram al-Hawrani**.

The two parties fused, forming the **Arab Socialist Ba'th party** (ASBP) in 1953. Its' leaders, were Michel 'Aflaq, Salh al-Din Bitar, and Akram al-Hawrani**. As the Ba'th embraced the peasantry, it lost for a time some of its' appeal to traders. The Arab Socialist Ba'th Party restated the Ba'ath's founding aims, but it was careful to stress the word '*socialism'* more prominently:

> "Drawn together by their opposition to the dictatorial regime of Colonel **Adib Shishkali,** the leaders of the Ba'th and the ASP decided in September 1953 to form the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party... The new party re-stressed the Ba'th's central slogan: 'Freedom, unity, socialism'." [56]

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[56] *Patrick Seale; "Assad - The Struggle for the Middle East"; London; 1988"; p. 31; 60;*
[57] *Dilip Hiro; "Inside The Middle East"; London 1982; p. 130-1*

This combined party therefore, now represented both the <u>rural peasantry</u>, and the <u>urban petit bourgeoisie</u> (white-collar urban workers school-teachers, government employees, large sections of the army and the air force). Initially the section of peasantry to which the Ba'th most appealed, was the poorest and smallest peasants. By the 1960's the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party:

"Accorded from the outset a high priority to peasants and their concerns. They markedly raised the share of the produce due to the landless underclass, reduced further the permissible size of private landholdings, speed up the redistribution of the land expropriated under agrarian reform laws and freed peasant beneficiaries from ¾ of the price and the land.. they also intensified the organising drive among the peasants… (giving) peasant unions in more than 1,500 villages…
Until 1967, the... Ba'th rested uneasily on an uneasy alliance within the armed forces between varying groups that shared similar rural roots." [56]

76.   But above all, the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party retained a **mystical Pan-Arabic vision**, as illustrated by their *Constitution*, as stated in their official history by *Bashir al-Da'uq ed; Nidal al-Ba'th*:
"The Arab nation constitutes a cultural unity. Any differences existing among its sons are accidental and unimportant. They will disappear with the awakening of the Arab consciousness... The national bond will be the only bond existing in the Arab state. It ensures harmony among the citizens by melting them in the crucible of a single nation, and combats all other forms of factional solidarity such as religious, sectarian, tribal, racial and regional factionalism." [58]

*What did **"socialism"** mean for the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party?* It was a very vague and imprecise ideology:
"Socialism, which comes last in the Ba'th trinity, is less a set of socio-economic principles than a rather vague means of national moral improvement. . . . All they [Ba'thist leaders] said was that socialism was a means of abolishing poverty, ignorance, and disease, and achieving progress towards an advanced industrial society capable of dealing on equal terms with other nations." [57]

77.   In the 1954 elections following Shishakali's fall, the Ba'th gained a parliamentary base. As we noted, when the Ba'th acquired a mass peasant base (primarily appealing to the small peasantry at this stage), large sections of urban traders were alienated.
Only very much later, well after Assad's accession to power in 1979, would sections of the urban merchants again cautiously follow the Ba'th. However an especial appeal by the Ba'th, was made to <u>army personnel</u>:

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[58] *Nicolas Van Dam; "Struggle power Syria. Assad & the Ba'ath party"; London 1997; p. 15.*

"In Syria the party drew its initial support either from the urban Sunni (Muslim) and Orthodox (Christian) petty bourgeoisie, or the rural notables, particularly those in the Alawi and Druze areas of Latakia. 'The party's social base remained the petit bourgeoisie of the cities, and in the countryside middle landlords with local social prestige,' notes Tabitha Petran. 'However, the Ba'th did not develop much in the cities. Most of the Sunni petit bourgeoisie, even in Damascus, was influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood and later also by President Nasser. But the Ba'th won a following among students and military cadets: future intellectuals and army officers." [55]

In fact with the 'leftist' orientation of the Ba'th, the enemies of the Ba'th were now: "Merchants, landowners, and city notables." [55]

But the Syrian party was _hijacked_ by the army officer movement, after the episode of the **United Arab Republic** in the militarist period (*see Theses Part 3, forthcoming, and #91 below)*.

Initially the Ba'th in Syrian power, enabled small peasants to regain a measure of control and their own land. But this land reform was not thorough-going, and it proved insufficiently large to obtain even a subsistence living.
An increasing concentration of land in the hands of very rich landlords took place.

Ultimately the Syrian Ba'th apparatus came to increasingly support the entry of capitalist relations into the countryside.
The Ba'th thereafter helped mainly the rich peasantry. Through to 1956, reforms benefiting this class layer took place, under the influence of the Ba'th. This continued right up to the period of the 1960s, under the Militarist Ba'th governments:
"The abolition of the tribal law by the state in 1956 and the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1958 and the related decrees of 1963-1964 undermined the power of the wealthy shaykhs, and led after 1966 to the demise of their political influence, at least at the national level. The same measures contributed to a further weakening of tribal bonds. The division of property also decreased the cohesion of the extended family". [55]

78.   While the Ba'th was primarily a Syrian based party, it had not lost its ambition to speak for all Arabs – regardless of their geographical location. In the first **pan-Arab Congress** of 1947, the programme called for land reform and nationalisation of major parts of the economy, and a constitutional democracy: "In Damascus… delegates from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Morocco adopted a constitution and a programme. The party's basic principles were described as: the unity and freedom of the Arab nation within its homeland; and a belief in the 'special mission of the Arab nation', the mission being to end colonialism and promote humanitarianism. To accomplish it the party had to be

'nationalist, populist, socialist and revolutionary'. While the party rejected the concept of class conflict, it favoured land reform; public ownership of natural resources, transport, and large-scale industry and financial institutions; trade unions of workers and peasants; the cooption of workers into management, and acceptance of 'non-exploitative private ownership and inheritance'." It stood for a representative and constitutional form of government, and for freedom of speech and association, within the bounds of Arab nationalism." [59]

In its original form, the Ba'th was a movement of the national democratic (bourgeoisie) classes. However, its' many later forms and phases require appropriate characterization.

79.   **Nasserism** was a specific form of Pan-Arabism, named for **Gamel Abdul Nasser.** Starting in the context of a nationalist movement in Egypt alone, Nasser struck a chord with those hoping for liberation from imperialism throughout large sections of the Middle East. But instead of Ba'th – Nasser talked of **Wahda** (or union) - to mean ultimately the same. **Wahda** - the name of Nasser's nationalist movement - was to be a 'renewal of Arabic culture', under a twentieth century guise of nationalism. It was a similar strategy of the national bourgeoisie to that of the Ba'th. Both aimed to contain the mass movement, emphasizing the 'Arab peoples', at the expense of class content. This task was made easier for the bourgeoisie, since revisionism by 1956, deprived the working class of capable genuine leadership in the entire Middle East. Nasserism was only able to consolidate itself because the **Egyptian Workers Party**, the **Communist Party**, was under the influence of the now Soviet-revisionist leaders.

80.   Nasser was one of the **"Association of Free Officers"** in Egypt, who came to power in Egypt, in an army coup in 1952. Till then Egypt had been a monarchy ruled as a colony for Britain. After taking control of sole power, Nasser initiated only limited reforms. **Enver Hoxha** characterizes him as follows:
"In 1952 there was a revolt in Egypt too. The monarchy was overthrown without bloodshed. King **Farouk** was expelled from Egypt by a group of officers, headed by **Nasser, Naguib,** and **Sadat.** Those who removed him from the throne, accompanied him to Alexandria, gave him money, put him on board a ship and helped him to get away and save his neck… What was this group of Egyptian officers that carried out this putsch and what did they represent? These officers were of the bourgeoisies, its representatives, they were anti-British, but amongst them there we also pro-Hitlerites… Anwar el-Sadat himself declares that he collaborated with the "Desert Wolf", the Nazi field **Marshal Rommel**.. This event, that is the removal of Farouk from the throne, was exaggerated to the point of being called a "revolution". However the Egyptian people, the working masses of that country, gained nothing from this whole affair. Virtually no reform to the

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[59] *Dilip Hiro; "Inside The Middle East"; London 1982; p. 130*

benefit of the people was carried out. The so-called agrarian reform ended up in favour of the feudal and wealthy landowners. Under the disguise of the unity of Arab peoples the newcomers to power tried to bring about the "unification" of Egypt with Syria. However every effort in this direction was in vain because in Syria too, at this time the capitalist bourgeoisies in the leadership of the state had simply changed their horses and their patron. The imperialist Soviet Union had replaced France. It sabotaged this baseless "unification: and established itself firmly in that country." [60]

81. The Ba'th in Iraq began to form quickly after it became established in Syria. The plight of the Palestinian nation fueled an intense sympathy around the region, and resistance of foreign forces. A Ba'th organisation emerged first within the nationalist parties, but soon separated off. The first Iraqi leader was 'Abd-ur-Rahman ad-Damen, but by 1951 the leadership was taken by **Fu'ad ar-Rikabi**. Michel 'Aflaq remained, the Secretary General of the "national command". [61]

ii) The Suez Crisis, the Eisenhower Doctrine and their effects on Iraq

82. As one of a group of emerging nationalist leaders, Nasser was invited to the **Bandung ('Non-aligned') Conference** of 1955. Here he impressed **Chou En lai** and **Josep Broz Tito**. Both recommended Nasser to Khruschev. To gain bargaining power with the USA and Britain, Nasser agreed in September 1955 to buy Soviet arms. This worried British and other imperialisms.
When Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in July 1956, some imperialists planned to take matters further. But imperialists did not agree on how to retaliate.

83. The Suez Crisis arose after the combined forces of Britain, France and Israel, attacked Egypt. These imperialists sought to physically capture the Suez Canal, and rebuke Nasser. The attack was launched on October 1956. It was a desperate 'last hurrah' of British imperialism, and was not supported by the USA. Indeed the USA had already signalled its own view that it viewed itself as the dominant imperialist state in the Middle East. In response to the tripartite attack, the USA allied to the USSR, and worked with the UN to politically force the invaders to withdraw.

84. Following this, the USA made its own position crystal clear. It enunciated the **Eisenhower Doctrine** of January 1957. This stated an open-ended 'commitment' to any country of the middle east wanting USA "aid" against international communism":
"To secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such

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[60] *Enver Hoxha, January 1980; Extract from Political Diaries, "The Events Which are taking place in the Moslem countries must be seen in the light of dialectical materialism"; In 'Reflections on the Middle East"; Tirana 1984; pp. 362.*

[61] *Battu ibid; p. 745*

nations, requesting such aid against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism". [62]

These events also led to the formation of the series of individual Pacts making up the **Baghdad Pact** *(# 27)*. These turns, reverberated in Iraq.

85. In Iraq in June 1955, the ultra-left **Hamid Uthman** was removed from the ICP leadership *(#26)*. A United Front was again raised in late April 1955. '**Aziz ash-Shaikh** for the ICP sounded out groups to allow the ICP in. But **Kamil ach-Chadirchi** – leader of the National Democrats, opposed their participation vehemently, unless as he demanded:
"Some elements of the left (abandon) the idea of bossing others.. (and) were un-provocative" [63]; and were "pro-Arab nationalism". And there should be no: "limitation of time: for reassuring other members they were not 'incidental'.

The ICP meekly accepted:
"We, the Communists, must be conscious of a special responsibility, a fraternal responsibility in the national movement. We must sincerely respect the opinions of others, even if they are opposed to our own." [63]

86. At this point the ICP adopted again, an ultra-right position, being headed by **Husain Ahmad as-Sayyid 'Ali ar-Radi; Amer 'Abdallah 'Umar al-'Amiri;** and **Jamal Haidar 'Asim al-Haidari**.
The new position moved the ICP in a 180 degree turn, to fully embrace the national bourgeois trend of **pan-Arabism**. [63] The **ICP Second Party Conference (June 1955)**, pursued polices for a "national Arab Policy" against "the aggressive Baghdad Pact", saying:
> "The Arabs are one nation… a stable historical group, live on a common language, possess the prerequisites of a unitary economy, and have a common psychological makeup which finds it expression in a common Arab culture and common traditions and in their fervent desire for unity."
> But - pan-Arabism depended upon "the disappearance of imperialism".

By November 13, 1955 the ICP was saying:
"Cooperation between the national forces is possible and indispensable. We do not have the slightest inclination to impose our political programme on any one". In all this the ICP followed the CPSL position of May 7 1956. During this time, the influence of the arch-revisionist **Khalid Bhadash** of the CP Syria and Lebanon (CPSL), on the ICP became paramount, until that is, 1959. [61]

87. In response to the tripartite imperialist attack on the Egypt, an Iraqi United Front

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[62] *US State Department: https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/eisenhower-doctrine*
[63] *Batatu Ibid p.712; 749; 720-21; 750-55; 759-60; 776;*

to protest it formed. But all its leaders were rapidly arrested on the same day. At the same Second Conference of 1955, the CC of the ICP also explicitly stated: "the coming battle would be of a *peaceful* character... (and in Iraq)... count one with the independent Arab national trend." [61]

Yet the 1956 Suez attack on Egypt by Britain, France and Israel in late October, had angered the Iraqi masses. Spontaneous demonstrations were ruthlessly suppressed. Although the ICP was not well situated, they were forced into action. To their credit, in Najaf and Hafvy, the ICP were in the forefront of battles.

Large demonstrations were even joined by the ulema (clergy) after police killed dozens. Later the ulema negotiated with the government and tried then to dampen the demonstrations, but they were unsuccessful. Meanwhile the ICP leadership in Hayy, began moves to an 'armed uprising", led by the communist bookseller **'Ali ash- Shaikh Hmud**. But without a Baghdad rising, this was doomed to fail, and it was duly crushed.

4. The Free Officer Period – a weak national bourgeoisie under army control finally takes control – but does not agree on Pan-Arabism

The national bourgeoisie had by now gained the adherence of key Army members.

i) The Qaseem Coup

88.   By Feb 1957 a **Front of National Union** had again formed. It called for removal of *Nuri-al-Sa-'id*; for democratic rights; and the release of political prisoners.

Meanwhile the Egyptian Free Officer movement had inspired progressive military leaders in Iraq. Within the Iraqi Free Officers, pan-Arabism was popular. As noted, this section of Arab nationalism was dominant primarily in Syria, as the Ba'th Party. Pan-Arabism was popularized by Nasserism.

In its Ba'th form, pan-Arabism intended to embrace all Arab countries. Yet this Pan-Arab vision never materialized. Instead, more narrowly based national Ba'ath parties formed, including in Iraq. The Ba'th in Iraq faced more obstacles than in Syria, since only a fifth of the population were Sunni. The Sunni were more receptive to a pan-Arabism, dating back to the Ottoman Empire, which was less appealing to the Shi'ia.

The appeal of Pan-Arabism was such that imperialists countered with false alley-way enticements of a comprador 'Pan-Arabism'. **Antony Eden** (Then Foreign Secretary of Britain), later encouraged discussions in 1942, to found the reactionary **Arab League** in 1945.

 The officer corps of the Iraqi army were largely Sunni, but had become discontent. Firstly their own standard of living fallen. But in addition, they had

seen the Palestinian cause betrayed. This led to cynicism about the British and the Hashemite Monarchy. Certainly communists were active in the army also, but amongst the rank and file and non-commissioned officers. That communist army group quickly accepted the dominance of the officers, and of Qaseem himself.

89.   Engineer Major **Rif'at al-Hajj Sirri** founded the first cell of what would become the Iraqi **Free Officer** movement, in 1952. The secret **Supreme National Committee** was formed February 1957. Its' Oath of office included a clear anti-imperialist intent.

On 14 July 1958, the final united front was composed of various Arab nationalists in the **'Free Officers'**, the **National Unity Front** (led by **Brigadier Abdul Karim Qaseem**, and then ally **Colonel Abd al Salam Arif**). This toppled the monarchist regime, and began the post-Hashemite phase of Iraq. Their main objective was to overthrow the Monarchy.

While the Free officer movement represented the bourgeois national capitalist class, it was facing imperialism, in comparison it was a weak force.
The weakness was reflected in the complex coalition that formed.
Firstly of Arab nationalists in the Ba'th Party;
Secondly sections of independently minded Iraqi aspiring nationalists; and
finally, pro-USSR forces including the ICP.
The strains within this united front would become obvious.

The key divisions within the ruling army officers, concerned the question as to what extent was pan-Arabism to be supported?
Central to this was the relationship between Iraq and Egypt, and the UAR?
Iraqi events until the Mosul Rebellion in March 1959, were dominated by responses to Nasser and his proposals at unity.

Qaseem himself thought the immediate goal was to create a strong Iraq. He was not enthused about a diffuse pan-Arabism.
On the other hand, pan-Arabists wished to emulate Nasser, or A'flaq.
Strains within the leading two Army figures, quickly became evident.
That is between Qaseem and his deputy Aref. But rivalry extended to other military officers who were aggrieved at being excluded from leadership.

By 1959 the Supreme National Committee took care to sound out the USSR for support should imperialists attack under the terms of the Baghdad Pact.
In turn, this prompted the ICP to reserve any negative critiques of the United Front, and especially of Qaseem.
In following the now revisionist USSR, they were to betray the Iraqi workers at critical points.

90.   As we saw, **Gamel Nasser** was admired by one particular section of the pan-Arab nationalists in the Iraqi 'Free Officers'. Nasser tried to entice Qaseem into the now existing union with Egypt and Syria (Formed in February 1958) called the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**.
Nasser's urgent request, was echoed by the pleas of **Michel 'Aflaq** himself. 'Aflaq allied himself to **'Aref,** who had already met Nasser in July 1958.
Aref called for an "Iraqi republic within the UAR". [64]

But led by Qaseem, the reluctant sections of the nationalists, had seen the reality of Egypt's hegemony within the Syrian-Egyptian entity of the UAR. They baulked at joining the UAR.
Their evident weakness compelled them to move Iraq into a client comprador relationship with the USSR.
Rejecting Nasser, the army leader Qaseem accordingly turned, to the communists, releasing communist prisoners and legalizing the Iraqi CP.
Retaliating, Nasser sponsored a rebellion of the more pan-Arabic Iraqi officers, which was successfully resisted by the Iraqi Communist Party and Iraqi nationalists. This was to culminate in the Mosul Rebellion.

91.   Qaseem instituted the fundamental steps of a democratic revolution.
As a national capitalist representative, his program followed the National Democratic Party. The Cabinet was diverse, including industrialists (like *Nuri Fattah* managing director of Fattah Pasha Spinning and Weaving); communists (Dr *Ibrahim Kubbah); and* a sayyid and mystic (Shaikh Baba Ali of the Qadri order). Progressive steps undertaken included:
i) Land Reform
Qaseem proclaimed a democratic republic, and espoused support for the Kurds. His land agrarian reform (of September 30 1958) was very ambitious at aimed to "limit the holdings of any one person to a maximum of 2,000 dunums of rain-fed land or 1,000 dunums of land irrigated by free flow or artificial means. This only struck at 2,8304 shaikhs and large proprietors, leaving untouched the smaller petty and middling landowners. Seized estates were to be distributed out to the peasants. [65]
(ii) Anti-imperialist expropriations:
Qaseem seized land from the British owned **Iraq Petroleum Company** – under Law 90 this mounted to 99% of the concession land without compensation – and released it to parts of the population. [66] He also hosted the first Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting, in 1960. [67]

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[64] *Batatu Ibid; p. 816-7*
[65] *Batatu Ibid; p. 837-839*
[66] *Morton, Michael Quentin (2014). The Third River: Aspects of Oil in the Middle East 1887-1979 (First ed.). United Arab Emirates: National Archives. p. 331. ISBN 978-9948-05-146-6. Retrieved 30 January 2015*
[67] *Aburish Ibid; p. 71*

He "encouraged national capital all along… by the end of the Qaseem period the classes living by profits would go on growing except for the merchant… The manufacturers in particular enjoying special rights – income tax and custom tariff exemptions, protection against foreign goods, and liberal credit from the state industrial Bank.. (they) would never have it so good". [64]

iii) Support to the minorities including Kurds:

Despite their hopes, neither the KPD or the ICP were included in the cabinet. Nonetheless the provisional constitution Article III stated "Arabs and Kurds are partners in the Homeland, and their national rights are recognized within the Iraqi entity". [68]

Qaseem's deputy Colonel **Abd al Salam Arif** and other pan-Arab nationalists objected to major concessions to the Kurdish population.
As Qaseem was resisted by the pan-Arabic wing of the Free Officers, he increasingly used the KDP and Mulla Mustafa - to balance against Arif and the Ba'thists. Qaseem's sponsorship of the ICP and the Kurds was especially important for him, during the Mosul Revolt.

92.   As noted (*#3*) the earliest front organisations of the ICP had raised nationalist slogans such as 'all Arab countries were one country'. [69]
In 1956, the theme of Arab unity were at the fore, driven by the tensions in Suez, and the Syrian state joining Egypt in the UAR. [70]

Even though the Syrian communist Bakdash ingratiated himself and the CPSL to the Syrian Ba'th, their overtures were not well received. After the creation of the **UAR,** the communists of CPSL, predictably, were massively repressed. [71]
As the ICP watched this across the Syrian border, they were apprehensive of the Iraqi Ba'th. The ICP also recognised that any unity with the UAR, would leave them vulnerable to Nasser. It was Nasser who had already butchered Egyptian communists.

93.   Hence the ICP attitude to Qaseem was unsurprisingly supportive, yet it was alarmingly un-critical.
The ICP had underlined correctly assessed the Qaseem regime as a 'revolutionary national bourgeois regime', recognizing that it was a coalition. However they somewhat benignly saw within it only a 'disaccord'. Qaseem's regime was:
"a revolutionary national bourgeois regime. It does not represent all the national forces, but (simply) the various strata of the petty, middle and big bourgeoisie. From this springs the contradiction. On the one hand, the forces that lead and take part in the national movement are those of the workers, peasants and petty

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[68] *McDowall Ibid p. 302*
[69] *Batatu Ibid p. 819*
[70] *Batatu Ibid; p.820-822*
[71] *Batatu ibid p. 827-831*

and national bourgeoisie. On the other hand the forces that appropriate the reins of power after the Revolution are those of the small and national bourgeoisie. This contradiction is the main reason for … the **disaccord** between the parties and groups inside the national movement. "

The ICP now incorrectly moved to preserve the front at all costs, not moving to ensure the hegemony though leading – of the ICP. It argued the 'disaccord' could be weakened:
"this disaccord - It is an error to regard this situation… as natural, nor is it proper to surrender to it… We can by mobilizing the masses, weaken this contradiction and then remove it to a great extent". [72]

By November 1958, the ICP indicated to Qaseem its wish to be part of the government.
The ICP also signed a covenant with the **National Democrats** (**Kam,il ach-Chadirchi**) and the **Independence Party** (**Muhammed Mahdi Kubbah**) – to "discard any dispute that might lead to division among the people". [73]

But this policy and statements, **failed** to see warning signs of an impending turn by Qaseem against the ICP.
The policy and statements **repudiated** the lessons of the United Front in the national liberation and semi-colonial countries: That the revolutionary bourgoisies would turn on the communists at some stage in a United Front.

94.   Qaseem dangled the communists on a leash, at times giving them more slack, while he himself resisted the Ba'thists with ICP help. Thus when 'Aref started to push for Union with the UAR, the ICP supported Qaseem.
        To defend Qaseem's, the ICP called out "hundreds of thousands" onto the streets on 7 August 1958. These included the Kurdish Democrats and the National Democrats.
        But the backbone of resistance was the ICP led masses.

95.   The slogan the ICP raised in opposition to the "UAR", was a for a "United Arab States" including not only the UAR but also the need to make a "Federal Union and Soviet Friendship!" [69]
        By 3 September 1958, this had quickly evolved, into open criticisms of the UAR, while still calling for a "democratic federal Arab republic."
        'Amer 'Abdallah – the ICP's leading theoretician, in February justified this position as:
        "The Arab unity movement was 'the movement of all Arabs... it will not have one single center or one single nucleus - neither the UAR nor the Iraqi Republic..."
        And it will not be solved by one party … but as a results of an arduous general

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[72] *Batatu Ibid p. 851.*
[73] *Batatu Ibid; 855.*

struggle in which all the Arab peoples with all their classes, parties, and leaders, regardless of their ideologies and political processes, will take part". [69]
This of course completely diluted the class struggle.

While in Batatu's words, the ICP "swept to conspicuous and immense strength surrounding in the process, state institutions with organs of power of their own making" [74] - they *did not* convert this strength into a seizure of power.

It is true that the ICP asked Qaseem to support progressive demands, and protested "the crying disregard of the Kurdish people. " [75]
It is true the ICP set up nuclei in various quarters of Baghdad – as **People's Resistance centers** (in response to American marine landings in Lebanon. These were landed by the USA, firstly to help "pro-West President **Camille Chamoun**, already fighting insurgents loyal to Nasser";[76] but also as a threat to other countries).

But they caved to Qaseem at any critical point.
When Qaseem ordered them to shut down independent Peoples Resistance units, they accepted his demand to restart them as under army control.
When Qaseem passed a constitutional a week later to prohibit any non-state bodies of armed men (i.e. the People's Resistance centers) , the CC ICP at the end of July did not challenge Qaseem.

96.   Despite this, the masses overwhelmingly followed the ICP. After a new rightist coup, led by **Ashid Ali** was exposed –the ICP masses surged onto the streets. The ICP was in control of the streets. It grew rapidly, taking control of broadcasting and attaining prominence in print media, Iraqi student unions, pushing for 'Peoples Courts', and taking leadership of many fronts of professionals (eg Engineers, lawyers etc.). Undoubtedly that the ICP held the momentum.
Yet, when Qaseem called a halt on January 14 1959, and asked the students and "noble citizens" to not perform police duties without a "clear order from the supreme command of the armed forces" – the masses followed the ICP lead, and stood down.
The ICP were content with a few peanuts thrown to them by Qaseem, who probably knew the Freer Officer Mosul rebellion was brewing *(see #104)*. Likely Qaseem many not have known where or when it would erupt. But he knew he would need the ICP masses shortly.

The ICP was underline correct to support Qaseem.
But it was underline incorrect to not use the surge of the masses to move to the leadership

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[74] *Batatu Ibid p. 832.*
[75] *Batatu Ibid p. 848-849*
[76] *Aburish Ibid p. 41*

of the National Democratic Revolution, moving through to the second stager of the socialist revolution. The moment was theirs to lose. As Batatu says:
"The laborers and the poor, regardless of race or religion, feeling their strength, were voicing openly their desires and expectations, while property owners and conservative people looked with eyes of alarm… and pinned their hopes upon the nationalists who, spurred by danger, had closed ranks and now secretly labored to encompass Qaseem's; ruin and turn the tide in their favour"; [77]

97. Largely by virtue of the mass ICP following, the pan-Arabists of the Ba'th type were defeated. By September 12, 1958, 'Aref had been dismissed as deputy premier and lost all his army posts. He was exiled as an ambassador to Germany. He was later to be sentenced to death for his role in the failed Mosul Rising of March 1959.

ii) The relationship of the Iraqi CP to Pan Arabism, and Battles With Bakdash
In this narrative we already saw some twists of the ICP. Here we will consider the principles of the National Liberation struggle, and how they were flouted in the Middle East.

98.   There are two main revisionist departures from the Marxist-Leninist communist approach to the bourgeois-led national liberation movements.
They have been discussed by *Communist League* and *Alliance ML* previously in many articles. [78]   We will not repeat the full discussion here. But it is clearly relevant to a correct line in relation to Iraqi history.
As communists tried to come to terms with the attitudes to the Ba'th Party, two incorrect, polar and opposite errors could be found.

First, the ultra-left rejection of the United Front in any shape.
For example, in Moscow in 1949 **E.Zhukov**, the Soviet specialist on Oriental affairs, who:
"Tied the hastening of the process of social and national liberation of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries" to the "pitiless denunciation of the reactionary national-bourgeois ideology in its various forms, be it Kemalism or Gandhism, Zionism or Pan-Arabism"... the mood to which Zhukov gave voice gradually faded out, and the interest of the ICP in the pan-Arab cause revived". [79]

The second error was to dissolve communist goals into a wholly bourgeois dominated "Front" where the CPs expressed no voice and were supine, for fear of antagonizing the bourgeoisie in the United Front.

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[77] *Batatu Ibid p. 860*
[78] *For example, at: http://ml-review.ca/aml/China/NotesChina.htm*
[79]*"Questions of the National and Economic Struggle after the Second World War," Voprosy Ekonomiki, No.9 of 1949, p. 58. Cited by Batatu Ibid; p. 821 on, 822-828; 837; 839*

Both errors were committed at differing times, by the ICP and, by the CPSL.

99.   The ICP attitude to the Ba'th, was heavily influenced by the Syrian CP.
After all, the CP of Syria and Lebanon (CPSL) had undergone the same debate about the Ba'th. Moreover the CPSL leader **Khalid Bakdash** (General Secretary from 1932) was considered the foremost leader within the Middle East.[80]
Both the ICP and the Syrian CPSL, vacillated between the two poles of revisionism described above *(#99)*, in their approach to the Ba'th.

<u>Bakdash tended consistently to a servile position to the national capitalists</u>.

Bakdash had gone so far in the Syrian elections of 1943, as to <u>deny</u> the CPSL's broader agenda completely.
In 1942, he assured the bourgeoisie, that the CPSL was "not in the first place a party of social reform", and:
"We assure the national capitalist, the national factory owner, that we do not look with envy or with malice upon his national enterprise. .. All that we ask is kindness towards the peasant and the alleviation of his misery". [81]

In May 1956 Bakdash was writing "that an entente between the two great poplar and patriotic parties – the CPSL and the Arab Socialist Ba'th" was historically obligatory." [82]

Yet at opportune times for himself, Bakdash *verbally* supported Lenin and Stalin's view that the United Front:
"can have a revolutionary significance only under the circumstances and conditions in which the CP enjoys complete freedom to carry out is political and organizational activity, to organize the proletariat into an independent political force, and to moblize the fellahin against the big landowners". [83]

Yet the underlying true and repeated theme of Bakdash, was to fawn on the national bourgeoisie. To this end he opened the doors of the CP Syria and Lebanon (CPSL) to all and sundry, as in 1943:
"All citizens irrespective of their social and philosophical ideas, are welcome to our party so long as they accept its charter" – which charter called for:
"nothing more than national independence, democratic reforms and very timid reforms"; [84] To remove any lingering doubts he explicitly stated "as Arabs" the

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[80] *Tareq Y Ismael & Jacqueline S. Ishmael; "The Communist Movement in Syria and Lebanon"; Florida 1998; pp 24-59; 32-3; 43*
[81] *Batatu 'Syria's peasantry'; Ibid; p.119; & in Batatu 'Iraq'; Ibid p. 584*
[82] *Batatu Ibid p. 822.*
[83] *Batatu Ibid p. 585.*
[84] *Batatu; Ibid; p. 584*

ICP was not concerned about the social system of the USSR:
"The Soviets… we... approach this issue as patriots and as Arabs.. and are not so much concerned because the Soviet Union has a particular social system". [85]

These quotes reveal that Bakdash and the Syrian CPSL consistently <u>enabled</u> the national bourgeoisie to take leadership of the national liberation struggle.

100.   By 1957, the CPSL, had already faced the Ba'th demand for unity with Egypt. Since 1955 to mid-1957 in Syria, the Ba'th and the CPSL, were in considerable agreement. In fact Bakdash in 1955, said:
"An entente between the two great popular and patriotic parties, the Communist and the Arab Socialist Ba'th" was "historically obligatory."

In contrast, the Ba'th was restrained about their view of the Syrian CP; saying for example, that this was a "temporary concurrence" of two otherwise incompatible lines of action".
The revisionist Soviet Union supported Nasser, and the unity of Egypt and Syria as the UAR. The Syrian CP agreed with this.
This support of the USSR for Nasserism, helped the communists across the Middle East to gain mass support.

101.   Meanwhile the Syrian army leadership and the Syrian Ba'th itself, flinched because of an evident rising Syrian Communist popularity. For that reason these elements embraced Nasser's Union as "an anchor of deliverance".
The Ba'th now successfully fanned the popular 'pan-Arab' passion for Nasser. The CPSL followed suit.

With Bakdash's approval, Communist inclined Syrian **General al-Bizri** and 'neutralist' **Brigadier an-Nafuri and Colonel 'Abd-ul-Karim** persuaded "the Syrian Army Command Council into an appeal for a complete and immediate merger with Egypt". Even though the CPSL had full knowledge about the Egyptian anti-Communist laws and crack-downs. A strong ally of Bakdash, Syrian Deputy Premier **al-'Azm** quickly supported such a merger.

In fact, some elements of the Syrian CP actually asked for *full merger between the Ba'th and the Communists* ('Abd-un-Basir). Though it is true that this dissolution step was resisted by Bakdash.

With the Syrian plebiscite of February 21 the Union of Syria with Egypt was accepted. But immediately following this, the Syrian CP was swiftly attacked and suppressed.

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[85] *Batatu Ibid 584-585.*

102.   The Iraqi CP underwent a more convoluted dance step, as it vacillated on the
        relationship to the national capitalists.

        While the Iraqi CP in 1956 had "inscribed Arab unity on their banners" they linked
        it to the "realization of democratic reforms".[86] This was correct, and avoided the
        sole slogan of 'Arab unity' becoming a substitute for moving to the second
        socialist stage of the revolution. But this correct position was not adhered to.

        Fahd (the leopard) appears to have been much clearer than Bakhdash about the
        primary goals of the CP towards socialism. [87] The differences between Bakhdash
        and Fahad came to a head with the affair of the ***Hizb-ish-Sha'b*** (The People's
        Party). [88] Bakdash went behind the backs of the ICP to arrange with **Aziz Sharif**
        – a good friend of his – to organise the Peoples Party front. It was then used, in
        an attempt to liquidate the ICP. This did not succeed, as Fahd refused to allow
        this.

        Again, Bakdash had promoted a non-communist front as the vehicle for 'Arab'
        leadership rather than communist leadership. Throughout, he never retracted,
        although the CPSL claimed that they gave no support to Aziz Sharif. However
        the affair smouldered on, and came to an end with Fahd's arrest on January 18,
        1947. With the state crack down, Aziz Sharif fled to Syria. Later during the 1948
        Watabh, again Sharif and his friend Bakdash tried to interfere with the running of
        the ICP through the People's party. Fahd from prison, appears to have tried to
        fight this off.

103.   After Fahd's execution, the ICP swung overtly to an uncritical support to the
        national bourgeoisie at varying times.
        Before the fall of the Monarchy in April 1958, the ICP had originally supported
        within the Front of National Unity, proposals for a federal link to the UAR. After
        the army take-over, Abd al Salam Arif strongly endorsed the Ba'th proposal to
        merge with the UAR.
        In response we saw that the ICP organised a massive demonstration against the
        Ba'th move, mobilising half a million. The ICP had an equivocal stance since it
        rejected 'merger' but demanded 'federal status with the UAR and the Yemen and
        Soviet friendship". [43] But Qaseem had used the support of the communists
        against the Ba'th, until the tide of merger with the UAR passed,

While Qaseem was intent on improving working people's lives, he was far from a
communist. He balanced off the communists against the other parties.

iii) The Mosul Revolt – counter-revolution in the First Officer movement – and

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[86] *Batatu Ibid; p.822.*
[87] *Batatu; Ibid Iraq; p. 585.*
[88] *Batatu; Ibid 586-594.*

critical failure of the ICP to seize the initiative

104.   By January 1959, the ICP had gained support and set up several front
        organisations. Indeed although its increasing influence tempted Qaseem to
        clamp down on the united fronts, he waited knowing he may need the ICP.
        But only a little over a year from the fall of the monarchy, the Qaseem reforms
        had provoked a counter-revolution.

        This took the form of the **Mosul Revolt** of March 1959. It was led by **Ahmad 'Ajil
        al-Yawer** – one of the dominant Shaikhs in the area.
        The landowning elements were represented by the Independent Party.
        Some merchants were represented by the Muslim Brotherhood.
        The Ba'th Party had major support in Mosul, and with key disaffected army
        members. Mosul was the home of about 1/3 of the army officers, and was also
        close to the Syrian border and Kurdish strongholds.
        The disaffected included many resentful feeling un-rewarded by Qaseem, such
        as Colonel Rif'at al-Hajj Sirri, and 'Abd-us-Salam. They were anti-Communist,
        and decried the ICP 'influence' on Qaseem.

105.   In March 1959 in Mosul, the pan-Arab nationalist and Baathist officers mounted
        their revolt against Qaseem.
        Ostensibly, it was provoked by an armed demonstration of the 'Peace Partisans'
        of the ICP. the Qaseem and National Democrat forces were outnumbered in
        Mosul, but relied heavily on the ICP.

        The ICP were strongly backed by the non-commissioned officers and soldier
        ranks in the army, laborers and the poor peasants. Indeed "tribal, ethnic and
        class conflicts had been ripening for years". [89]

        The struggle became a battle between pan-Arabists and Kurdish and Christian
        leftists and nationalists. [90]
        Kurdish KDP forces rallied to Mustafa Mullah, and the ICP. As did the population
        - the Kurdish and Yazdhi inhabitants, Assyrian and Aramean Christians, and
        tribal peasants of Mosul country fought with the ICP.

        Qaseem had to support the ICP resistance against the landowners and
        reactionaries in Mosul.
        Meanwhile the ICP were mistaken about the real intents of Qaseem.
        The ICP raised slogans such as "Our sole leader is 'Abd-ul-Karim Qaseem!" [91]
        This created a populist surge focusing on Qaseem. Meanwhile it showed the ICP
        subservience.
        In reality Qaseem relied on the ICP, but profoundly distrusted them.

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[89] *Batatu Ibid p. 869.*
[90] *McDowall Ibid; p.304*
[91] *Batatu Ibid; pp. 870-889;*

The Mosul Revolt was put down by the ICP and Qaseem but only after much sacrifice.

The revolutionary forces (communists, and the tribal Kurds, and Arameans working with them) suffered huge casualties and deaths, fighting against the counter-revolutionaries (the army leaders and the landlords).

People's Courts were set up by the ICP and the People's Resistance Force (headed by **Mahdi Hamid**) which summarily tried the rebels and landlords. Total deaths on both sides amounted to the hundreds. [92]

Immediately after, Qaseem purged the armed forces of Arab nationalists and Baathists. Similar events followed in **Kirkuk**, where there were also ICP attacks on Turcoman shops and owners.

106.   With the crushing of the Mosul coup, the momentum of communists surged. On the 24th 1959, the Qaseem government withdrew from the Baghdad Pact. At the same time Communist led 'Committees for the Defence of the Republic', were set up to purge ministries of counter-revolutionaries. Approximately 2,000 people lost their jobs. Many were imprisoned. Similarly in the army. [93] Communists took key army and air force positions.

Again however, they did not effectively use their advantage to push socialist offensive steps to take state control.
As **Zaki Kharai** would later say:
"We had the First Army Division in our hands but failed to put this to use when the coup of February came". [87]
The People's Resistance Force, also expanded and by May 1959 comprised some 25,000 people. They took control of the Censor's position, and the media. This was happening across Iraq, not merely in Baghdad. On all fronts the surge was remarkable. But Qaseem still denied the ICP cabinet positions. The ICP made his refusal public.

107.   The CIA chief **Allen Dulles** described Iraq as "the most dangerous in the world today." [94] While Qaseem still refused to bend to the ICP, huge mass demonstrations supported the ICP.
And yet… the ICP did not change their slogan of: "Long Live the Leader Qaseem!"
They did it is true add: "The CP In Government is a Mighty Demand!" [95]

108.   Briefly the British government made public statements to support Qaseem by

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[92] *Batatu Ibid; pp. 883-889*
[93] *Batatu Ibid p. 890-899*
[94] *Batatu Ibid p. 899*
[95] *Batatu Ibid p. 900*

granting him arms. Qaseem meanwhile insisted on 'neutrality' and resisted the ICP. Now the National Democrats vice-chairman **Mohammed Hamid**, used the prior words of the ICP against them, which upheld Qaseem:
"On May 19… they could not remain insensible to the wishes of "the leader of the country".

The ICP Politbureau essentially caved in the face of Hamid's retort.
As Politbureau member **Zaki Khairi** later said:
"*The momentary political view prevailed*: Qaseem was looked upon not as the leader of the bourgeois class but as a military individual of diverse inclinations… Had the party been orientated after 1958 toward power, the Revolution would have triumphed. This was the basic shortcoming and not the need for army officers." [96]

109.   It is clear that the revisionist **CPSU(B)** leaned heavily on the ICP to bend. The revisionist CPSU(B)-USSR wanted to maintain relations with Nasser and not to provoke Qaseem.
Many comrades within the ICP were disgusted, but this did not reach public view. As an internal circular stated:
"We let slip through our fingers a historic opportunity and allowed a squandering of a unique revolutionary situation to the detriment of the people… To say that the masses loving Qaseem would have stood against us is untrue… Had we seized the helm and without delay secure the masses in their interests and their rights, granted to the Kurds their autonomy and, by revolutionary measures, transformed the army into a democratic force, our regime would have with extraordinary speed attained to the widest popularity and would have released mass initiatives, enabling the millions to make their own history"; [97]

By May 20 1959 a retreat of the revolutionary momentum was in full sway.
By 24 May Qaseem clamped down on the 'Peoples Resistance' fronts, removing their authority. He removed the media from Communist dominance, and created a 'special branch' to overlook governmental offices.
Now the National Democratic party organised mobs to attack communist in the street, and landlords challenged the communists in the countryside. The army was purged. As clashes became tenser, Qaseem used increasingly soapy language to assuage the anger of the communist masses. Even now the PB of the ICP did not break with Qaseem. [98]
Cleverly, in a sop, Qaseem now appointed 1 communist and 2 left National Democrats to the cabinet.

110.   But rapidly Qaseem suppressed the party. At the same time the influence of the

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[96] *Batatu Ibid p. 901*
[97] *Batatu Ibid; p. 904*
[98] *Batatu Ibid; p. 909*

party amongst the masses was lost.

These tensions culminated in a failed assassination attempt of Qaseem in October 1959, in which **Saddam Hussein** was involved. Saddam Hussein became a member of the Ba'th Party in 1959, and was organizing street warfare for the Ba'th.[99] After the failed attempt, he escaped to Syria and then to Cairo, where he made contacts with the American embassy and the CIA.[95] Qaseem wrongly suspected Barzani and the Kurds of involvement in this failed attempt. There is good reason to suspect that the USA had backed this attempt, as the "Ba'ath was the political force of the future".[100]

There seems no doubt that the ICP army contingents basically leapt into action and prevented the attempt becoming a coup. Yet with this, the ICP was again gaining, prompting Qaseem to attack them more. By now the ICP had splintered, Qaseem played one off against the other. He granted a small ultra-left splinter legal status but denied this to the ICP. This enabled him to force the ICP to relinquish "Marxism-Leninism as a prescription": [101]
Yet even despite this, the party was not legalised'. So in a completely un-principled manner, the ICP <u>accepted</u> the mandate granted to the renegade ultra-leftist party.

Qaseem proceeded to systematically destroy the ICP:
the party paper was banned, the members purged form any jobs in government and army, and the auxiliary organisations were crushed, including the trade unionists and the peasant associations. A counter-revolutionary terror began, to which the ICP only responded to with pleas. [102] The now empowered rightwing, promoted religious Shi'ia ulema to issue fatwas against the ICP. Combined with sabotage in the agricultural economy by the shaikhs, the right wing had seized control. [95]
And yet, even now the ICP did not resist Qaseem. From their: "central line "To fix the regime firmly upon democratic foundations, they did not swerve"; said a critical internal party circular." [103]

111.   But as Qaseem moved against the ICP, he had also removed any support he had against the Ba'th. The coup that was now to unseat him, was led by an alliance of the army (led by **'Abd al-Salam 'Aref**) and Ba'athists (led by **'Ali Salih al-Sa'di**). These were the very 'pan-Arabists' – some of whom were

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[99] *Said K Arburish; 'Saddam Hussein" London 2000; p.35; 44-47.*
[100] *Bulloch & Morris; ibid; p.124; Who is Saddam Hussein? Portrait of a Fascist Made by Imperialism'; Alliance North America; Volume 1, Issue 2; February 2003; at http://mlreview.ca/aml/PAPER/FEBRUARY2003/SADDAM.html;*

[101] *Batatu Ibid; p. 939-40*
[102] *Batatu Ibid; p. 951-955*
[103] *Batatu Ibid; p. 957*

Nasserites - who had been resisted by Qaseem.

By the time of his unseating, Qaseem's agrarian reform had stalled, and only 1,800, 461 dunums were distributed to 35,104 peasants. [43, 49] The Ba'th had recovered from their defeat at Mosul, and were still at this stage linked closely with the Syrian Ba'th. They made military contacts with Brigadier **Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr**, and others. Finally links to the CIA were cemented to ensure support.[104]

The coup was scheduled for 18 January 1963. The **Kurdish Democratic Party** had meanwhile approached the ICP with a plan to launch a separate coup.
But astoundingly they were rejected by the ICP, still loyal to Qaseem.
The unprincipled Kurdish Democratic Party now simply aided the Ba'th. The ICP warned Qaseem that a plot was afoot, but he made no counter-move.

When the coup launched, masses of the *shargawiyyas* came to the streets in response to the ICP, to defend the government.
But they were rolled aside by the tanks of the army.
Qaseem and his defenders were captured and summarily shot by firing squad.

112.   Communists were slaughtered, accounts estimate 5,000 communists and allies were killed. [104,105] The Ba'thist National Guard carried out the murders. The poorest (Shi'ia) districts held out against the army and Ba'th, to the last. The coup was assisted by American intelligence, the Ba'thists quickly slaughtered many progressives and Iraqi communists.[106] **King Hussein** of Jordan related that: "I know for a certainty that what happened in Iraq on 8 February had the support of American intelligence… Numerous meetings were held between the Ba'th Party and American Intelligence in Kuwait… Do you know that on 8 February a secret radio beamed to Iraq was supplying the men who pulled the coup with the names and addresses of the Communist there so that they could be arrested and executed?" [107]
The ICP central committee members were captured, tortured and killed. First Secretary **Hadi Hashim al-A'dhami,** died without naming names.
But the party was largely destroyed. Remnants joined with the Kurds who were resisting the war newly launched against them. By November – when the Ba'th themselves fell – between 7-10,000 communists were imprisoned. More than a third of the CC (7 of 13) was killed. [103;108]

The in-coming Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister **Ali Saleh Al**

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[104] *Aburish Ibid; p. 54-59*
[105] *Batatu Ibid; p. 985*
[106] *Bulloch & Morris Ibid; p. 127;*
[107] *Conversation to Muhammed Heikal Editor al-Ahram, 27 Sep 1963; cited by Batatu Ibid; p. 986*
[108] *Batatu Ibid; p. 990*

Sa'adi said: "We came to power on a CIA train". [103]
In return American companies including **Bechtel** and **Mobil** obtained major contracts, and the Iraqi army gave weapons and aircraft from the USSR, to the CIA to enable them to assess them. [103]
After the coup, Saddam Hussein returned to Iraq.

113.   Internal circulars show that some ICP elements made the correct post-mortem diagnosis of why and how the ICP had failed in its historic mission:
"The "chief factor"… was the line of **"passive defense"** that it had pursued in 1959-1963. In those years, "the whole strategy of our party rested on wrong principles, namely that, rather than initiating the civil war ourselves we should avoid it all costs. At the same time, the other forces.. were sharpening their knives.. We abandoned the initiative to the enemy.. to the Counter-Revolution." The party "had thousands of soldiers an officers" inside the army, and a wide base of support among the masses, but four years of waiting were enough to spell the end of "any revolutionary political army", which "unlike military army, cannot ever and against be set in motion at the beck and call of the commander-in-chief"… Had Lenin not committed his revolutionary political army in a decisive battle on 7 November 1917, had its summons to act been delayed only 24 hours, he might have lost that army and the October revolution might no have made history…. *We had lost the battle of 8 February 1963 since the year 1959!*" [109]

iv) The first and second Ba'th governments

 114.   After the fall of Qaseem, the Ba'th Party held governmental power – but it consisted now of two distinct parts.
<u>One was a civilian Ba'th part and the other a military Ba'th part.</u>
The Ba'th dominated the **National Council of the Revolutionary Command**, set up by the new regime – holding 16 of 18 positions. The premier was **Brigadier Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr**. 'Aref was on the Command as well, and was made President, and he was still of Nasserite persuasion.

The Ba'th party had about 15,000 members in 1963. [110] But although there were military officers of the Ba'th, the army commands were kept clear of any Ba'th authority.

Bakr ensured that **Saddam Hussein**, his tribal kinsman and young protégé – was appointed to the President's Bureau. Hussein took responsibility to organise the National Guard further, and began his on-going tortures of opponents. [111]

To counter the fact that it had no Army based Ba'th positions, the civilian arm of the Ba'th built up the **Nationalist Guard**, from 5,000 men, within a year to

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[109] *Internal Communist Party Circular of 1967; Cited Batatu Ibid; p. 992-93*
[110] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1010*
[111] *Aburish Ibid pp. 60-61*

34,000. But this became an arrogant force, quite unpopular with the masses. The leadership of the civilian Ba'th had no clear programme, and it basically copied that drawn up by Premier al-Bakr.

The Iraqi Ba'th moved steadily towards one-party rule, with one motif – anti-communism. In addition the Nasserites were now organised in the Independence Party. On April 17, Iraq had duly but very briefly, joined the UAR with Egypt and Syria.
For on May 25 the Nasserites were denounced by the Revolutionary Command Council for 'conspiracy'.

115.   Finally, by July the UAR project had completely <u>collapsed</u>. [112]
         This was largely due to a <u>Syrian disenchantment </u>with the UAR.
         A new military wing of the Syrian Ba'th – refused any further collaboration with Nasser. A Syrian purge of Nasserite officers of the army and the Ba'th took place. These tensions reflected the take-over of the Syrian Ba'th at the 6th Congress by "left" elements led by **Hamud ash-Shuff**. At the conclusion of this congress Michel 'Aflaq declared sadly that it was 'no longer his party' [113]

         But these Syrian events were bound also to reverberate inside Iraq.
         Tensions between the civilian 'left' wing and the military 'right' wing of the Iraqi Ba'th grew. Now 'Aref grew distrustful of the civilian Ba'th, and moved against it. The Iraqi Ba'th was already very divided in itself. The military-Ba'th leadership was uniformly Sunni, whereas the civilian Ba'th leaders were Shi'ia – as were the majority of the rank and file.

         Both sides agreed on the creation of the **Iraqi National Oil Company (INOC)** which ultimately took place in 1964. [114]
         But by March a dispute arose over the **Personal Status Law No 188** previously passed by Qaseem. This gave equal rights to inheritance to men and women. 'Aref and Bakr moved this was "inconsistent with Sharia law", and repealed it. [115]
         To which the Ba'th objected, given their claims as a secular party.

         More issues arose including the Ba'th control of the Nationalist Guard.
         Inside the Council, factions arose – one calling itself 'Left" (**As-Sa'adi**) and "Marxist". The other termed "right" were mainly the military, including Bakr and 'Aref.

         In Iraq, the army leaders were alarmed at this turn. They staged an Extraordinary Regional Congress, at the end of which a coup was struck. The 'leftist' Ba'thists

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[112] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1015*
[113] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1020-22*
[114] *Aburish Ibid p. 71*
[115] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1018*

(led by **Sa'adi**) were expelled on a plane to Madrid, by Saddam Hussein.
By the next morning (13 November) the rank and file Ba'th were warned by
Premier al-Bakr against "Ba'thist killing Ba'thist".

As this broke out, the original leader of the Syrian Ba'th – 'Aflaq desperately
sought to prevent further splintering. In a bizarre spectacle, Michel 'Aflaq flew to
Baghdad, and tried to 'mediate'.
Under leftist slogans, workers came onto the streets demanding 'immediate
socialization of factories and collectivization of agriculture', but the generals took
control using air bombardments and tanks. [116]

The Second Ba'th Government.

116.   This regime was led by **'Abd-us-Salam 'Aref** from 18 November 1963 to his
        death in the air in a helicopter, on 13 April 1966. It was a coalition still of military
        'Arefites, and military Ba'thists, with some residual Nasserites.
        The Vice-president was **Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr.**

        Aref moved against the civilian Ba'th party in this phase.
        He created the Republican Guard – as a safeguard against the National Guard.
        'Aref tried to take solitary power, placing Bakr under house arrest briefly.
        Saddam Hussein became embroiled in assassination attempts on 'Aref, which
        failed, and he was briefly arrested, until he escaped.

        Meanwhile, a clique of officers of the Military bureau of the Ba'th, had developed.
        They all came from a tribal group **ash-Shiyayshaha, from Takrit.**
        Bakr was also from Takrit, but from a ruling tribal section - **al-Beghat.**

        The Ba'th Government coalition was bound to rupture.

117.   But as 'Aref and the Nasserites again maneuvered in a last-ditch effort to achieve
        a union with Egypt, they were surprised that Nasser drew back.
        At this time, the ICP – pushed likely by Khrushchev - were again abasing
        themselves to 'Arab Unity'. [117] Here the ICP was playing the distasteful role of a
        comprador bourgeoisie on behalf of Egypt.
        The ICP moreover were again rejecting any path toward "conquest of power";
        stating there was a "possibility of Iraqi development along non-capitalist lines". [118]
        Yet the momentum for merging or joining with Egyptian state had stalled, as
        Nasser in turn now became wary.

        At the same time the worsening and blatant renunciation of communist positions
        led to "great indignation" among the ICP rank and file.

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[116] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1025*
[117] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1037-8*
[118] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1039-40*

This pressure from below, led to yet another 180-degree reversal, now to adopting "violent struggle." [115]

Once more the ICP was adrift, while constantly and opportunistically changing its line.

On 9 October 1965, an enlarged meeting of the CC of the ICP was completely split [119] Fierce discussions were followed by a resolution endorsing "decisive action" at a time when cooperation of "the KDP, the remaining Qaseemites, and some of the nationalist groups of socialist persuasion" was also obtained. [118]

At a later meeting of the ICP "**Committee for the Organization Abroad**" in Prague, very differing opinions were voiced. It was attended by _all_ the members of the CC and leading members aboard.

The relevance of the Kurdish rising was clearly noted by some. _Saber_ counseled that:

"It is necessary to take into account a very favorable element: the Kurdish rising.. we must at least time our action with its leadership": [118.]

Yet _Sadeq_ also warned that the Kurdish struggle had 'defects':

"The Kurdish revolution is of great importance to us. But it has defects. Its forces re not homogenous. Our own capabilities in it are weak.. Nearly all the members of their political bureau lean to the right. Even many of the forces of Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani incline to the right despite their subordination to him…" [118]

In reality, despite a new growth in membership (to about 5,000 members and a mass following again) – the ICP had little armed strength now. Recognising this, the 'Committee for the Organization Abroad' sent back to Baghdad a note warning against adventurism.

118.   By the spring 1965, the military Ba'th Nasserites were on the back foot. [120] 'Aref was forced to appoint the first civilian to head the premiership since 1958 – **Dr. al-Bazzaz**. The cabinet proclaimed a nationalist policy again, with some pablum about "Arab socialism". But shortly 'Aref died in a helicopter crash. (_see #132_).

Therefore, on April 16 1966, **Major General 'Abd-ur-Rahman 'Aref**, brother to the late president, was elected by the cabinet and the National Defence Council – to become **President** of the Republic.

Reflecting a chaotic imbalance between progressive and reactionary forces, an attempt was made to restore the old landed classes. This was in contrast to the oil nationalisation (_See #121_).

At the same time 'Aref aimed to cut down the spending to the army. This

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[119] _Battatu Ibid; p. 1045-48; 1051; 1053-60_
[120] _Battatu Ibid; p. 1033-1037_

prompted an order from the army that 'Aref should step aside 'to rest'; he was followed by Retired Staff Major General **Naji Taleb,** but 'Aref again returned. [121]

Trying to find allies and stave off opposition, the 'Aref government tried to reach accord with the B'ath of Syria. As noted, this had been taken over by a 'leftist' National Command (*see #116*). But the Iraqi 'Aref overtures were rejected by the Syrian Ba'th.

v) The ascent of Saddam Hussein with CIA help

119.   Meanwhile both Bakr and Saddam Hussein worked with the **Syrian Ba'th 'leftist' National Command.** But their goals were too far apart, involving Iraqi hegemony. Consequently the Syrian Ba'th national Command expelled Bakr and Hussein from control of the Ba'th in Iraq. However in reality the Syrian Ba'th had little leverage within Iraq. In response, Bakr and Hussein simply set up a new **Iraqi Ba'th Command**. They claimed this superseded the Damascus Ba'th – and only they themselves could speak for "all Arabs". [122]

120.   Meanwhile a battle over oil royalties from the **Iraq Petroleum Company** (British owned) took place. This resulted in Premier **Taher Yahya** taking over the oil reserves of the Northern field of Rumailah. The fields were given to the state controlled **Iraqi National Oil Company (INOC).** But at the same time, new oil exploration rights were given to the French company **ERAP**; while also signing deals with the USSR to undertake new technical and equipment for oil. [123-124]

121.   The oil losses of British and USA companies, prompted what **Ahmad Chalabi**, the USA comprador called **"the second stage of CIA-Ba'th cooperation"**. [124] Former Secretary of the USA Treasury **Robert Anderson**, met with Bakr and plans for a coup were set afoot. Iraqi intelligence Chief **Nayyef** was heavily involved, and later said: "For the 1968 coup you must look to Washington". [124]

In two 'bloodless' coups, separated by 13 days, between July 17-30, 1968, the 'Aref regime was disposed of.
First a military controlled Revolutionary Command Council was installed. This was sparked by the 'Pan-American Company', which was denied a sulfur concession. Its leaders were Colonels **An-Nayef, Ad-Daud, and Sa'dun Ghaidan**. [125] Bakr was appointed as chairman .

Feeling insecure, they linked closely with the Ba'th Party military elements. But very quickly Ba'th Party elements took over. The coup was led by Brigadier

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[121] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1064*
[122] *Aburish; ibid p. 66.*
[123] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1066-7*
[124] *Aburish Ibid p. 73-75; 96*
[125] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1074*

Hammad Shebab at-Takrit, commander of the Baghdad garrison.

As a second stage of the coup took place as in 1964, the leadership of the Ba'th was taken over by Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr and Saddam Hussein. Both were related through Hussein's foster-father) from the al-Begat section of the Albu Nasir tribe in **Takriti**. [126]
They 'Takritiz-ed' the Ba'th – as Batatu put it. [127]

Saddam Hussein was by now the Deputy Secretary General of the Iraqi Ba'th. In addition he was given the post of running the security services, blandly named the Office of General Relations. He became Vice President by 1969.
Steadily over the next ten years, Hussein expelled, or killed all the potential rival military leaders.

122.   By 1973 Hussein had also assassinated **Shia Fuad Al Riakabi**, the former civilian leader of the Ba'th. [124]
By 1968, the Ba'th was no longer a mixed party of both Sunni and Shi'ia.
It was now heavily **Sunni dominated** (84.9%, versus 53.8% Shi'a, 7.7% Kurd). [128] This was due to the (largely Sunni) police hunting down of Shi'ia Ba'thists during the 1963 coup of 'Abd-us-Salim 'Aref.
In addition, the influx of Sunni officers, especially of the **Takriti army officers –** ensured Sunni domination.

123.   Therefore, the duo of General **Ahmed Hassan al Bakr and Saddam Hussein**, for the **Baath Party**, had state control. Hussein was the main force even in this coalition.

Their military dictatorship early on, still represented the weak Iraqi national bourgeoisie.
This regime at first continued a weak struggle against the dependence on British and USA imperialism.
But, just as before – as internal and international pressures were intense, al-Bakr was compelled it to seek assistance from the principal rival of the USA, **Soviet neo-imperialism**.

The revisionist USSR now became Iraq's main source of "aid" and arms.
Iraq formally signed in 1972 a Treaty of Friendship with the revisionist Soviet Union. Correspondingly, in 1972 Saddam Hussein nationalized the IPC under Law 69. By 1973 the Basra Oil Company was also nationalized. In the interim he

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[126] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1084*

[127] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1079*
[128] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1078*

steadily made more firm links with the USSR for aid. [129]

124.   By 1974 Saddam Hussein was in complete control of the Iraqi state, but this was
        only clear to all in 1979. Bakr had been a mere cipher in the interim. Saddam
        Hussein had by 1979 made the Ba'th into a shell for his Tikriti family members
        and tribe. By 1977 he had completed a crack-down on the small remnant of the
        ICP. By 1979 – Saddam Hussein was moving to remove Bakr.

125.   <u>What was the class character of Hussein?</u>
        From the start he was a creature of the CIA, as we saw earlier. Yet, he continued
        links with the USSR and nationalised the IPC.
        But these were in essence, feints for more bargaining power with the USA.

        In reality the <u>USA still saw him as someone who could be 'their man'</u>.
        <u>Why was this?</u>
        Hussein rejected aggression against Israel, and by and large the USA was
        reassured.
        Furthermore, differences between Bakr and Hussein had arisen.
        Bakr had shown resistance to Hussein on the issue of Syria. Bakr was trying to
        mend fences with the Syrian Ba'th, and now announced a unity of Iraq and Syria
        under a single Ba'th party.

        This would have been a problem for the USA.

        As Khomeini came to power in Iran in 1979, USA calculations in the Gulf became
        even more strained. Bluntly said, the USA needed a 'vultures perch' in the Middle
        East – Saddam obliged, and offered Iraq (*see also #146*).

        As Syrian President **Hafiz Assad** hesitated to Bakr's proposal, Hussein moved.
        Saddam Hussein purged the Ba'th party even more and replaced thousands with
        tribes-people either of, or loyal to, the Tikritis.

        The USA had only wanted Saddam Hussein to end the discussion of a Syrian-
        Iraqi joint state. Hussein effectively stopped moves to a merger between Iraq and
        Syria. Hussein was only too happy to oblige. [130] [124]

        Hussein ensured by this step, that the CIA-USA would not oppose him, when he
        delivered the coup against Bakr. The USA gave assurances to enable Hussein to
        move against Bakr openly, not fearing opposition from the USA.

        By and large by this time the ICP and its splinters, could play no meaningful role
        in these events. Instead it continued to face even more serious splits took

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[129] *Aburish Ibid pp. 101-103*
[130] *Batatu Ibid pp. 1654-171.*

organizational shape, in especial with the formation of the ICP (Central Command) under **'Aziz al-Hajj 'Ali Haidar**. [131]

<u>We now return more frontally to the Kurds.</u>
We now relate earlier changes during and after Qaseem's rule, into the Kurdish story.

5. The Kurdish parties, Saddam Ba'thists and the USA
i)The Kurdish leaders of the KDP ally to Qaseem

126.   Following the fall of the Mahabad Republic, the Barzani fighters escaped Iranian and Iraqi attacks, by fleeing into the USSR (*Theses on Kurdistan Part 1)*. After 11 years in exile in the USSR, the Barzanis returned to Iraq in 1958, under a safe guarantee, from Qaseem. Four hundred Barzani fighters also came back to Iraq.

127.   Qaseem hoped that Barzani would enable tribal support for agrarian reform. The tribal chiefs were antagonistic to the Agrarian Laws. These were framed to limit land holdings, and alarmed the large landowners and tribal chiefs. [132] But this did not perturb the Barzanis, because they no longer owned landed-estates. Barzani tribal lands were expropriated during Mullah Mustafa's long exile, and given to the Herki, Zebari, Pizhdar and Baradost tribes. The aghas were thus alarmed at the coalition between Qaseem and Mulla Mustafa. Mulla Mustafa had promised he had not forgotten old enemies, who had helped drive him out in 1945. As the Reforms would limit landholdings to a maximum of 1,000 dunums of irrigated and 2,000 dunums of rain-fed land – this implied redistribution of almost half the total cultivated area of Iraq (24 million dunums) to peasantry".[133]
The agrarian reform proposals, drove revolts led by the Baradost and Pizhdar tribes. But they were suppressed by Barzani tribesmen who drove the offenders into Turkey or Iran. Resentments would surface at the *Mosul Uprising* (*See #105*).

128.   Before Barzani's return from exile, **Hamza Abdullah** and **Ibrahim Ahmad** had vied for the leadership of the KDP. Hamza, was a communist, but strove to include tribal landowners into the KDP. Moreover he had made overtures to the more overtly Arabist leaders of the Free Officers, including 'Aref. But Ahmad wished to build a more urban-based party. Mullah Mustafa effectively united these two wings. At first he favoured the Hamza Abdullah faction. But after the Mosul-Kirkuk disturbances, the Hamza Abdullah faction was purged from the KDP. He supported the Qaseem leadership of Iraq, and did not support the push for open Kurdish autonomy at the 4th Congress in 1959. Yet Ahmad and Talabani insisted on it. These tensions boiled up, when Mulla Mustafa rewarded Qaseem handsomely for his support, during the Mosul-Kirkuk Revolt *(#105).* When Qaseem

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[131] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1067-69*
[132] *Bulloch & Morris; Ibid; p. 120-121*
[133] *Mcdowall, Ibid p. 306; and see [43] Batatu p. 837*

later turned against the ICP, Mullah Mustafa joined him. [134] But this exacerbated divisions within the KDP.

ii) The Kurdish Revolt and the Split in the Kurdish forces

129. The failed assassination of Qaseem (*#111*), led Qaseem to wrongly suspect Kurdish involvement. This inflamed tensions between Qaseem-Barzani, and armed battles. Kurdish aspirations for a recognised status in Iraq were unfulfilled. Instead a series of state led coordinated assaults were launched upon the KDP. The self-defense became the **1961 Kurdish revolt**. But the KDP was still riven by division at the early stages. One section led by Ahmad, supported by Mulla Mustafa, argued it was 'too early' for a revolt. In contrast Jalal Talabani, argued that an immediate declaration of war would ensure control over the tribal chiefs. These internal differences rapidly became irrelevant, as Qaseem banned the KDP, forcing an open revolt, enforcing unity. But to convince all factions this was a real unity, diminishing the purely tribal, and Barzani dominance seemed right. Thus the 'Kurdish national army', or the **peshmerga** was formed. [135]

130. On February 10, 1964, the Kurdish Revolt was halted, and Jalal Talabani accepted a KPD commission to negotiate with 'Abd Salam 'Aref. After the Ba'thist massacres of the ICP, *the leading positions were taken in the ICP by Kurds*. This section of the ICP supported the halting of the Revolt for talks. [136] Iraq now briefly joined the UAR in 1963. But since Kurdish autonomy was not on 'Aref's agenda, he avoided any substantive steps. Instead 'Aref simply sent Talabani to Cairo to demonstrate that the Iraqi Kurds 'supported' the UAR. When Iraqi discussions on Kurdish autonomy did take place, they broke down on the ownership of Kirkuk. This re-sparked divisions in the Kurdish camp. These were exacerbated when a separate, and opportunist peace treaty between Mulla Mustafa and Abdel Salaem 'Aref was signed. Ibrahim Ahamad and Talabani denounced this as a 'sell-out'. On 16 July Talabani refused KDP orders to hand them a radio station. Mulla Mustafa's son Idris and forces seized it, pushing Ahmad, Talabani and 4,000 men into exile in Iran. [137]

131. But the cease-fire between the Barzani KDP wing and the Iraqi state, did not hold for long. In the midst of renewed fighting, Abdel Salam 'Aref died in a helicopter accident *(See #119)*. We saw that **Abdel Rahman Bazzaz** became interim Prime Minister. In a June 1966 Declaration, he promised a future 'bi-national character of the Iraqi state', implying hopes for Kurdish autonomy. However the army removed Bazzaz, and then rejected this Declaration.

132. On April 16 1966, **Major General 'Abd-ur-Rahman 'Aref**, brother to the late

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[134] *McDowall Ibid p.305*
[135] *Bulloch & Morris; ibid; p.125*
[136] *Battatu Ibid; p. 1036*
[137] *Bulloch & Morris Ibid; p.126-8*

president, became President of the Republic (*#119)*. Meanwhile, the war against the Kurds soon heated up again. The Iraqi Army began to deploy a new tactic, of forming columns of renegade, paid Kurdish fighters (so called '**jash'**, or donkeys) to fight on the government side, <u>*against*</u> the Kurdish KDP. Even worse, the Jash were joined to the forces under Talabani's command.[138] As Talabani attacked the Barzani controlled, larger KPD, a full civil war broke out ***within*** the Kurdish forces.

iii) Saddam Hussein's war on the Kurds begins

133.   Led by Talabani, the jash continued to attack the KDP. Barzani vigorously counter-attacked on oil depots in Kirkuk. Therefore, Saddam Hussein, in January 1970, travelled North to meet personally with Barzani. In the 11 March Agreement, local self-government of the Kurds with full language rights and Kurdish administration in Kurdish areas – was promised. Moreover not only territory negotiations were promised, but other gains included recognizing the peshmerga as frontier forces under Kurdish commanders. A census was to be held, in order supposedly to determine the extent of Kurdish territory, which was to be held within 4 years. [139] This was hailed as a victory for the Kurds. Barzani now felt less threat from Talabani's forces. These forces were therefore 'amnestied', allowing them to return to Iraq.

134.   In reality Saddam Hussein was playing for time. The census he had promised for 1971, was stalled. Meanwhile an enforced Arab immigration into Kurdish areas took place, with the intent to dilute the Kurdish majority, especially in oil-rich Kirkuk. Ba'ath-ists then failed to assassinate Mullah Mustafa.

By March 1974, a new autonomy law was announced, with derisory terms. The Kurdish forces were given 15 days to accept and join the ruling coalition of the National Front.

iv) USA Betrayal Round Two - Courting Kurds to attack Saddam Hussein
<u>The First USA betrayal of the Kurds</u>, was to renege on the promises within the King-Crane Commission. This directly failed to establish a Kurdish state.
This second USA Betrayal would lead directly to the deaths of many Kurds.

We saw above that by 1979 – Hussein had moved directly to the camp of the USA (*See #126*). But in the early half of the 1970s, the position of Saddam Hussein was still unclear to the USA. At that stage, the USA imperialists were concerned about the Iraqi state approaches to the USSR.

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138. *Bulloch & Morris Ibid; p.128*
139. *Bulloch & Morris Ibid; p.130-2*

Accordingly the USA adopted a plan together with the Shah of Iran, to entice Kurdish forces in Iraq to rise against the Iraqi Ba'th government.

135.   As we saw above, in the second half of the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, the KPD led by **Mulla Mustafa Barzani,** was fighting the Iraqi government. The KPD, was the only significant force in Iraqi Kurdistan at the time, and was supported by **Shah Pahlavi's** Iran.

136.   Accordingly, the Kurdish representatives were courted by imperialists. **Richard Helms** (CIA) and **Al Haig** (White House Chief of Staff), met with **Massoud** and **Idriss Barzani** in Washington, in 1973.

A deal was concluded. The CIA would supply the KPD with military aid, hoping to weaken the Baath regime – which still kept close ties to the USSR.
The KPD, through the CIA, also forged close links with Israeli military trainers.

Arms were shipped from Israel, and the USA, to **Shah Pahlavi's** Iran and thence to the KPD. The USA promised that Kurdish resistance to Saddam Hussein would translate into obtaining a Kurdistan state [140]
To show the thinking of the USA, the remark by Secretary of State, **Henry Kissinger**, telling Saudi officials about the Iraqis and Saddam Hussein, in instructive:
"We consider them Soviet clients and your enemies-in-arms," Henry Kissinger told Saudi officials in 1974". [141]

137.   But the ensuing instability in the region proved too disruptive.
Iraq and Iran were therefore brought together by Jordan, Algeria and the USA, into an agreement. Unbeknown to the KPD, the two previous antagonists - agreed to cook the Kurdish goose – at an OPEC meeting in **Algiers.** One dispute between Iran and Iraq had been the water channels.

In March 1975, an agreement was signed between Iraq and Iran to move the boundary between the two states in the Shatt-al-Arab from the eastern bank to mid-channel – a concession from Iraq.
To reciprocate, the Iranian government pledged to cease support for the Kurdish national liberation movement within Iraq. At the same time, Iranian forces

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140 Garbis Altinoglu; 'Turkish Expansionism And Us Aggression Against Iraq;' Alliance Number 49; Special War Issue ; September 2002, at
Http://Ml-Review.Ca/Aml/Allianceissues/Turkishexpansionismusagressionagainstiraq.Htm
      And; Bulloch & Morris Ibid; p.137-139
[141] *Arthur L. Lowrie Oral History Interview, December 23, 1989, Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection, Library Of Congress, Washington,; Cited By: Hal Brands And David Palkki; ""Conspiring Bastards": Saddam Hussein's Strategic View of the United States"; Diplomatic History, Vol. 36, No. 3 (JUNE 2012), pp. 625-659*

working with the Kurds were pulled out. Crucially, Iran would not allow KPD guerrillas to retreat when pressed, into Iranian safe zones. This enabled the Iraqi government forces to wage a successful offensive against the Kurdish liberation forces. That the USA was behind the Iranian offers was clear.

Suddenly, American and Iranian military aid to the PDK abruptly ended and Iranian borders closed. [45]

138.   The Kurds were given a two-week notice of closure of the Iran-Iraq border. But this formality was ignored, and the border was closed immediately. Kurds came under vicious Iraqi attack immediately. Kurdish fighters faced an advancing much larger Iraqi army. In two weeks an estimated 20,000 Kurdish fighters and civilians and 7,000 Iraqi soldiers lost their lives, and around 600,000 Kurds became refugees. Despite desperate appeals by Kurds, the US refused to intercede with the Shah, prompting **President Nixon's** Secretary of State **Henry Kissinger**'s**,** to make his infamous, but typical expression that "covert action should not be mistaken for missionary work." [140-142]

139.   This betrayal was acknowledged in the **'Pike Report'** (By the 'House Select Committee on Intelligence Report'), revealed by leaks, first to the '*Village Voice*'. The Report stated, that $16.2 billion had been given to Shah Pavlavi's Iran for their arms purchases to entice the Kurds into open anti-Iraqi rebellion:
"The President [Nixon], Dr.Kissinger and [the Shah] hoped our clients [the Kurds] would not prevail. They preferred instead that the insurgents simply continue a level of hostilities sufficient to sap the resources of our ally's neighbouring country [Iraq]. This policy was not imparted to our clients, who were encouraged to keep fighting. Even in the context of covert action, ours was a cynical enterprise." [143]

Just in case any could sow any doubts, about whether the CIA's was 'out of control', the Pike Report also stated unequivocally:
> "the CIA is not a "rogue elephant" — as Senator Church, the chairman of the Senate select committee on intelligence, once called it. The Pike report says: "All evidence in hand suggests that the CIA, far from being out of control, has been utterly responsive to the instructions of the President and the Assistant to President for National Security Affairs." [47]

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[142] *Bulloch & Morris Ibid; p.137-138*; *James A. Bill; 'The Eagle & the Lion. The tragedy of American-Iranian Relations'; Yale; 1988; p.202.*

[143] *Aaron Latham; "The CIA Report the President Doesn't Want You to Read - The Pike Papers: Highlights from the suppressed House Intelligence Committee Report"; by* <u>*THE VILLAGE VOICE ARCHIVES*</u>*; FEBRUARY 16, 1976*; at https://www.villagevoice.com/1976/02/16/the-cia-report-the-president-doesnt-want-you-to-read/

140.   Mulla Mustafa, and his sons fled into exile. They went first to Iran, and from there to the US, where Mulla Mustafa died in 1979. In a letter to then **President Carter** in early 1977 the ailing leader said:

> "I could have prevented the calamity which befell my people had I not fully believed the promise of America. This could have been done by merely supporting Baath policy and joining forces with them, thereby taking a position contrary to American interests and principles and causing trouble for Iraq's neighbors. The assurances of the highest American officials made me disregard this alternative." [140-143]

141.   Once the debacle was over, on June 1 1975, Talabani, formed the **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan** (PUK), based in Damascus Syria.[12] There followed a re-ignition of intense rivalry, feuding and mutual killing - between Barzani and Talabani forces. [144] Only in 1986, did the two forces form a coalition, and the **Kurdistan National Front**. Under this banner, five Kurdish national groups joined – the KDP, PUK, KSP, KPDP and Pasok. [145]
Sections of the ICP and the Toilers Party and the Assyrian Democratic Movement also joined. Meanwhile, as Saddam Hussein launched the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988), the PUK effectively became, in McDowall's words "a Trojan horse for an Iranian Victory" [145] .

History would soon repeat itself, for the Kurdish leaders *still* did not avoid deals with imperialists. This became quickly evident.

v) Reorientating USA plans in the Middle East – the 'Rogers Peace Plan'-Betraying Palestine

142.   Meanwhile, wider strategic events were taking place in the Middle East. A USA counter to USSR moves in the Middle East was made. [146, 147]
During the early 1970s the US imperialists radically <u>reorientated</u> their Middle East policy. By the summer of 1970 the most influential section of the United States imperialists, wished to more securely ensure their own oil imports from the Arab States. Therefore US imperialists offered a '*bargain'* to Arab Middle East governments.

In 1970 and 1971 the US government pressed this **'Peace Plan'**. Visits were made to the Middle-East by US Secretary of the State, **William Rogers**, Assistant Secretary of State **Joseph Sisco** and diplomats **Donald Bergus and Michael Sterner.** The USA would endeavour to persuade the Israeli government to withdraw 'voluntarily' to the boundaries existing before the war of 1967. And if those attempts failed they would hold back (but not discontinue entirely)

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[144] *McDowall Ibid; p. 342-351.*
[145] *McDowall Ibid p. 352.*

US military aid to Israel provided two conditions were met:
1) the Palestine national liberation movement was effectively liquidated: and,
2) the representatives of Soviet imperialism were expelled from Arab states. [147]

143.   Nasser accepted the Rogers Plan to use *UN Resolution 242*, to push for a so-called 'peace-for-land' agreement. [148] Consequently, the Palestinian peoples, underwent an escalating terror and more exiles.
Given the absence of effective engagement on Palestinian soil, Palestinian commandos increasingly adopted individual terror tactics. They hijacked several airliners in September 1970.
King **Hussein** of Jordan used this as a pretext to launch a large-scale offensive against the Palestinian national liberation forces within Jordan. In July 1971, Hussein announced that the resistance forces within Jordan had been completely liquidated.
In April 1973 the government of Lebanon, used the pretext of an Israeli commando raid against Palestinian guerillas near Beirut in February, to launch an offensive against the Palestinian national liberation forces within Lebanon.[149]
The attack ended in May after the guerillas had suffered heavy casualties.

144.   This reorientation of policy on the part of the US imperialists had, as intended, repercussions throughout the Middle East. It led in Iraq, as in Egypt to a **split** in the ruling Arab capitalist classes – between those supporting the USA and those supporting the neo-imperialist USSR.
Meanwhile the Egyptian government took action against the representatives of Soviet neo-imperialism.
By the spring of 1975 a pro-US wing of local ruling classes had emerged victorious in many of the Middle Eastern countries.

The USA and revisionist USSR battle for control of the Middle East had a fall-out for the Kurdish nation. Kurdish representatives were once again pawns in the 'Great Game'.

vi) The Iranian people rid themselves of the Shah of Iran
But by 1979 a new factor in the Middle East had emerged - the fall of the **Shah of Iran.**
This posed new problems for USA calculations, since the Shah had been a most trusted and dependable vassal. *We draw the following account from **Bland W.B**.; writing for the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain (MLOB).* [150]

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[147] *W.B.Bland for MLOB; "War has Come Once Again to the Middle East": in 'Class against Class"; London 1973; "http://ml-review.ca/aml/MLOB/WarMiddleEast1973.htm*
[148] *Aburish; Ibid p. 89*
[149] *Bland WB; 'Notes on Lebanon"; not published, ca.1987; http://ml-review.ca/aml/BLAND/Lebanon_WBB.html*
[150]*W.B.Bland for Marxist-Leninist Organisation Britain & Communist League; "The Iran-Iraq War by Proxy"; October 1980; reprinted Alliance ML Issue 2; April 1992; ""the Gulf War-The USA*

145.   Bland explains that the mass revolt that took place in Iran left the pro-USA
        comprador forces of Iran (Persia) in a weak position. Thus:
        "In order to save themselves, therefore, the representatives of these ruling
        classes strove to take over the leadership of the revolutionary movement so as to
        divert it into the channels of what was called an **"Islamic Revolution",** one
        which would be limited in scope to the replacement of the imperial regime by (at
        least in the initial period) a dictatorship of the reactionary Moslem clergy.
        In the month following the departure of the Shah in January 1979, therefore, an
        "Islamic Republic" was established which took the form of a **dual power**.

        One facet of the apparatus of power was in the hands of the mullahs and
        ayatollahs, headed by **Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini,** controlling the
        government, the parliament, the judicial system, and the para-military
        "Revolutionary Guards".

        The other facet of the apparatus of power was in the hands of the national
        bourgeoisie, headed by **Abolhassan Bani-Sadr**, controlling the Presidency and
        the regular armed forces. The mood of the masses was such that the clergy, to
        retain their influence were compelled to mouth anti-American slogans.

        Despite its "anti-Americanism", the new regime in Iran was acceptable to
        Washington as a short-term measure, since it enabled the landlords, and
        comprador bourgeois to save themselves from the wrath of the Iranian people,
        and it was upon these classes that any future neo-colonial regime dependent
        upon the USA must be based.

        In the long-term, however, the requirements of Washington in relation to Iran
        could only be met by a new military dictatorship which could resume open
        dependence upon the USA.
        However, a successful military coup required that the Iranian masses should
        become dissatisfied with the existing regime.

        The Khomeini regime introduced a series of measures of the most reactionary
        character: women were forced to wear the **chador** (the full-length black veil),
        polygamy was legalised for men, the right of divorce was removed from women,
        the minimum age for the marriage of girls was reduced from 18 to 13.

        But such mediaeval measures were not enough. The US imperialists needed
        some pretext to exert maximum pressure upon Iran if discontent was to reach the

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*Imperialists Bid to Recapture World Supremacy"; at: http://ml-
review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALLIANCE2-GULFWAR.htm*

point where a military coup would be likely to be successful.

On October 22nd, 1979 the US government <u>provocatively</u> admitted the hated ex-Shah to the United States. This provoked a response.
On November 4th, "in reprisal", the US Embassy in the Iranian capital of Tehran was occupied by "students" loyal to Khomeini and a number of its diplomats detained as **"hostages",** allegedly for the return of the ex-Shah and his wealth to Iran.

The principle of the inviolability of diplomats and diplomatic buildings is a cardinal principle of relations between civilised states. Therefore this terrorist action was quickly opposed by **President Bani-Sadr** on behalf of the Iranian national bourgeoisie, as:

> "A move which further reduced the government's prestige both in Iran and abroad". *("Keesing's Contemporary Archives", Volume 26; P. 30,150).*

> "The incarceration of the 52 American hostages is largely to blame for Iran's failure to win any effective friends in its struggle against Iraq, according to a senior aide to President Bani-Sadr. President Bani-Sadr, according to sources close to him, would like to send the hostages home immediately thus erasing what he regards as the biggest single blot on the record of Islamic Iran. But, as in so much else, the President cannot impose his will, and the real extremists, who include Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Rajai, hold sway".
> *("Daily Telegraph"; 6 October l4th 1980; p.4).*

Like all acts of terrorism, the taking of the hostages assisted the forces against which it was said to be directed. It enabled the **Carter Administration** to build up an aggressive nationalist hysteria at home, to mobilise international opinion against Iran, to freeze Iranian assets in the US, to launch a military "rescue" operation against Iran, and to blockade the country.
The blockade placed Iran in the position where it was unable to obtain spare parts for its' predominantly American military equipment so that, in the event of war it could (in the opinion of the Pentagon's "military experts") offer only short-term military resistance to an invader. Then, so went the plan - in the circumstances of ignominious defeat and the reactionary character of the Khomeini regime, the climate would become highly favourable for a military coup by "patriotic" and "progressive" officers.

Naturally later events in Iran would take many different turns, which cannot be examined here.
The Khomeini regime had its compradors, in the Iraqi Shi'ia clergy (see #42; & #215).

vii) *Saddam Hussein's fascist* dictatorship in Iraq over-reaches – The Iraq-Iran War

and the Halabja Massacre

146.   By 1975 the Iraqi Ba'th party controlled a huge oil revenue, $8000 million, amounting to 6 times the 1972 level. This formed the basis of a new and very rich bourgeoisie, as represented by the Saddam Hussein version of the Ba'th. As we saw, by 1979 Saddam Hussein was the sole head of government. But he had installed members of his own tribe from Takriti, into leading echelons of the state. This clique formed the new ruling class. We have given a class characterization of Saddam Hussein above (*see #126*).

Having first attacked and killed most communists in the state, Hussein had then intensified the dictatorial nature of the regime. The "*Knight*" as he was called, purged all rivals.

After the fall of the Shah of Iran (January 1979), the erstwhile local main puppet of the USA, the USA sought a new base.
Correspondingly, in February 1979 the USA had sought out the newly pliable regime. As Hussein was previously an old 'CIA man', he was a known quantity. Hussein simply switched over from the USSR to the USA – from being a pro-USSR comprador to being a pro-USA comprador.

147.   In the **Iran-Iraq war** (1980-1988), the USA was balancing the two powers – trying to weaken each of them.[151] The Iraq-Iran war should be viewed as a war by proxy on behalf of USA imperialism. One key target of the USA was to remove the **Khomeini** government, and the nationalist elements in the leadership of Iran. But the resistance within Iran to external attack, surprised both the Iraqi and the USA ruling class. [152]

148.   It also surprised the Iraqi ruling clique. Saddam Hussein anticipated a short war would win over territory of Iranian Kurdistan, and the Iranian province of Khuzestan. But unexpectedly stiff resistance from the Iranian state was encountered. As the war continued, deaths mounted to a final estimated 500,000 of both Iraqi and Iranian. Iranian human wave attacks (including of children) were countered by Iraqi chemical attacks. Most of the war was fought on Iraqi Kurdistan territory. But a stalemate after 8 years, led to a case-fire brokered by the UN in 1988. Only in 1991, did the UN Secretary General identify Iraq as the aggressor.

149.   During the war the Kurdish parties became inevitably involved. A bizarre

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[151] *Bland WB, 'War By Proxy, The Iraqi-Iranian War'; Compass Journal Of Communist League, UK, October 1980. Contained in: http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALLIANCE2-GULFWAR.htm*
[152] *Hal Brands And David Palkki; ""Conspiring Bastards": Saddam Hussein's Strategic View of the United States"; Diplomatic History, Vol. 36, No. 3 (JUNE 2012), pp. 625-659*

"triangular relationship" arose whereby the Iraqi KDP became an ally to the Khomeini government; while the Iranian KDP located itself in Iraq to attack Iran; and finally the Talabani PUK joined forces with the Iraqi KDP – but was based in Tehran to attack Iraq. [153]

150.   Kurdish attacks raised Saddam's ire against the Kurds even higher.
        The Saddam forces launched brutal attacks upon the Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga, and civilians. These were on women and children as well, for example in Suleimaniyeh. Attempting to completely subdue Kurdish peshmerga resistance, Saddam appointed his vicious cousin **Ali Hassan al-Majid** (Chemical Ali) Governor of North Eastern Iraq. His mandate was to suppress the Kurds to extinguish rebellion. Ali unleashed a violent, vengeful scorched earth policy on all civilians, aiming to exterminate both guerilla and the 'water in which they swam', the civilian population. [154] A genocidal war on the Kurds had ensued,

151.   But Kurdish pleas to the international community that this was a genocide were ignored. Almost at the end of the Iran–Iraq War, a massacre took place in the Iraqi-Kurdish city of Halabja.
        By January 1988, Iranian forces were deep into Iraqi Kurdistan, and Hassan Ali launched the **An-fal Operation**. By February there were 1.5 million deportees out of Iraqi Kurdistan, and 12 towns and over 3000 villages had been razed. [153]
        As PUK and Iranian forces captured the town of **Halabja,** the massacre took place**.** A chemical attack on both armies and Kurdish civilians, was launched on March 16, 1988. This was the worst "single violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the use of chemical weapons since Mussolini had invaded Abyssinia in 1935". [153] The Al-Anfal Campaign in Northern Iraq, continued in 8 waves through to August. According to the United Nations medical reports, mustard gas and other nerve agents were used. Just the Halabja Massacre caused the deaths of around 3,200-5,000 people and injured 7,000 to 10,000 more, most civilians". [155] But the Anfal operations as a whole "probably accounted for 150,000-200,000 lives". [153.]

152.   The USA ruling classes, and its' President **Ronald Reagan** - had used Saddam Hussein in an attempt to fatally weaken its opponents in Iran. In fact as we saw, the CIA had nurtured Saddam Hussein long before.
        But the USA leaders had no illusions about Hussein. In fact Reagan had gauged Saddam accurately, perhaps too casually as a "nut-job":
        "In a 1981 diary entry, Reagan labeled Saddam a "no good nut." Several years later, an unnamed White House official was equally blunt in his assessment: "I don't think it's in anybody's interest, any country in the world, to have either

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[153] *Bulloch & Morris; Ibid; p. 155*
[154] *Bulloch & Morris Ibid pp. 159-165; McDowall Ibid, pp352-54; 359; 361*
[155] *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halabja_chemical_attack*

side win (in the Iraq-Iran war)." [156]

153.   While the USA kept the Iraq-Iran war aflame, they began to recognize that the
        longer the war continued, *Iraq rather than Iran would be weakened*. Despite their
        wariness and distrust of Hussein, this potential defeat of Iraq alarmed the USA
        ruling class. They therefore moved to *prop up the Hussein regime* even further:
        "An Iraqi defeat would empower the vehemently anti-American government in
        Tehran, allowing it to dominate the Persian Gulf and the international oil market.
        Moreover, if Saddam grew desperate, he might seek greater military and
        economic support from Moscow, thereby allowing the Kremlin to expand its
        influence in the heart of the Gulf region. To forestall these dangers, the Reagan
        administration quietly began to support Saddam. Iraq came off the US list of
        sponsors of terrorism in 1982 and full diplomatic relations were restored in late
        1984. Between fiscal years 1983 and 1986, the Department of Agriculture
        guaranteed roughly $1.65 billion in Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) credits
        to banks that would lend Iraq money for the purchase of U.S. agricultural
        commodities. (Subsequent allotments in 1987 and 1988 brought the wartime total
        to roughly $3.5 billion). Iraq also received hundreds of millions of dollars in
        credits from the Export-Import Bank and was permitted to buy dual-use goods
        such as trucks, helicopters, and high-speed computers. U.S. officials only
        occasionally criticized Saddam's frequent use of chemical weapons"; [156]

154.   However Hussein remained suspicious of the USA. Especially after the so-called
        Irangate episode. In this, the Reagan administration, covertly arranged for arms
        supplies to Iran – using the monies gained to covertly fund the contra guerillas in
        Nicaragua. However this plot was exposed, and the details were made public.
        This alarmed Hussein, and the ensuing suspicion of Hussein emerges in
        captured documents during the later USA led invasion of Iraq:
        "Iraqi officials and research in captured Iraqi records, concludes that,
        "after Irangate, Saddam believed that Washington could not be trusted and that it
        was out to get him personally." …
        In April 1990, he complained to **Yasser Arafat** that the aim of Irangate had been
        to topple the Iraqi regime, and he asserted that Washington's hostility
        necessitated preparations for a major conflict with the United States.
        "If America strikes us, we will hit back," he said.
        In July, he told the U.S. ambassador, "New events remind us that old mistakes
        were not just a matter of coincidence. And from the late 1980s onward, Saddam
        would often refer back to this incident as the opening shot in an American
        onslaught against Iraq. "The war was launched on us long before all this,"
        Saddam said after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. "It officially started in the 1986

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[156] *Hal Brands And David Palkki; ""Conspiring Bastards": Saddam Hussein's Strategic View of the
United States"; Diplomatic History, Vol. 36, No. 3 (JUNE 2012), pp. 625-659*

meeting, and was exposed under the title 'Irangate.'" [157]

155.   Increasingly, Hussein behaved both unreliably, and with instability. For example: "In February, Iraqi authorities imprisoned **Farzad Bazoft**, a British journalist of Iranian origin, on charges of spying. "I say we execute him in Ramadan, and this will be the punishment for **Margaret Thatcher**," Saddam told subordinates. Following Bazoft's execution (in 1990), Saddam's lieutenants dutifully sent the corpse to London with a note attached to the coffin: "Mrs. Thatcher wanted him. We've sent him in a box." In early April, Saddam publicly warned that if Israel attempted to "strike at any [Iraqi] metal industries ... I swear to God that we will burn half of Israel." Saddam issued this threat, he later explained, because the United States "commissioned Israel with striking at our critical establishments." Feeling cornered, Saddam responded by lashing out." [157]

His instability led the USA to reconsider their choice of dependent leader. Besides they were conceiving plans to recreate the borders of the Middle East.

6. The Overall 21st Century USA Strategy: To Redraw Middle Eastern Borders

156.   Since 2001, the Middle East has suffered several full-scale wars, including: The Iraq wars, a still occurring disintegration of the Syrian state, the Saudi led war in Yemen, continued oppression of the Palestinians by Israeli fascism. Through many of them, there has raged an Islamic Fundamentalism.

The underlying central theme of all these upheavals in the Middle East is **the new USA strategic goal**. This is to re-draw the boundaries and maps of the Middle East, which had been set after the First World War. Skeptics argue that this was unplanned, and has evolved. But data confirms a conscious plan.

The Rogers Plan (*see above #143*) indicates that the USA has in fact been thinking along these lines for some time. Moreover, the USA built on what was known as the **Oden Yinon Plan** or the plan for a **'Greater Israel"** articulated in 1982: "The first argument for partitioning Iraq was made in 1982 by Zionist strategist Oded Yinon, whose plan - often called the Yinon plan or the plan for "Greater Israel" - calls for dividing Iraq into separate statelets for Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. It similarly calls for the division of other secular Arab states, like Syria, into smaller states divided along ethnic or sectarian lines that are constantly at war with each other in order to ensure that Israel "becomes an imperial regional power." [158]

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[157] *Hal Brands And David Palkki; ""Conspiring Bastards": Saddam Hussein's Strategic View of the United States";Diplomatic History, Vol. 36, No. 3 (JUNE 2012), pp. 625-659*
[158] *Whitney Webb, 'Regime Change, Partition, and "Sunnistan": John Bolton's Vision for a New Middle East'; March 30th, 2018; MintPress News, https://www.mintpressnews.com/regime-change-partition-and-sunnistan-john-boltons-vision-for-a-new-middle-east/239714/*

But what was new in 2003, was an escalation to a full-blown physical invasion. The opportunity after 9/11 gave the USA arguments to put 'boots on the ground'.

157.   Even amongst skeptics, few would dispute that the USA made Israel and Saudi Arabia, its most important power bases in the Middle East for decades. Trump's recent postures, although especially odious, make this clear. For example, Trump's support of the **Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman** of Saudi Arabia's murder of opponents. Or Trump's support of an increasingly brazen Israeli on-going open assault on Palestinians.

   But there is no essential difference between Republican and Democrat lines on the Middle East.
   Both Republicans and Democrats have worked to carve out a new map, which certainly directly affects the Kurds.

158.   It is well accepted that Iraq never presented a threat against the US and/or world imperialism in general. Hence other reasons must explain the several phases of the Iraqi operation. An important aspect was identified by **Mo Mowlam**, a former British cabinet minister:
   "Since September 11... it has become increasingly apparent to the US administration that the Saudi regime is vulnerable. Both on the streets and in the leading families, including the royal family, there are increasingly anti-Western voices. **Osama bin Laden** is just one prominent example. *The love affair with America is ending.* Reports of the removal of the billions of dollars from the US may be difficult to quantify, but they are true. The possibility of the world's largest oil reserves falling into the hands of an anti-American, militant Islamist government is becoming ever more likely - and this is unacceptable.
   "The Americans know they cannot stop such a revolution. They must therefore hope that they can control the Saudi oil fields, if not the government. And what better way to do that than to have a large military force in the field at the time of such disruption? In the name of saving the west, these vital assets could be seized and controlled. No longer would the US have to depend on a corrupt and unpopular royal family to keep it supplied with cheap oil. If there is chaos in the region, the US armed forces could be seen as a global savior. Under the cover of the war on terrorism, the war to secure oil supplies could be waged." [159]

159.   To ensure safety of the Saudi oil reserves, a much larger plan was needed than just to remove Hussein. Targeting the Saddam Hussein regime, enabled both a control over Iraqi oil and an immediate boost to Israel's security. But the added bonus was to redraw the map of the Middle East. This became clearer over the period of the Gulf Wars. All sections of USA capital agreed the USA should

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[159] *Altinoglu G,* Ibid*; citing, Mo Mowlam, "The Real Goal is the Seizure of Saudi Oil", The Guardian, September 5, 2002*

dominate Eurasia and the world. Control over the entire region's energy resources was the goal. The USA plans to gain crucial competitive edges over its imperialist rivals, such as the EU, Japan, China and Russia. This would prevent the latter countries from a competitor status.

160.   The US made its strategic aims public, in a Pentagon document, released on May 30th, 2000, that is more than 15 months before the events of 11 September. This document was **"Joint Vision 2020"**, a US Department of Defense plan, prepared around1992. This explicitly states the strategic aim of the USA is: "full-spectrum dominance… Given the global nature of our interests and obligations, the US must retain its overseas presence forces and the ability of rapidly projecting power worldwide in order to achieve full-spectrum dominance." [160]

161.   Just as vivid are other authoritative recent statements of intent. In 2006, Secretary **Condoleezza Rice** in a press conference, who justified the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, by invoking a '**New Middle East'**:
 "What we're seeing here [in regards to the destruction of Lebanon and the Israeli attacks on Lebanon], in a sense, is the growing—the 'birth pangs'—of a 'New Middle East' and whatever we do, we [meaning the United States] have to be certain that we're pushing forward to the New Middle East [and] not going back to the old one." [161]

All President representatives of USA capital have been in agreement - from Bush, to Obama, and even now to Trump – all are quite consistent. [162]
A re-drawing of the older boundaries was needed.

Accordingly **Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Peters** (retired colonel of the U.S. National War Academy) floated new maps – as below [163].

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[160] *Altinoglu*; *Ibid*; *Citing Sara Flounders, "Expanding Empire: Pentagon Bootprints Around the Globe", Workers World, January 31, 2002*

[161] *Sec State Condoleezza Rice, Special Briefing on the Travel to the Middle East and Europe of Secretary Condoleezza Rice (Press Conference, U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C., July 21, 2006). Mahdi Nazemroaya, "Plans for Redrawing the Middle East: The Project for a "New Middle East"; Global Research; https://www.globalresearch.ca/plans-for-redrawing-the-middle-east-the-project-for-a-new-middle-east/3882*

[162] *Although it is true that Trump has broken with many 'rules' set by, both his Democratic and Republican fellow imperialists.*
[163] *This map was published in the Armed Forces Journal in June 2006; (Map Copyright Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Peters 2006). Cited in: Mahdi Nazemroaya, "Plans for Redrawing the Middle East: The Project for a "New Middle East"; Global Research; https://www.globalresearch.ca/plans-for-redrawing-the-middle-east-the-project-for-a-new-middle-east/3882*

Map 2) **Anticipated re-division of Middle East**
Two key aspects were to carve out a new state of Kurdistan from Turkey, Iran and Syria; and to divide Iraq into a Sunni and a Shia sections.

In reality, the plan logically flowed from the geographic divide in Iraq between South, central and Northern parts, corresponding to religious and racial divides (*See Map 1, #58*).

162.   The Democratic Party followed the entire game plan, as it was originally set by the Bush regime. For example, **Joe Biden** (before he became Vice-President to Obama), offered a '**soft partition plan**':
"Biden's so-called soft-partition plan - a variation of the blueprint dividing up Bosnia in 1995 - calls for dividing Iraq into three semi-autonomous regions, held together by a central government. There would be a loose Kurdistan, a loose Shiastan and a loose Sunnistan, all under a big, if weak, Iraq umbrella.

> "The idea, as in Bosnia, is to maintain a united Iraq by decentralizing it, giving each ethno-religious group - Kurd, Sunni Arab and Shiite Arab - room to run its own affairs, while leaving the central government in charge of common interests," Biden and Gelb wrote in their opinion piece on May 1, 2006. "We could drive this in place with irresistible sweeteners for the Sunnis to join in, a plan designed by the military for withdrawing and redeploying American forces, and a regional nonaggression pact."
> The proposal acknowledges forthrightly what a growing number of Middle East experts say is plain as day: Iraqi Shiites and Sunnis are not moving toward reconciliation; they still haven't managed to get an oil law passed, and de facto ethnic cleansing is under way as Sunnis flee largely Shiite

neighborhoods and towns, and vice versa." [164]

While there remains some fine-tuning (for example, there is disagreement about whether there should be 'federalism' or simply a frank partition)[165], the overall intent is clear, as stated by Trump's Secretary of Defence, **Ash Cart**er:
"When Secretary of Defense Ash Carter attended a recent House Armed Services Committee hearing, and ranking Democrat Rep. Adam Smith suggested that Iraq would never again return to political unity ("Iraq is no more," he said), Carter agreed. "There will not be a single state of Iraq," he said, suggesting that "a multi-sectarian Iraq" might no longer be possible." [164]

Again, these are not new plans, but dust off those offered by the **Oden Yinon Plan for a Greater Israel** (*#156*[ref 158]).

163.   Why should the Trump government dispute any of this? **John Bolton** in March 2018, was installed as the National Security Adviser. It is true that Bolton and trump *disagreed* on some details of geopolitics, causing Bolton to resign in acrimony.
But there is no indication that any disagreements were on Israel. Nonetheless, Bolton has a long history of wanting to re-carve the Middle East into an American flavor. It is worth a long quotation [166], to show several of Bolton's stated views. These include the centrality of **Israel**, and of course, **oil**:
"A major part of the groundwork for partition, the invasion of Iraq, and the current Syrian conflict, was laid out in the neo-conservative manifesto "A Clean Break," whose lead author **Richard Perle** is Bolton's mentor, and who, along with Bolton, later co-founded the **Project for the New American Century (PNAC)**…
The title of the document comes from its suggestion that Israel make a "clean break from the slogan 'comprehensive peace' to a traditional concept of strategy based on the balance of power." The manifesto states:
"Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq — an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right — as a means of foiling Syria's regional ambitions."

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[164] *Helene Cooper, 'Biden plan for 'soft partition' of Iraq gains momentum', New York Times; July 30, 2007. At https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/30/world/americas/30iht-letter.1.6894357.html*
[165]. *Max Fisher, "Why DC loves Biden's terrible plan to divide Iraq Aug 5, 2015. https://www.vox.com/2015/8/5/9097133/iraq-biden; and, Ben Connable, 'Commentary: Partitioning Iraq: Make a Detailed Case, or Cease and Desist'; May 16, 201;6 At War on the Rocks'; and, https://www.rand.org/blog/2016/05/partitioning-iraq-make-a-detailed-case-or-cease-and.html*
[166] *Whitney Webb, 'Regime Change, Partition, and "Sunnistan": John Bolton's Vision for a New Middle East'; March 30th, 2018; MintPress News, https://www.mintpressnews.com/regime-change-partition-and-sunnistan-john-boltons-vision-for-a-new-middle-east/239714/*

"A Clean Break" also calls for "re-establishing the principle of pre-emption" — i.e., pre-emptive war - as well as the creation of a "new Middle East."

The 2003 invasion of Iraq that Bolton helped manifest (and that he continues to support) fulfilled several of the objectives laid out in "A Clean Break," by removing Saddam Hussein from power and altering the region's "balance of power." Yet, now, with Saddam long gone and Syria weakened after years of fighting off foreign-funded proxies, the next step needed to cement this "new Middle East" is the partitioning of both Syria and Iraq.

The first argument for partitioning Iraq was made in 1982 by Zionist strategist **Oded Yinon**, whose plan - often called the Yinon plan or the plan for **"Greater Israel"** - calls for dividing Iraq into separate statelets for Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. It similarly calls for the division of other secular Arab states, like Syria, into smaller states divided along ethnic or sectarian lines that are constantly at war with each other in order to ensure that Israel "becomes an imperial regional power."

Unsurprisingly, Bolton has, since leaving his post in the Bush administration, consistently advocated for partitioning both Syria and Iraq. In 2014, Bolton asserted that Iraq was inevitably "headed toward partition." In 2015, on Fox News, Bolton stated:

> "I think our objective should be a new Sunni state out of the western part of Iraq, the eastern part of Syria run by moderates or at least authoritarians who are not radical Islamists."

A few months later, Bolton - in a New York Times op-ed - detailed his plan to create the Sunni state out of northeastern Syria and western Iraq, which he nicknames "*Sunni-stan*." He asserts that such a country has "economic potential" as an oil producer, would be a "bulwark" against the Syrian government and "Iran-allied Baghdad", and would help defeat Daesh (ISIS). Bolton's mention of oil is notable, as the proposed area for this Sunni state sits on key oil fields that U.S. oil interests, such as ExxonMobil and the Koch brothers, have sought to control if the partition of Iraq and Syria comes to pass.

Bolton also suggested that Arab Gulf States "could provide significant financing", adding that "the Arab monarchies like **Saudi Arabia** must not only fund much of the new state's early needs, but also ensure its stability and resistance to radical forces." He fails to note that Saudi Arabia is one of the chief financiers of Daesh and largely responsible for spreading "radical" Wahhabi Islam throughout the Middle East.

Notably, Bolton directly mentions who would benefit from this partition, and it certainly isn't the Syrians or the Iraqis.

> "Restoring Iraqi and Syrian governments to their former borders," Bolton writes, "is a goal fundamentally contrary to American, Israeli and friendly Arab state interests."

Control of northeastern Syria, currently occupied by U.S. forces, is set to be given to Saudi Arabia if the Saudis commit to spending $4 billion to "rebuild" the area, a first step towards preventing the reunification of Syria and creating an

"independent" sectarian state. Bolton, as national security adviser, is likely to push for the creation of a new sectarian state out of Syrian and Iraqi territory, now that the groundwork has been laid and the path largely cleared to building a "new Middle East." However, as previously mentioned, Iran is currently the only country in the region with the potential to foil the plan to fundamentally reshape the Middle East." [166]

164.   The USA vision, extends to all parts of the Middle East, including Turkey and Iran. No doubt, this will ultimately depend upon how compliant these states are to USA demands.

Current USA belligerence against **Iran**, is not discussed in detail here, but is relevant:
"(In) former U.S. National Security Advisor **Zbigniew Brzezinski's** book, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geo-strategic Imperatives…. (*He envisages*)* a divided and balkanized Iraq… Taking what we know from the White House's own admissions; there is a belief that "creative destruction and chaos" in the Middle East are beneficial assets to reshaping the Middle East, creating the "New Middle East," and furthering the Anglo-American roadmap in the Middle East and Central Asia…
The **Eurasian Balkans** include nine countries that one way or another fit the foregoing description, with two others as potential candidates. The nine are *Kazakstan [or Kazakhstan], Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia* - all of them formerly part of the defunct Soviet Union - as well as *Afghanistan*.
The potential additions to the list are **Turkey** and **Iran**, both of them much more politically and economically viable, both active contestants for regional influence within the Eurasian Balkans, and thus both significant geo-strategic players in the region. At the same time, both are potentially vulnerable to internal ethnic conflicts. If either or both of them were to be destabilized, the internal problems of the region would become unmanageable, while efforts to restrain regional domination by Russia could even become futile." [167]

We will now see how the USA government attempted to effect its plans for division of Iraq. Of course the best plans of mice and men can go astray.
In this case they were forced astray by Iran. We discuss this later (*See Section 9. The Iraqi puppet regime - US imperialist policy post-war;#208 on*).

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[167] *Zbigniew Brzezinski; **Cited by:** Mahdi Nazemroaya, "Plans for Redrawing the Middle East: The Project for a "New Middle East"; originally 2006; reprinted by Global Research; 2017; at: https://www.globalresearch.ca/plans-for-redrawing-the-middle-east-the-project-for-a-new-middle-east/3882*

In essence, until now the USA has failed to achieve its strategic goals in the Middle East. Notwithstanding, it has done considerable damage to its peoples (including but not confined to: The Palestinians, the Yemeni, the Syrian…. Etc); and, Considerable damage to the progressive agendas of the oppressed.

7. The Gulf Wars

165.   With the Gorbachite led destruction of the USSR state, the major opposition to the USA strategy had been removed. Ultimately, this was to lead to the series of wars, termed the Gulf Wars. Leaving aside the Iraq-Iran war, the USA led Iraq wars consisted of the following series of wars, from 1990 up till today:

1) The Gulf War (August 1990 to February 1991) – the Kuwaiti phase of the war against Iraq by the USA led coalition, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The build up phase was called **'Desert Shield'**, and the eventual fighting on the ground was called '**Desert Storm'**.

2**) Operation Desert Fox** (1998), was a short (four-day) bombing campaign during the Iraq disarmament crisis

3) The **invasion of Iraq** (2003–present) was led by US and UK forces; followed by a longer, seven-year phase of **occupation** (March 2003 to December 2011).

4) **Iraqi insurgency** (2011–2013), the surge in sectarian violence immediately following the end of the 2003 to 2011 Iraq War

5) **Iraqi Civil War** (2014–2017), began when the initial three-year-long insurgency escalated in January 2014

6) The USA led intervention in Iraq (2014-ongoing)

The above chronology, serves only as a reminder. We do not discuss details of each war in this piece.

i) The Gulf Wars Against Iraq Start With The Kuwait Invasion – leading to the third USA Broken Promise to the Kurds [168]

The first phase of the USA plan was to engineer a casus belli – a pretext to launch war. The invasion of Iraq's neighbor, Kuwait, followed assurances given by the USA Ambassador to Saddam Hussein – **April Glaspie** - that the USA 'understood' that Iraq 'needed' to enter to seize oil resources of Kuwait. It was meant to serve as an entrapment. It enabled a casus-belli by the USA.

166.   The USA ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie - met Saddam Hussein on the eve of the Iraqi invasion, after Iraqi troops had massed on the Iraqi-Kuwait border. When discussing why this happened, Hussein talked largely about the fear of oil prices going down as the Kuwaitis were not adhering to OPEC restrictions. To

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[168] *Alliance ML; "The Gulf War – The USA imperialists bid to recapture world supremacy"; at* *http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALLIANCE2-GULFWAR.htm*

which Glaspie mildly responded:

"GLASPIE: I have lived here for years. I admire your extraordinary efforts to rebuild your country. I know you need funds. We understand that and our opinion is that you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country. But we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait. I was in the American Embassy in Kuwait during the late 60's. The instruction we had during this period was that we should express no opinion on this issue and that the issue is not associated with America. **James Baker** has directed our official spokesmen to emphasize this instruction. We hope you can solve this problem using any suitable methods via Klibi or via **President Mubarak**. All that we hope is that these issues are solved quickly. With regard to all of this, can I ask you to see how the issue appears to us?

My assessment after 25 years' service in this area is that your objective must have strong backing from your Arab brothers. I now speak of oil. But you, Mr. President, have fought through a horrific and painful war. Frankly, we can see only that you have deployed massive troops in the south. Normally that would not be any of our business. But when this happens in the context of what you said on your national day, then when we read the details in the two letters of the Foreign Minister, then when we see the Iraqi point of view that the measures taken by the U.A.E. and Kuwait is, in the final analysis, parallel to military aggression against Iraq, then it would be reasonable for me to be concerned. And for this reason, I received an instruction to ask you, in the spirit of friendship -- not in the spirit of confrontation -- regarding your intentions." [169]

167.   Other signs that the volatility of Iraqi leadership was being fanned by American calculation include, Tariq Aziz berating the Kuwaitis for obtaining security aid from the USA:

"What is going on?" **Tariq Aziz** (Deputy Prime Minister) reported asking Kuwaiti rulers in 1988. "Are you becoming part of the Atlantic alliance?"…

the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander **General Norman Schwarzkopf** publicly averred Washington's commitment to Kuwaiti security and directed CENTCOM officials to change the long-standing war plan aimed at defending Iran against a Soviet invasion to instead focus on the defense of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia against Iraqi aggression. CENTCOM also offered to send U.S. ships on port calls to various Gulf countries as a signal of Washington's commitment, and in July 1990, the command ran an exercise simulating a U.S. response to a hypothetical attack on Kuwait." [58]

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[169] *The New York Times International Sunday, September 23, 1990; "Excerpts From Iraqi Document On Meeting With U.S. Envoy"; at: https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/glaspie.html; There is a different text at The Margaret Thatcher Foundation (the first to publish the full transcript), which however does not allow any differing conclusions than Glaspie 'greenlighted' Hussein: at: https://c59574e9047e61130f13-3f71d0fe2b653c4f00f32175760e96e7.ssl.cf1.rackcdn.com/0DFD0DDB2BA34EF59F2570CE7EEE03C8.pdf*

168. After Hussein's mild meeting with US Ambassador Glaspie, Iraq launched a blitzkrieg invasion of Kuwait, on 2 August 1990. A mere two-day operation enabled Iraq to occupy Kuwait, which lasted for 7 months. When the UN set a mandate for Iraq to withdraw, it refused.
A UN authorized coalition (Resolution 660 at the UN Security Council) of forces from 35 nations, orchestrated and led by the USA expelled the Iraqi forces. In **Operation Desert Shield** (2 August 1990 – 17 January 1991) and **Operation Desert Storm** (17 January 1991 – 28 February 1991) the Iraqi forces were quickly destroyed.
The retreating Iraqi army fled, destroying Kuwaiti oil wells in their scorched earth retreat. But the USA led coalition did not enter Iraq.

169. The USA led coalition forces had already devastated *civilian* life in Iraq with massive bombings. This was compounded by crippling UN approved sanctions of foods, medicines and other materials. [170] It is true that false claims were made of a dramatically higher child mortality from the UN sanctions. The Survey team was manipulated by Saddam Hussein's administration. [171]

But the effects of the UN sanctions were still horrific. To illustrate this, the World Health Organisation stated in 1996: "the vast majority of the country's population has been on a semi-starvation diet for years".[172]
Although Hussein had evaded direct invasion of Iraq, the regime's defeat in Kuwait fueled discontent inside Iraq.

170. This discontent was encouraged by the USA. At the end of the Kuwaiti phase of the Gulf War in 1991, the Kurds, were incited by the US to rise against the Hussein government. This was also urged on the Shiite Muslims of Southern Iraq. Both Shi'ia and Kurds had heard **President George Bush** incite rebellion on the radio 'Voice of America':
> "There's another way for the bloodshed to stop, and that is for the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters in their own hands to force Saddam Hussein, the dictator to step aside". [173]

171. While the USA avoided an explicit promise of support to those rising, the implication was there.
First the Shi'a peoples, rose against Hussein's oppression.

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[170] *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War#Operation_Desert_Shield*
[171] *Michael Spagat; 'Truth and Death In Iraq under sanctions"; Significance J of the Royal Statistical Society' London; September 2010.*
[172] *WHO cited by Patrick Cockburn; "The Age of Jihad"; New York; 2016; p. 37.*
[173] *Rayburn JD COL & Sobchak FK Col: The US Army in the Iraq War, Volume 1"; USA SSI and War Army College; 2019; ISBN 1-58487-774-X p.11*; McDowall Ibid; p. 372; & Quil Lawrence, *'Invisible Nation'; New York; 2008 (citing Bush & Scowcroft) p.45.*

Very shortly after, so did the Kurdish people, but not led by the Kurdish parties. In fact **Masud Barzani** admitted: "The uprising came from the people themselves. We didn't expect it". [174] The KDP and PUF followed the masses.

Erbil, Sulimaniya fell to Kurdish forces. But these were brief, and unsupported rebellions. Hussein, was given a green light by the USA to suppress these revolts. It soon became clear that that the USA coalition was not going to remove Hussein, or assist in these rebellions.

In fact, General **Norman Swarzkopf** gave the Iraqi Defense Minister rights to use armed helicopters. These were turned against all the Iraqi rebels - whether Shi'ia or Kurd. It led to a complete rout of the Kurdish forces, and the less organized Shi'ia rebels.

The Iraqi Republican Guard, were the most loyal of Hussein's troops, and they had been regrouped after the USA reprieve in Kuwait. The tide of the rebellion turned. Quickly Kirkuk, Erbil, and other Kurdish towns were taken. Both Turkomans and Kurds were massacred.

Again USA had swelled Kurdish hopes, but let them down.

172.   This constituted the **3rd Broken Promise** by the USA to Kurd militants and nationalists.

The American response may have been from a fear of dislocation of the region, following a break-up of Iraq. Ironically, this would become their conscious strategy.

In addition, there was a chance of events forging an alliance between the Kurds of the South and those of the North, under the leadership of the radical-nationalist PKK. This could have meant serious trouble for the Turkish reactionaries. On the other hand, Shi'ia of Southern Iraq, who constituted about 50 percent of Iraq's total population could have easily turned to Iran, still following a militant path of opposition to the US and Israel.

Neither the US, nor regional allies of world imperialism, were quite ready for this turn of events. Instead a staging ground to test possible ways forward was conceived by the USA as the **'safe zones'**.

ii) Creation of the Safe Havens – a nidus of a Kurdistan or a USA outpost?

173.   Hussein's revenge on rebels, created a huge wave of refugees. Over 1.5 million Kurdish refugees moved to the Turkish or Iranian border.

There the Iranians allowed entry, but the Turkish government refused. While an international outcry arose, just as it had around Halabya – this time it triggered a response at the United Nations. UN Security Council Resolution 688 mentioned

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[174] *McDowall Citing the Independent, 1991, Ibid p. 371*.

Kurds by name, as victims of Iraqi attacks.

President **Ozal** of Turkey, was placed under international pressure. He eventually allowed refugees to cross into Turkey. Ozal now called for a '**safe haven**' for Kurdish refugees on the Iraqi side of the border. This was exactly what the USA wanted, and which had been resisted for a long time by the Turkish government. The Coalition created such zones around Zakho. Coalition ground troops under Major General **Jay Garner**, entered Dohuk in **Operation Provide Comfort**, and set it up as part of the Kurdish zone.

174.   With the defeat of Iraq in 1991 by the US-led imperialist coalition, Washington had imposed two so-called **"safe havens" or "no-fly zones"** in the North and South of the country, through a UN decision.
Iraqi planes were prohibited from flying North of the 36th Parallel, and refugee Kurds moved into this 'safe haven'. Oil-rich Kirkuk was deliberately excluded from this zone. [175] Iraqi ground forces were also held back from this large area, which was patrolled for 12 years by USA the air force.

Taken with the connivance of other imperialist powers, this decision effectively banned the Iraqi state from exercising its authority in these two zones. In effect this denied and violated Iraq's sovereignty over part of its territory. But it enabled the Kurdish parties to find a foothold. They seized this chance and created loose administrations.

175.   Democratic elections were held in May 1992, which were won by the dominant PUK (43.6% votes) and KPD (45%).[176]
Hence, since 1992, two internationally unrecognized Kurdish statelets came into existence in Southern Kurdistan. One of these statelets was led by Massoud Barzani of the KPD and the other was led by Jalal Talabani of the PUK. But their enmity led to two warring statelets, where the PUK were based in Sulamanyia and the KPD in Erbil.

Amazingly, a civil war in the territory between PUK and the KPD erupted in 1994. The ostensible reason was over revenues from border crossings, and was to last 4 years. [75] Such battles escalated into open civil war.

In 1996 the KPD even made a secret deal with Saddam Hussein, that allowed the Iraqi army into Erbil to displace the PUK, and bequeath it to the KPD.[177]
Just as Barzani collaborated with Iraq, Talabani made deals with the Iranian government. In addition the PUK collaborated with the PPK to undermine KPD

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[175] *Quil Lawrence, "Invisible Nation'; New York 2008; p.60-62*

[176] *Lawrence Ibid; p. 65-74; 87; 89; 91*
[177] *Rayburn and Sobchak Cols; "The US Army In the Iraq War": Ibid; p.16-17*

territory, while using PUK territory to attack into Turkey.

We discuss these aspects much more below (See section 10 The PKK ('Workers' Party of Kurdistan'). Here we only note that Turkey briefly invaded the Safe Havens on account of this. [75]

176.   More than 3,000 people are thought to have died during the KPD-PKU infighting between 1993 and 1997; and thousands more in the attacks on PKK fighters and sympathizers during the 1980s and 1990s. The constant shifting of alliances of the KPD and PKU made them "comrades-in-arms" with Turkey, Iran, Iraq, the US and Britain and at times with the PKK. In 1998, there were further clashes, when PUK and PKK forces attacked KDP territory. After some initial success, the PUK received an ultimatum from the Turkish army, which had been in alliance with the KPD.

177.   Naturally this renewed Kurdish civil war was a gift to Saddam Hussein, and simply invited Iraqi armed intervention. As noted the Turkish forces also made two large incursions into the territory. But the Kurdish civil war was also bound to antagonise the USA.

While the USA had not necessarily at the _outset_ had a clear plan to dismember Iraq, this was quite consistent with their rapidly evolving plan.
A dismemberment of Iraq, had in fact already taken shape as the safe havens developed. Some viewed them hopefully, as becoming the nidus of a potential future Kurdistan. But in reality their role had emerged already as pawns of the USA.

Concerned to stabilise their plans, the USA was prompted to summon the warring Kurdish leaders of the warring factions to Washington. There, Barzani and Talabani were pressured by **Madeline Albright** (UN Secretary State 1997-2001 under President Clinton), to sign the so-called '**Washington Agreement'** – that ensured peace between the two statelets.

However this Agreement, did not resolve the revenue issue arising from border crossing tax levies which favoured the KPD (at the Khabur bridge). [175]

But, after this, an uneasy peace existed between the two parties. Each of them blamed each other for the stalled normalization talks, supposed to lead to a reunified Kurdistan.
For the time being, there were two statelets led by Barzani and Talabani, **each** with its own army, intelligence service, government and flag!

iii) Turkish plans to remove the safe havens _(Also see section 10)_

178.   As plans for the formal USA-Coalition invasion of Iraq began to take shape in
        2002-3, the USA planned to use North Iraq (Kurdish statelets) as an entry point.
        But at the beginning of August 2002, the Turkish General Staff made their own
        plans for how to support the American operation against Iraq.

        According to their plan, Turkish military would move 80,000 troops into Northern
        Iraq and invade into territory at least 40 km wide. Tank formations were placed to
        prevent PKK/ KADEK guerillas from assembling.
        By August 8th, 2002 about 5,000 Turkish crack troops were in in Northern Iraq,
        and had been working in coordination with US Special forces.
        They carried out an attack on Bamerni airport and captured it after defeating the
        Iraqi forces there. Meanwhile, US and British warplanes hit targets in Northern
        and Southern Iraq.

        However as the USA invasion of Iraq became more imminent, in March 2003, the
        Turkish parliament refused entry of troops via Turkey.
        The Turks were especially anxious about Kirkuk and Mosul, the oil rich centers,
        and insisted that the Kurd statelets would take these centers in the chaos of war.
        [178]

179.   During the floundering of the joint KPD-PUK government, a chaotic situation
        unfolded in Southern Kurdistan. Intense, and regular Turkish military incursions
        targeted the forces and bases of the PKK, which had now become an increased
        real threat to Turkish colonialists.
        At the same time however, Southern Kurdistan was the only place in Iraq, where
        the opponents of Saddam Hussein could organize and operate with a measure of
        freedom.
        Various strands of Islamic fundamentalist groupings began to emerge at this
        stage including the **Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK)**.
        But there was also a greater penetration of the region by Turkish, Iranian, Israeli
        and Iraqi intelligence services, as well as American and British intelligence
        operatives, some of whom were there under the cover of NGOs on humanitarian
        missions.

        The British sponsored the so-called **Iraqi National Accord (INA),** which
        consisted of ex-Ba'thists and military officers close to MI6. This was to be the
        pro-British wing of the potential post-war Iraqi compradors.

        The USA through the CIA, sponsored the formation of their own compradors, the
        so-called **Iraqi National Congress (INC)**, based in London, which had sent their
        operatives into the Kurdish statelets. This was headed by **Ahmed Chalabi**, the
        former banker.[179] Chalabi was a long time CIA stooge, and had long been

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[178] *Quil Lawrence Ibid pp. 148-159*
[179] *Quil Lawrence; Ibid; pp. 67-69*

groomed for the post-war puppet government that the USA would set up after the Iraqi war.

180.   Both the Iraqi Government and the Turkish Government, failed to prevent the toe-hold of a rudimentary statelet for the Kurds. For it was part of the USA plan by which to control Iraq, and to funnel troops through during the actual invasion shortly to be unleashed. Even if the statelets were only initially called 'safe havens', **they did form the nidus of a Kurdistan.**
        But as we saw, its formation had become a key part of the USA Plan to Balkanize Iraq, and wider sections of the Middle East.

Nonetheless, they represented – for the Kurds – a temporary victory.
And despite the earlier broken promise, it had effectively been granted them by the USA. What future price would the Kurds have to pay?

Actually, the price in fact was evident from the start: The statelets were to be an "outpost" of USA imperialism – to use the words of Garbis Altinoglu.

iv) Preparing the actual invasion of Iraq

181.   Meanwhile, the USA bullied the UN to get the 'international support' it needed to invade Iraq under 'legal' cover. So it built up a 'case'. Steadily, the heat was turned up on Iraq and Saddam Hussein. UN Special Commission Inspectorates were given authority by the UN Security Council Resolutions, to inspect Iraq for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and chemical weapons. But the scientists and objective inspectors (such as **Hans Blix**) were undermined. Under the pretext that the Iraqi government was evading such inspections, **Operation Desert Fox** was launched. This intense four-day bombing of Iraqi lasted from 16 December 1998, to 19 December 1998, by the United States and the United Kingdom.

182.   Fortunately for the invasion plans of the USA, the individual terrorist attacks on the skyscrapers of New York on September 11 2001 [180] gave the USA imperialists a pretext. This was good enough to implement their 'New Middle East' plan.
        We believe that the secret services were aware this terrorist attack was imminent, and did not disable it. This was akin to the **Pearl Harbor** attack, which enabled the USA to enter the Second World War.[177]
        The 9/11 attacks enabled the **George W. Bush** Government to target the invasion of Iraq. On the day of the attacks, Secretary of Defense **Donald Rumsfeld** asked his aides for:
        "Best info fast. Judge whether good enough to hit Saddam Hussein at same time.

[180] *Down with USA Imperial attempts to create a new world war!"; Alliance 44: October 3rd 2001 At: http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALLIANCE-44-WTC.htm,*

Not only Osama bin Laden." [181]

George W. Bush, reiterated the policy of "dual containment" in his speech, when he characterized **Iraq, Iran and North Korea** as an **"Axis of Evil"**. Bush and Co. openly advocated the overthrow of Saddam Hussein regime (and of all regimes not to their liking for that matter) in open violation of bourgeois international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

183.   Regardless that the evidence firmly pointed to Saudi Arabia as having been the incubator and supporter of elements behind the 9/11 acts, the USA was determined to attack Afghanistan first, and then Iraq. It was abundantly clear that Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11:
"The rationale for invading Iraq as a response to 9/11 has been widely questioned, as there was no cooperation between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda." [182]

Nonetheless, the USA and Bush began coercing the United Nations on 12 September 2002 to move aggressively on Iraq, in 'retribution for 9/11'.
The USA claimed aggression was needed to prevent Iraq from making and stock-piling, so-called '**Weapons of Mass Destruction'** (WMD). **UN Security Council Resolution 1441** authorized new weapons inspections, by the **United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC**) and the **International Atomic Energy Agency**. Saddam accepted.

Unfortunately for the USA, UNMOVIC chairman **Hans Blix** and IAEA Director **General Mohamed El-Baradei** found no evidence "or plausible indication" of the revival of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq.
By March 2003, Blix stated there was no evidence of WMD.
Yet, the **Iraqi invasion of Iraq led by the USA** and with a coalition of countries, (2003–2011) proceeded. The Gulf Wars removed Hussein from power. [1-5, 183, 184]

With this overall framework, we now retrace our steps to examine in more detail,

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[181] *"Plans For Iraq Attack Began on 9/11". CBS News. 4 September 2002; Cited Wikipedia, at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_War#cite_note-73*
[182] *Smith, Jeffrey R. "Hussein's Prewar Ties To Al-Qaeda Discounted". The Washington Post, Friday, 6 April 2007; Page A01.*
[183] *McDowall Ibid p. 347; 349.*

[184] *The Invasion Of Kuwait'; Compass - Journal Of The Communist League (Uk) No. 88a, August 1990; http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/CommunistL88A-Aug1990-Gulf1.htm;*
[184 continued] *'The "Setting-Up' Of Iraq'; Compass No.80; October, 1990 Http://Ml-Review.Ca/Aml/Allianceissues/Communistl80-Oct1990-Gulf2.Htm*
"The Gulf War - The USA Imperialists Bid To Recapture World Supremacy"; Alliance Issue Number 2; April 1992; First Placed On Web October 2001. Http://Ml-Review.Ca/Aml/Allianceissues/Communistl83-Feb1991-Gulf3.Htm

how the ruling class in Turkey responded.

8. The geopolitical stance of Turkey and its internal politics up to the Gulf Wars [185]
i) Turkish ruling class attitudes to the Kurds Since the First World War

184.   The attitude of Turkey is especially important to the Kurds, since:
"well over half of the world's 25 million to 30 million Kurds live in Turkey. The emerging statehood in the 'South' (north of Iraq) is, in effect, more vital to the Turkish polity than anything else in Iraq: Ankara's biggest concern is no secret: the prevention of a Kurdish nation in northern Iraq. Turkish officials have long feared that a Kurdish state would incite their own Kurdish population leading to a possible uprising as Turkish Kurds express their solidarity with Iraqi Kurds realizing their long-lived dream of statehood." [186]

185.   The hostility of the modern Turkish state towards Kurdish movements was long standing, continuing from Ottoman Empire days. Even the term 'Kurd' was substituted by the term "mountain Turks".[187] Whether secular or as later parties were – Islamicist - all ruling class parties were anti-Kurd. The modern manifestations of this had begun under **Kemal Attaturk**. Immediately after World War One, Turkey put pressure on France to restrict the Kurdish and Christian movement, inside the French mandate of Syria:
"The Turkish ruling elites of the late 1920s were … worried that the flight of several politically active Kurdish tribal leaders as well as other non-Muslim minority groups to Northeastern Syria under the French mandate would eventually lead to the formation of a Franco-Kurdish-Armenian union...The Turkish state even condemned the French for providing protection to Kurdish rebels and letting the Armenians to ''colonize'' the frontier…. the colonialist French placated Republican Turkey by acceding to its demands and crushed the

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[185] *This section directly follows Garbis Altinoglu, and includes much verbatim quotation; see footnoted reference 12 (p.8). As well, we use these texts with modification (by shortening) direct quotations: Altingolu "Blood thirsty puppets of blood thirsty masters', for the Progressive Documentation and Information Center 2000;   " at http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/HIZBULLAHGA2000.HTM;*
Altınoğlu, "An Assessment of the Istanbul Bombings"; 2003; The original version is at "Turkish Marxist" at: http://www.turkishmarxist.dds.nl/english/articles.html; and at http://ml-review.ca/aml/PAPER/NOVEMBERDECEMBER2003/IstanbulBombings.htm
Altinoglu, "Notes On The History Of MLKP And The Revolutionary Movement In Turkey"; 2003 at: http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALL35MLCP%28TURKEY%29GA2000.HTM;
Altinoglu; "As Clouds Gather: Turkey and Kurdistan on the Eve of the US War with Iraq"; 2003; at http://ml-review.ca/aml/PAPER/March2003/KURDISTAN.html;
[186] *Riemer 2003; cited by Özcan, Ali Kemal. Turkey's Kurds : A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan, Routledge, 2005. P. 4*
[187] *See preface and footnote reference 1.*

pro-autonomy Kurdish and Christian movements in Syria. This enabled Turkey to ''secure'' its southern border." [188]

"Ankara's biggest concern is no secret: the prevention of a Kurdish nation in northern Iraq. Turkish officials fear a Kurdish state would incite their own Kurdish population leading to a possible uprising as Turkish Kurds express their solidarity with Iraqi Kurds realizing their long-lived dream of statehood." [189]

ii) Moving towards fascism under Erdogan from 2002 onwards

186. Any review of recent Turkish history from 1983, will confirm that resurgent Kurdish movements were brutally suppressed. In November 1983, the military junta formally handed government over to **Turgut Ozal**'s **ANAP** ('Motherland Party') following general elections.
By April 1999, Turkey was governed by a three party coalition led by Prime Minister **Bulent Ecevit's DSP** ("Democratic Left Party"). This coalition included fascist parties, such as **Devlet Bahceli's MHP** ("Nationalist Action Party"). The third party was **Mesut Yilmaz's ANAP**, which posed as a liberal party, pressing for Turkey's candidate membership in the EU. These three coalition partners (DSP, MHP and ANAP) became very discredited in the eyes of the masses. This can be seen by the upsurge of Kurdish and revolutionary movements in 1984.

187. The rise in the revolutionary wave, made the old party forms inadequate for the ruling class. Therefore, new effective deceptions of the masses required that big capital and the military form a new, respectable "center party" out of the old dilapidated bourgeois parties.
Tayyip Erdoïgan's AKP (Justice and Development Party founded in 2001) and the **SP** (Contentment Party) were candidates.
But these two ("moderate") Islamist parties, were themselves the offspring of two banned Islamic parties, that is, **Welfare Party and Virtue Par**ty, led by **Nejmettin Erbakan**.

At first the still-Kemalist (thus secularist) military General Staff, considered these parties as beyond the pale. But the parties judiciously shed some of their more overtly hypocritical anti-Western rhetoric and criticism of the NATO, the IMF and the EU. As these reactionary Islamist parties came toward the political center, it

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[188] Seda Altuğˇ; "Syrian uprising and Turkey's ordeal with the Kurds"; Dialect Anthropol (2013) 37:123–130

[189] Özcan, Ali Kemal; citing Riemer 2003: "Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan, Routledge, 2005. Preface".

reduced tensions between the Islamist and "secularist" wings of the bourgeoisie and the military.

Subsequent elections in 2002 saw Erdogan's rise to Prime Minister in 2003. In reality, the distinctions between various bourgeois parties had long been all but obliterated. Until Erdogan - all of the government parties and 'opposition' parties, advocated rule under the very close supervision of generals.
But undoubtedly under Erdogan, the state steadily assumed more of a fascist character, especially after the failed 15 July 2016 coup d'état of the military.

188.   Despite all the changes of figureheads, <u>state power remained in the hands of the Turkish big bourgeoisie.</u>
Since 2015 under Erdogan, the state adopted more of the trappings of a **fascist state**. And all governments obediently followed the IMF prescriptions of '**austerity'** - meaning of the working class.

All bourgeois parties agreed:
to screw the vicious exploitation of workers and toilers higher; and, the national oppression of Kurdish people; and,
to maintain a brutal semi-military dictatorship over the masses.

All these bourgeois parties are tainted with corruption and financial scandals.
All these parties were also united for a militarist and expansionist foreign policy, mainly in line with the interests of the USA.
And all are subservient to the powerful military clique, itself closely associated with Washington. Many looked at times to the European Union.
In summary, the ruling powers are allied with both pro-US, pro-European big capital, and Israel.

189.   Although in the long run, objective reality favours the revolutionary and the Kurdish national movements, especially given the protracted period of economic and political crisis, <u>neither</u> of these two movements have succeeded as yet.
It is true, that guerilla warfare of the Kurdish people broke out and was led by the PKK in August 1984; and the first stirrings of progressive student youth began in 1985; and, the first important workers' struggles began in 1987.

These were all harbingers of a *new phase* in the political landscape of Turkey.
Indeed in the period of 1987-1991, there was a cumulative growth in the mass struggles of workers, youth and Kurdish people.
Increasingly the fascist state seemed unable to check the rise of the working class movement, or to contain the growth of the Kurdish guerilla movement and destroy it.

iii) Initial Reluctance of the Turkish ruling classes to join the USA led Gulf Wars

190.   These developments were bound to severely irk the Turkish ruling class.
        Since **Kemal Attaturk**'s days, the ruling class of Turkey has feared and fought
        the possible dangers of an internationally recognized Kurdish state. Such a
        development, would rekindle the very live national aspirations of nearly 15 million
        Kurds in Turkish (that is, Northern) Kurdistan.

        Thus when the USA, during the Gulf Wars, found it expedient to again use
        Kurdish fighters, to achieve USA aims – there were bound to be tensions and
        clashes between the USA and the Turkish ruling class. This logically, extended to
        the point of *resisting* the wars against Saddam Hussein – out of a fear that the
        breakup of Iraq would spur Kurdish moves to nationhood.
        As **Alan Makovsky**, a senior fellow for National Security and International Policy
        at the right wing think tank 'American Progress' wrote in 2001:
        "For years, Iraq has been the most difficult issue in US-Turkey bilateral relations.
        Turkey has a large stake in the outcome of the Bush administration's Iraq policy
        review...
        "Nevertheless Ankara has been hostile to the forcible overthrow of Saddam
        Hussein regime, which, it fears, will lead to the break-up of Iraq and the
        emergence of an independent Kurdish state. Although not publicly
        acknowledged, Turkey's concern is that such an eventuality would encourage
        further separatism among its own Kurds. Turkey also generally opposes the Iraqi
        National Congress (INC), the diaspora-based Iraqi opposition that, shortly after
        its formation in 1992, endorsed the notion of Kurdish 'self-determination' within
        Iraq. …
        But Ankara's own attitude towards Iraq is somewhat ambivalent, if not
        contradictory. Most Turkish decision makers recognize that a more powerful,
        weapons of mass destruction-stocked and revenge-minded Saddam would again
        be a menace to the region and probably specifically toward Turkey, which
        strongly backed the 1991 war." [190]

191.   The Turkish ruling class had several fears of supporting the destruction of Iraq.
        These were understandable.
        Turkish fears of reigniting a Southern Kurdistan entity, and renewing the 15 year-
        old guerilla warfare in Northern Kurdistan, were fully legitimate.
        There were also economic concerns about the likely, forthcoming war against
        Iraq. The already battered Turkish economy was likely to suffer badly as a result
        of the war: the financial burden of war and maintaining tens of thousands of
        troops in Northern Iraq; the Kirkuk-Yumutalik pipeline (closed since 1991 as a

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[190] *From reference number 12 ibid. Altinoglu, citing "Turkey and the Bush Administration, the Question Marks", March 30, 2001*

result of the UN embargo) could not re-open; cross-border trade would diminish; and - Turkey would be deprived of the illegal flow of oil from Iraq.

192.   Moreover, the multi-billion dollar Turkish tourism sector, would be dealt a mortal blow and foreign investors would be discouraged.
Another important worry of the Turkish reactionaries, was a fear of a new wave of Kurdish war refugees, which would contribute to the "deterioration of security situation" in Northern Kurdistan.
Finally they were concerned about the negative political repercussions of such a war, which, from a Turkish perspective may last years and even decades.

In this they were obviously right, as the enormous turmoils of the Middle East since the Iraq wars, have shown. Many of these fears became magnified, and echo down to today's vicious Turkish invasion into Kurdish Syrian territories, in 2019.

193.   But balanced against these fears of the ruling class, was the tempting vision of more power. The Turkish ruling class ambition, since the 1990s, was to play in the "New Great Game" to dominate Eurasia.
Therefore, it eventually succumbed to the USA.
It actively supported the aggression of US-led coalition during the Kuwaiti phase of the **Gulf War of 1991** against Iraq, though without contributing troops.
It supported the anti-Iraqi "Operation Provide Comfort" (later called "**Operation Northern Watch**"). This latter, supposedly protected the Kurdish people from the atrocities of Iraqi fascists, and contributed to the enforcement of a "no-fly zone" in Southern Kurdistan.
Turkey hosted American and British planes which bombed Iraqi civilian and military targets from 1990. (*Then in the 2000s, they were bombing Syria*).
Since 1993, Turkish troops participated in numerous so-called peacekeeping operations in Somalia, Bosnia, Albania, Georgia, Al-Khalil (Hebron), Kuwait, Kosovo, Macedonia, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
Under Erdogan, this overall policy continued.

This expresses a desire to emulate and renew the old Ottoman Empire in its scope and geographical expanse.

However the initial Turkish ruling class fear of engagement, became a reality with the US inspired formation of Northern 'statelets' under Kurdish control.

194.   During the **Gulf War of 1991**, a section of the Turkish ruling classes led by then-president **Turgut Ozal,** again devised adventurist plans to incorporate Northern Iraq into a greater Turkey. As a sop, they planned to grant limited autonomy to both Northern and Southern Kurds. Through this initiative, the Ozal clique hoped to weaken the appeal of the militant Kurdish insurgency led by the PKK, reduce

Turkey's dependence on foreign energy resources, and project Turkey as a powerful regional state.

195.   But at that time, the main body of the Turkish ruling classes chose against pursuing such an adventurist line, due to the insurmountable difficulties and uncertainties it involved.
This was because the annexation of Northern Iraq, would have increased the military burden of Turkish armed forces, raised the tension in the region and would have placed Turkey on a collision course with several forces. These opposing forces were not only Iraq, but also the Arab world and Iran as well – not to say possibly the USA. At the same time the PKK was then conducting a successful guerilla warfare against Turkish forces.

Overall then, such a move risked heightening the already high level of militancy of the Turkish workers, further sharpening the contradictions between the working class and other toilers and the fascist dictatorship of the ruling classes; and; moreover further worsening the already not very good relations with the EU, heighten the already great dependence of Turkey on the US.
So, it was rejected and shelved for that moment.

196.   Throughout all this, the Turkish state cultivated relations with Israel.
Despite the deepening isolation from the Arab and Islamic world, the Turkish ruling classes reaped dividends from their cooperation with the Zionist state.
As long ago as October 1998, they demanded and secured the expulsion of **Abdullah Ocalan**, the leader of the PKK from Syria through military threat and massing of their troops on the common border.
The Syrian reactionaries would not have complied with the demands of their Turkish counterparts, had it not been for the indirect threat posed by the Israeli-Turkish alliance.

197.   Meanwhile Turkey's relationship to the EU experienced major problems.
Several factors, made the integration of Turkey into Europe very difficult. Among these remain, Erdogan's increasing dictatorial suppression of basic democratic rights, including those national rights of the **Kurdish** people. The economic crisis of Turkey – now chronic for over 20 years – did not, and does not now, help Erdogan's case. These factors contributed to the ruling classes of Europe's anxiety over assimilating Turkey.

198.   Ultimately to obtain Turkey's final support for the invasion of Iraq, multiple pressures were applied to the Turkish ruling class: Defense Secretary **Donald Rumsfeld**'s visit to Turkey in June and October 2001; Secretary of State **Colin Powell's** visit to Turkey in November 2001; Prime Minister **Bulent Ecevit**'s visit to Washington in January 2002; US Vice-President **Richard Cheney**'s visit to

Ankara in mid-March 2002; US Undersecretary for Defense **Paul Wolfowitz's** visit to Ankara in July 2002. [191]

iv) Increasing class warfare inside Turkey up to the invasion of Iraq

199.   Turkey at times, tried to appease European democratic sentiments, hoping to persuade Brussels to begin accession negotiations. For example, over 2001-2002 the Turkish parliament amended several articles of the Constitution. These included lifting of the death penalty (except in war), legalization of Kurdish language broadcasts and education and reduction of restrictions on the freedom of assembly. But even such extremely limited reforms were enacted in the face of strong opposition from the **MHP** (Nationalist Action Party) and sections of the military. Moreover these cosmetic democratic steps were swiftly reversed by Erdogan. His scathing attacks in 2018 on European leaders as 'fascists' for not allowing his foreign based supporters of Turkish origin, to march in European streets, antagonized European leaders. For some time, EU imperialists were in no hurry to open the doors of Europe to Turkish reactionaries.

200.   According to the World Bank, at the end of 2000, Turkey had the 22nd biggest economy among 207 countries. One year later, Turkey fell to the 27th place; in 2001, Turkish economy shrank by 10 percent and GDP dropped from 200 billion US dollars in 2000, to 148 billion US dollars in 2001. In the meantime, national income per capita receded from around 3000 US dollars to 2160 US dollars. According to official statistics, at the end of July 2002, Turkey's debts totalled 204.4 billion US dollars. This figure included an internal debt burden of 86.9 billion dollars and an external debt burden of 117.5 billion dollars. As of the end of 2001, the sum total of Turkish debt was about 135 percent of the country's GDP, whereas the ratio of total external debt to the GDP was around 77.6 percent. The budget is almost entirely devoted to paying Turkey's debt service. The total amount of tax revenue is not sufficient to cover the debt service.

201.   Moreover there was a growing abyss between poorer and richer classes of Turkish society with regard to the distribution of national income.
This led to the grim situation under which workers and toilers live.
The purchasing power of ordinary people receded more than 50 percent since the beginning of the economic crisis in November 2000. In a country of nearly 70 million, about 30 percent of the workforce was estimated to be unemployed by 2000, while the great majority of those employed have to be content with meager wages and with almost no job security. (The minimum monthly wage in Turkey was then about 100 US dollars.)

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[191] *In addition to Altinoglu, see Quil Lawrence Ibid; p. 132.*

More than 2 million workers were estimated to have lost their jobs after the beginning of the November economic crisis. At least several tens of thousands of small traders and handicraftsmen had to close their shops and workplaces and join the industrial reserve army. The overall situation has greatly exacerbated class contradictions and increased tensions in the country.

202.   In June 2001, the Turkish **National Security Council**, the real source of power which was dominated by leading generals, presented a secret report at a meeting. According to Istanbul newspapers, the report warned that the growing impoverishment of the broad strata of the population would lead to a 'social explosion.'

The Turkish generals were/are aware of the increasing frustration and anger of the masses. They knew that this frustration and anger was further exacerbated by the sense of national humiliation the masses of people felt. The people watched the government (and almost all political parties) capitulate to the dictates of international capital and its instruments, the IMF and the World Bank. Further worrying the generals, was the well-known complicity of the Turkish ruling classes with the aggression of Israeli Zionists on Palestinian people and of US imperialists on Afghan and other Islamic peoples.

Hence the Turkish establishment tried to deflect the discontent of the masses by inciting reactionary nationalism and chauvinism and lulling them with dreams of military glory and expansionism.

This was an added underlying reason to play the 'Turkoman" card.

v) Playing The Turkoman Card – A Play For Mosul

203.   The **Turkomans** are a Turkic people who reside mostly in and around the predominantly Kurdish Kirkuk and Mosul provinces in the north of Iraq. At present, they are estimated to comprise less than 5 percent of Iraq's total 24 million population, while Kurds comprise about 20 percent.

The Turkish fascists played a "Turkoman card" – to attempt to capture oil-rich Kirkusk and Mosul, while denying them to Kurdish claims by the KPD and PUK (*See Safe Havens #87*).

On August 26th, 2002, Turkish press reported a statement made by the '**Turkoman Front'** (Sometimes known as the **Iraqi Turkoman Front - ITF**). This asserted that, as of January 2002, the Turkoman minority had decided to arm and form a 10,000-strong force to protect their people from the encroachments of the KPD forces led by Barzani.

The Turkish ruling classes aimed to break up, or effect a **Balkanization,** of Iraq. But as discussed, this was consistent with the overall game plan of the USA.

204.   A chain of "historical" arguments were invoked to back the Turkoman case. These referred to the post-World War I imperialist led re-drawing of the map of the Middle East (*Theses Kurdistan Part 1*). The carving of the Ottoman Empire had

allowed British and French imperialists to take over Arab lands, formerly ruled by the Sublime Porte. Older Turkoman interests were remembered in 2002:
"Turkey has historical interests in Northern Iraq and will not tolerate the establishment of an independent Kurdish state there," said Turkish Defense Minister **Sabahattin Chakmakoglu** on 23 August 2002.
He referred to the area as:
"Turkish soil!" and "under our safekeeping", and he argued, Northern Iraq:
"was forcibly separated (from Turkey)... by manipulating (its) conditions at the time." [192]

205.   After the initial defeat of Iraq in the Kuwaiti phase, by the US-led imperialist coalition in 1991, the Turkish ruling classes strengthened old ties, and established fresh ties with the Turkoman minority.
In this, the Turkish ruling class was helped by the suffering of Turkomans under various Iraqi governments, as they became targets of "**Arabization**". In doing so, the Turkish ruling classes tried to manipulate Turkomans for their expansionist purposes, and to counter-balance the PKK, KPD and PUK.

The Turkish state made two half-hearted attempts to realize their fond dream of annexing the oil-rich Mosul and Kirkuk region of Iraq.
The Turkish 'loss' of the **Mosul and Kirkuk** provinces had occurred during the World War I. In 1987 and 1988 (towards the end of the eight-year long war between **Iran and Iraq**) Ankara talked of regaining "the lost territories," on the pretext of saving the Turkomans. The Iran-Iraqi war had exhausted both countries and Iraq seemed in no position to be able to stop a Turkish incursion into the oil-rich region.
But, the internal conditions of Turkey, (a conjuncture of both the working class movement and the Kurdish national struggle were rising, and, a lack of military and psychological readiness on the part of the Turkish ruling classes) - as well as the balance of forces in the region (The Soviet Union was still a superpower and allied with Iraq and Syria) did not allow such Turkish aggression.

206.   As the Iraqi war operation approached, the relations of the Turkish militarists with KPD and PUK too, became more tense. Aware of the presence of Turkish troops on their territory and of Turkish aims, Barzani and Talabani voiced their concerns more loudly than ever. They rightfully worried about Turkish aims to annex part of Northern Iraq on the pretext of supporting the US drive to overthrow the Saddam Hussein clique.
Massoud Barzani openly warned Ankara of the undesirable consequences of Turkish military action against Southern Kurdistan in case of a US operation. Furthermore he criticized Turkish expansionists over their intentions to seize Kurdish lands and especially oil-rich **Kirkuk** province, then under Iraqi

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[192] *Altinoglu reference 12 above; citing 'The Jordan Times'; August 23-24, 2002*

jurisdiction. In an interview he gave to German journal *Die Zeit*, on September 5th, 2002, Barzani was asked about their position over Kirkuk and Turkey's antagonism to the possible emergence of a Kurdish state. He said:
"We would give our life to our enemies, but not Kirkuk. Kirkuk remains the heart of Kurdistan... We do not leave a millimeter of our soil to the Turks. Not only will our soldiers fight, but also our women, young people and the elderly. A Kurdish uprising would make our roads to graves for the Turkish military. Turkey should instead protect the rights of the 15 million Kurds in their country."

207.   As the invasion of Iraq went ahead, the USA government half-heartedly tried to reassure Turkish sensibility, to keeping Kirkuk and Mosul out of the hands of the Kurds. But this proved impossible and the USA did not try very hard. Soon KPD forces took Mosul and PUK forces took Kirkuk.
Both captures reversed the demographic shifts that Saddam Hussein had engineered. In fact the Turkish government only wished to do, what Saddam had done. Hussein had moved both Turkomans and Shi'ias into expropriated Kurdish property.
Now in the aftermath of Hussein's fall, the previous Kurdish tenants reclaimed their lands, plots, houses and towns. [193] These Kurdish seizures took place in 3 provinces of Iraq.

Effectively, a **Kurdistan Regional government** had taken shape, and was referred to as such.

These Turkish fears never dissipated. Of course just recently in November 2019, Turkey was given a greenlight to enter Kurdish territory in **Rojava**, by the USA. We examine this in *Part 3*.

9. The Iraqi puppet regime - US imperialist policy post-war

The USA had urged on anti-Saddam forces inside Iraq, well <u>before</u> the actual invasion. Naturally then, the USA imperialists had identified those they could manipulate. When the time came to appoint as a puppet government, the USA knew who to call upon.
The USA goal was to splinter any single 'Iraqi consciousness', to prepare a new partition of Iraq.

<u>The USA planned to achieve their goal by two steps during the USA occupation:</u>
<u>First</u> the infra-structure of Iraq was to be decimated in looting by an angry populace, while destroying any civil order by disbanding the Iraqi army; and,
<u>Second</u> sectarian militia were to be enabled, fostering violence.

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[193] *Quil Lawrence, Ibid; 182-201*

Jointly this would remove any inconvenient visions of one joint 'Iraq' owned by Shi'ia, Sunni and Kurd – free of Saddam Hussein's tyranny.

It is put more delicately in the official USA history of the Iraqi War by Rayburn: "Once on the ground, however, U.S. officials made a series of decisions that dramatically expanded the invasion's impact on the Iraqi state and society, precipitating a governance vacuum at all levels in Iraq". [194]

But the plans of the USA did not go entirely as they had anticipated.
They were complicated by Iranian influence on the Shi'ia parties and political representatives of Iraq.

At least to date the USA has not been able to achieve its strategic goals.

We first describe the early anti-Hussein compradors of the USA.
We then discuss the steps taken of the occupying forces.

i)   USA Identifies compradors early on, to form the later Iraqi Interim Government

208.   In 1996, the **CIA-led Iraqi National Congress** attempted an insurrection in Iraq. But it was crushed by the Hussein Iraqi state, with the open support of the Kurdish Barzani faction and the tacit approval of Turkish reactionaries. In the same fight-back, the Hussein Iraqi army attacked PUK strongholds. The Barzani clique were delighted with this Iraqi state attack upon PUK. When Iraqi forces entered the city of **Erbil**, they were openly violating the UN-imposed ban on Iraqi entry into the Safe Havens.
While the Iraqi army attacked the PUK, it is true that they also targeted and executed around 100 local CIA agents. In addition they detained hundreds more CIA agents. Thousands of such local CIA agents were evacuated through Turkey. The US merely launched a couple of ineffectual Cruise and Tomahawk missiles at some Iraqi military installations to the south of Baghdad.

209.   US imperialists had made only slow progress in overthrowing the Iraqi government. In October 1998, **US Congress** passed the **"the Iraq Liberation Act",** allocating 97 million US dollars for training anti-Baath guerrilla groups. Regular bombing of Iraqi targets, and the continued barbaric embargo, intensified the misery of the people. The USA had identified future Iraqi allies. Therefore as part of the post-war preparations before the invasion, meetings in both London and Bonn were sponsored by both the Clinton administration, and the Bush administrations.
Many people later critical to the USA, attended. They included **Sayyid Majid al-Khoei** – the son of **Grand Aytaollah al-Khoei**. These Shi'ia clerics were already being lined up by the USA for a post-invasion comprador role.

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[194] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid; p. 140.*

At these meetings in 2002, Talabani pointed out to **Dick Cheny** that post-war looting was the first major problem to be encountered. [193]

These allies were ready for when Saddam Hussein was removed.
The right moment arose, after the pretext given by events of 11 September 2001; and after the 2003 war removed Hussein. USA puppets expected to 'lead Iraq'.

ii) Step One: Ensuring a civil breakdown

210.   The USA policy of 'divide and rule' required to breakdown any norm of a civil society. Baghdad was seized by the USA invaders, on April 2nd 2003.
Despite Talabani's (and likely others) warnings, there were no provisions for the "chaos" of the aftermath:
"Coalition troops were unprepared for the utter dissolution of public order that followed. Within days of the regime collapse, Baghdad and other areas of Iraq descended into chaos. Looting and arson began in Baghdad almost immediately, and disorder spread throughout southern Iraq and in Kirkuk as well. Opportunists took advantage and ravaged Ba'ath Party and Iraqi Government facilities, critical infrastructure sites, public houses, and the homes of wealthy Ba'athists who had fled. Regime loyalists and security and intelligence personnel who remained destroyed a substantial amount of government security documents and ministry information, all of which was intricately maintained only in hard copy form. The Iraqi police structure was severely damaged, and many police stations were destroyed. Looting at hospitals resulted in the disappearance of much-needed pharmaceuticals. The National Museum of Baghdad was looted as well". [195]

211.   By end April 2003, the forces of the 'Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC)' were still struggling to find 'Weapons of Mass Destruction'… Given that they had been 'invented', naturally they failed to find any.[196] But they did find a huge number of standard weapons in caches. It is very likely that many caches were taken up by various militias.

212.   At first USA **General Jay Garner**, was appointed to head the occupation. But he was soon dismissed for being too transparent and soft. [197] He was replaced by **Paul Bremer**, who became the USA head of the **Coalition Provisional Authority** (**CPA**), from May 2003 until June 2004. Bremer was appointed as 'presidential envoy', or Ambassador. Reflecting his imperial behavior he was also called a 'Vice-Roy' or 'Pro-Consul'. Bremer had been on Kissinger's team. He was the effective power behind an interim government of Iraq, in the year that sectarian violence ramped upwards.

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[195] *Rayburn JD Col. & Sobchak FK Col: "The US Army in the Iraq War, Volume 1"; Ibid; p.112.*
[196] *Rayburn JD Col. & Sobchak FK Col Ibid; p.139*
[197] *Quil Lawrence Ibid; p. 204-209; 209-213*

213.   The **Iraqi insurgency**, or the Iraq Crisis, was a direct consequence of Bremer's policies. At heart, the USA occupiers measures ensured a violent sectarian bloodbath, between Shi-'ia and Sunni. At first the US Airborne Division Army 101, under **Lt General David Petraeus** had tried to 'coopt' Mosul's majority Sunni Arabs into government. But this move was rapidly undercut by Bremer's decision to 'de-Baathify', and to disband the Iraqi army.[198]

214.   Bremer had already hatched plans before his arrival in Iraq, with Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld, for an immediate '**de-Baathification**'.
Hence the <u>first order of the CPA</u> was this:
"On May 16, 2003, Bremer issued CPA Order 1, De-Ba'athification of Iraqi Society, which banned Iraqis who had been in the upper four levels of the Ba'ath Party—rather than just the top two levels—from holding government office, effectively putting between 30,000 and 50,000 Iraqis out of work, including senior civil servants, military leaders, and university professors." [199]
Since the Ba'th was predominantly Sunni, the major new unemployment fell on Sunni. Of itself this prescription deepened civil chaos.
But <u>CP Order 2</u> extended this:
"Bremer issued CPA Order 2, The Dissolution of Entities, 1 week later on May 23, 2003, (which) dissolved most of Iraq's security and intelligence apparatus, including the Ministry of Defense, Iraqi Intelligence Service, Special Security Organizations, and paramilitary forces. It also disbanded all branches of the Iraqi military in their entirety... CPA Order 2 also suspended pay for members of those entities and, because many security officials were also in the top four levels of the Ba'ath Party, it essentially prohibited them from public employment in the new Iraq." [200]

These two orders created a huge reservoir of unemployed, and removed any *effective* independent police force.

Since all state structures of Sunni strongholds were also abolished – the Mukhabarat secret police, and the Ba'th Party – the Sunni were especially hit.
It is true that the Hussein Iraqi Army contained Shi'ia in "20% of the officer corps of the army, but 80% of the rank and file". [201]
But the unemployed Shi'ia rank and file of the army, were soon swept up into the various Shi'ite militia, while the Sunni higher grades remained unemployed.
In addition the national Police became "thoroughly infiltrated by Shiite militias".[196]

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[198] *Thomas E. Ricks; "The Gamble. General David Petraeus and the American military Adventure in Iraq 2006-2008"; 2009; New York; p.46; 51*
[199] *Rayburn JD Col. & Sobchak FK Col Ibid p. 140*
[200] *Rayburn JD Col. & Sobchak FK Col Ibid p. 141-2*
[201] *Patrick Cockburn, "Muqtada al-Sadr: The Shia Revival and the Struggle for Iraq"; New York; 2008; p.46*

Hence <u>power on the ground was largely in the hands of Shi'ite militia.</u>
This would not protect the Sunni.

iii) Step Two: Enabling Shi'ia militia rule

The historical (theological) origins of the Shi'ia Sunni divide were discussed earlier (*Theses Part one #7-9; and see # 42-43 above*).
The USA invaders, claimed early on that they would ensure representation of the three major sections Shi'ia, Sunni, and Kurd. (This leaves aside the Christian community. The Jewish community had long left Iraq.)
But this pious claim of the USA, cannot be reconciled with events.

We already saw how the National Police were heavily comprised of Shi'ia milita members (*See #213*). This became important as Shi'ia revenge attacks upon Sunni Saddamites, and Ba'thists began quickly (*See #211*).
Furthermore, on top of this Shi'ia-Sunni violence, was the factional rivalry *within* the Shi'ia themselves.

215.   The key to the inter-Shi'ia factionalism in Iraq, was (and remains today) the attitude taken by the factions to the government of **Ayatollah Khomeini** and his successors in Iran (*see #146).*
<u>In Iraq, there were two major Shi'ia factions:</u>
<u>Firstly,</u> a pro-Iranian comprador faction, represented by the Badr, SCIRI and Da'wa (*see #217*); and the clerics **Grand Ayatollah Abu al Qasim al-Khoei** and his successor Grand **Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.**
<u>Secondly,</u> a determinedly independently Iraqi faction, was represented by **Muqtada al-Sadr** and his **Mahdi Army**, or **Jaysh al-Mahdi** (**JAM**) militia (*See # 218).*

At the same time these two factions also differed by their **class appeal.**
<u>Sadr</u> represented the <u>poorest section</u> of the working class located in the Sadr City part of Baghdad. These were the descendants of the *shargiwiyyas* (the 'easterners', or the **mudhut dwellers** that the ICP had its base in. Sadr City was originally named Saddam Hussein City, but was renamed after the First Sadr Martyr, Imam Mohammed Baqir al-Sadr.
<u>Sistani's</u> appeal was to the Shi'ia <u>shopkeepers and businessmen.</u> [201]

Both the **Da'wa** and the **Supreme Council for Islamic revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)** (*See #42-45*), were suppressed by Saddam Hussein. While the Da'wa largely became inactive, the SCIRI found safety by organising from Iran. The Iranian State sponsored and funded it and the Badr (*see #218*).

Quite misleadingly, Sadr was to be repeatedly labeled as 'pro-Iranian' by President Bush – while SCIRI and Badr were not labeled as such.

In reality, both SCIRI and Badr were moving to an alliance with the USA. The pressure exerted by Iran (both diplomatic and military) upon the USA had ensured this.

Already, SCIRI had been present in the USA planning conferences in London of December 2002. In fact the son of the Iraqi Marja Grand Ayatollah al-Khoei, Ayatollah Abdul Majid al- Khoei had attended. [202]

The later murder of the son (Majid al-Khoei), as a USA comprador by Sadr, would exacerbate the intra-Shi'ia sectarian strife (*#218*).

216.   The pro-Iranian compradors of SCIRI and its armed wing, the **Badr Organisation** (*See #44-45*) had long suffered under Saddam Hussein and his Sunni elite. To avenge themselves, they had prepared attacks on Sunni forces in Iraq:

"The Badr Corps militia led by **Hadi al-Amiri** had spent months preparing lists of regime loyalists it intended to target once Saddam was no longer in power. According to Iraqi politician Ali Allawi, shortly after major combat operations ceased, approximately 10,000 Badr Corps personnel organized into death squads began hunting and executing senior Sunni regime loyalists, as well as Shi'a citizens who had collaborated with the regime. Badr acquired weapons by looting Ba'ath Party militia and Iraqi Army depots, rapidly established footholds in Basrah, Amarah, and Baghdad, and set its sights on Diyala as well. In response to the Badr reprisals, some other militias and tribes began to form protection forces in Baghdad and across southern Iraq." [203]

The Badr forces in Baghdad were led by Hamid A'atabi al- Sheibani. [202]

217.   Opposing the pro-Iranian compradors was the faction led by **Muqtada al-Sadr**. Muqtada is a cleric, whose uncle **Ayatollah Mohammed al-Sadr** and father (**Sadiq al-Sadr**) were murdered for their opposition to Saddam Hussein (*See #42-45*). Sadiq al-Sadr's death (Martyr 2) lit the "al-Sadr intifada", which was brutally suppressed by Hussein in 2003.

Such acts of opposition, made the Sadr family and its militia, revered leaders and martyrs of the Shi'ite cause. [204]

Muqtada took pains to be seen as truly independent, and therefore a 'nationalist' – as opposed to the SCIRI:

"In public, Sadr attempted to maintain distance from both Iran and the U.S.-led coalition to signal that he was unbound by foreign influence, a nationalist message that resonated with many Shi'a." [205]

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[202] *Patrick Cockburn, "Muqtada al-Sadr: The Shia Revival & the Struggle for Iraq"; New York 2008*; p.132;160-161

[203] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid p.125-26; 181*

[204] *Patrick Cockburn, Ibid; p. 9; 107.*

[205] *Rayburn & Sobchak; p. 182*

Effectively – Muqtada al-Sadr took the leadership of Iraqi nationalists. In doing this he tried to promulgate Shi'ia-Sunni unity. (*see #224*)

Sadr established the **Jaysh al-Mahdi** (**JAM** or **Mahdi Army**) after the USA invasion, in a fiery speech at the Great Mosque at Kufa on July 18. The militia welded a resentful Shi'ia poor and the ex-army Shi'ia unemployed, into an armed force. Initially it was ad-hoc and ill-disciplined. But by using the traditional Friday sermon as a political venue, Muqtada built its discipline and anti-coalition activity: "On July 18, a few days after the CPA formed the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC)... Sadr gave a sermon in the Great Mosque in Kufa in which he branded the new Iraqi Government non-believers and claimed he was setting up a religious army called the Mahdi Army… Jaysh al-Mahdi also absorbed some of the Shi'a soldiers of the Fedayeen Saddam who lacked employment after CPA Order 2 dissolved the Iraqi security organizations. Most of Jaysh al-Mahdi's members, however, were the uneducated Shi'a males whom the Ba'ath had repressed. Although they were eager to exact revenge on former Ba'athist supporters and to escape poverty and political disenfranchisement, the militia was an amateur organization with no formal hierarchy. … Capable military leaders rapidly emerged from its ranks, however, and they began training companies and battalions in southern Iraq by the late summer of 2003. In the meantime, Sadr used his Friday sermons at the Great Mosque in Kufa, his chosen headquarters, to mobilize his supporters and the Mahdi Army against the coalition presence using protests, propaganda, and other disruptive activities." [206]

218. The JAM inflamed intra-Shi'ia sectarian tension by the murder of Ayatollah Abdul Majid al- Khoei (*See #44; #209; #215*), the son of the former Marja.
He had previously attended the previous CIA sponsored meetings in London and Berlin, to discuss Iraq post-war.
As Muqtada and the JAM undoubtedly understood, Al-Khoei was a pro-USA comprador force:
"On April 5 2003, Ayatollah Abdul Majid al-Khoei, son of the former Grand Marja' and a leader of the 1991 uprising, returned to Najaf from his 12-year exile in London. Upon arriving in the holy city, Khoei moved to the Imam Ali shrine. News of his return quickly spread to supporters of Moqtada Sadr... Sadr and his followers, however, had a popular following in Najaf and viewed Khoei as a Western-backed interloper". [207]

Other violent provocations by the Mahdi Army were also not resisted by Coalition forces. These included establishing shadow courts and prisons in Najaf, close to the Imam Ali shrine. The shrine itself was also occupied by Sadr in opposition to the **Grand Ayatollah Sistani**. [208]

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[206] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid p.183*
[207] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid p.126*
[208] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid p. 270*

Yet the Coalition forces, took no effective action against Muqtada and the JAM, until later. No doubt Bremer hated him personally.
But the USA and coalition forces feared his significant following in the Shi'ia poor.

Moreover the Shi'ia population was now being targeted by Sunni-led bombing. This culminated in the March 2, 2004 bombing of Karbala and Khadamiyah shrines, during the great religious festival of Ashura (commemorating the battle of Karbala). The resulting Shi'ia fear drew more people to flock to the militia for protection, as manifestly the USA army could/would not protect them. [209]

When the Coalition did finally move against him on April 3, 2004, by arresting his top aide (Mustafa al-Yaquibi) the streets erupted in protest and attacks upon the Coalition forces.
It is interesting that, <u>even Sunni insurgents and supplies</u> were sent to defend the Sadrists. [208]
The USA army were forced to ease off their first attacks on the Mahdi Army.

Even a later second attack on the Najaf stronghold of the Mahdi Army in August 2004 was unsuccessful.
On this occasion it was halted by the intercession, or mediation, of **Al-Sistani**.
While al-Sistani opposed Muqtada Sadr (being himself a pro-Iranian comprador) he gauged the attack on Sadr and the Mahdi Army would anger the Shi'ia masses.
The USA army accepted al-Sistani's intervention, and did not arrest al-Sadr. [208]

After this close call, Sadr took up a more cautious position.
He joined with al-Sistani and other Shi'ia in an electoral alliance (the **United Iraqi Alliance [UIA]**), and in elections of December 16, 2004 = Sadr's militia won 32 seats (in total of 275).

v) The Sunni Fundamentalists organise resistance
Several branches of Islamic Sunni and Salafi fundamentalism entered the raging sectarian war. These included Islamic fundamental forces, based in Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, **al-Qaeda** or its offshoots (*see #221*).

219. Early attacks were directed by vengeful Shi'ia upon the Sunni population. Naturally Sunni fear and resentment grew. Whereas previously under Hussein they had been priviliged (for example, being encouraged to expropriate Turkoman and Kurd properties in Kirkuk), they were now removed from influence. [210]
Several Sunni fundamentalists formed groups early after the fall of Baghdad. The earliest was probably a Ba'ath resistance, directed by Saddam Hussein before

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[209] *P.Cockburn Ibid p. 145; 149; 155-162;*
210 Quil Lawrence Ibid; pp. 221-223.

his capture, called **Jaysh Muhammad** (Army of Muhammad), led by Mohammed Yunis al-Ahmad. [211]

Other Ba'athist resistance groups were led by Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri and Mohammed Yunis al-Ahmad. Others included **Ansar al Sunna** and **Jaysh al-Islami.**

All launched attacks on coalition forces, UN, and assassinated members and officials of the Iraqi Interim Government. [212]

220.   Stating that the escalating violence was due only to 'remnants of the Saddam Hussein army', the USA army sought to minimize the attacks.
But the Sunni insurgency grew. Sunnis in the middle belt of the country were especially susceptible to fundamentalist organisers:
"The most contentious areas were the Baqubah to Tikrit corridor; the urban part of Anbar consisting of Fallujah, Habbaniyah, and Ramadi; and the corridor between Hadithah and Hit… and Sunni Islamic fundamentalism, including Salafism, was thought... to be the unifying factor among restive groups in Anbar. Many Iraqi Salafis were virulently anti-coalition, calling for and executing attacks against coalition forces. Signs emerged that Ansar al-Islam, having survived the coalition's attack on it in early April, was beginning to reestablish itself in northern Iraq with support from al-Qaeda".[213]

221.   The origins of **Al-Qaeda** lay in Afghanistan, where close links had been forged to **Osama bin Laden** via the credo of **Wahhabism**.[214] This branch of Islam was begun by Abdul Wahab (1703-1792) supposedly to:
'cleanse the Arab bedouin from the influences of Sufism….
Arab Mujaheddin, including Osama Bin Laden, who joined the jihad, won a small Pashtun following." [215]

After the temporary defeat of the Taliban, and the assassination of Bin Laden by the USA, the Arab contingents of the Afghan Taliban drifted into several directions. Those in the Iraqi Middle East coalesced to form **Islamic State in Iraq and Syria** (**ISIS**); or **Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL).** Their attacks on the Iraqi Shi'ia community began in early 2004. A distinct subgroup, was **Tawhid**

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[211] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid; p.172*
[212] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid; p.169; 173; 174; 175; 177*

213 Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid p-154-155

[214] *See Alliance 45; The Afghanistan War of 2002 – Legacy of USA imperialism and Social imperialism"; February 2, 2002; at https://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALLIANCE45AFGHANISTAN.html*
[215] *Rashid Ahmed; "Taliban: Militant Islam and Fundamentalism in Central Asia"; New Haven; 2000; p.85.*

wal-Jihad (Monotheism and Holy War) led by the Jordanian **Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi.**

Zarqawi linked al-Qaeda with the developing Iraqi Sunni fundamentalists *(#220)*, through the Fallujah-based Mujahideen Shura (or council) of Sufi **Sheikh Abdullah Janabi**. This had funding from donors in the Gulf. [212]
Even the Kurdish based Sunni formed **Ansar al-Islam** formally linked up with al-Qaeda, changing their name to **Ansar al-Sunna**. [212]
Later, the parent l-Qaeda was to cut links with ISIL in 2014.

By March 2003, Zarqawi preached the goal to stop Shi'ia from governing Iraq. [212]
Consistent with this, Zarqawi's earliest action inside Iraq was to murder the founder of the SCIRI – **Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim**. [216]

By August 2004, attacks on coalition forces had escalated to 600 per month. [212]

222.   In another development, the USA funded various tribal elements against al-Qaeda. But these simply created a new future wave of attackers. For example the USA launched a group of "our Sunnis" – the so called **Amariya Knights**, termed by the USA as "Concerned Citizens". They were led by former members of the insurgent 'Islamic Army' – one **Abu Abed**.
That their 'mission;' was ultimately sectarian is seen in their objectives. Abded stated:
"Amariya is just the beginning. After we finish with al-Qaida here, we will run towards our main enemy the Shi'ia militias. I will liberate Jihad [[a Sunni area next to Ameriya taken over by the Mahdi army], then Saadiya, and then the whole of west Baghdad." [217]

223.   *iv) The Sunni Fundamentalists organise resistance*
In the midst of burning sectarianism, non-sectarianism somehow survived. In fact, the hatred of the USA occupation actually united some Sunni and Shi'ia. Even the official US Army history points to a "*brotherhood of resistance against the coalition*":
"As the fighting spread across the Iraqi provinces, coalition leaders were alarmed to discover Sunni and Shi'a militants operating in tandem against coalition units. While the battle raged in Fallujah, Shi'a volunteers from Baghdad and the south made their way to the city to support the Sunni resistance fighters, and vice versa. Fallujah insurgents reportedly delivered weapons such as the shoulder-fired SA–7B surface-to-air missile to Sadrists in Baghdad. Insurgent propaganda

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[216] *Cockburn P Ibid; p. 136*
[217] *Ghaith Abdul-Ahad; "Meet Abu Abed: the US's new ally against al-Qaida"; Guardian November 10; 2007;*
London; https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/nov/10/usa-al-qaida

highlighted this brotherhood of resistance against the coalition, such as an April 6 statement by the Sunni insurgent group Jihad Brigades to the Al Jazeera news channel that urged Sadr's followers to continue resisting coalition forces.

Sunni and Shi'a insurgent groups sometimes wrote joint statements, including one in which Jaysh al-Mahdi and Ansar al Fallujah Army warned Iraqi civilians to avoid roads used by coalition supply convoys (*saying*):

"Both Forces have decided to make the road of Al Usufiya, al Rashid District, Abu Dasher, Hora Rigab as a war zone against Jewish and Zionist forces. We will attack all the infidel vehicles that would use this road and these districts . . . we urge our patient people through this statement, to stay away from this area."

Another declaration called for shopkeepers in Baghdad to close their shops from April 15–23 because "your resistance brothers al Mujahideen from Ramadi, Khaledia, and Fallujah will move the resistance fire to Baghdad and will support our brothers Mujahideen from Al Mahdi Army."

In the words of one coalition planner, "We had at that point managed the nearly impossible task of uniting the Sunnis and Shiites... against us." [218]

"The joint Sunni-Shi'a declarations showed that, for at least a short time, the Iraqi insurgency had gelled into a national resistance." [218]

224.   But this was _before_ Zarqawi controlled the Sunni resistance.

"In April 2004, the Sunni resistance in Anbar was led primarily by former regime elements alongside which Zarqawi's Tawhid wal-Ji had played a relatively minor role. With Zarqawi not yet the dominant Sunni insurgent leader, Shi'a insurgents could rationalize working with Iraqi Sunni groups and Sunnis with Shi'as because they shared the common objective of expelling a foreign occupying force." [218]

Muqtada Sadr in particular, temporarily embraced this collaboration with Sunni insurgents. It helped him stand out from other more traditional Shi'a leaders by emphasizing his nationalistic credentials. [218]

But such cross-sectarian allegiance did not last long.
Zarqawi did all he could to disrupt non-sectarianism.
Zarqawi soon exploited the violence in Fallujah far more effectively than former regime elements. Sunni-Shi'a collaboration soon gave way to a monotonic sectarian civil war.

225.   The Sunni insurgency was combatted by the Kurds.

A pivotal moment came in November 17, 2004, in the Fallujah insurgent offensive, Mosul fell into the hands of the Sunni insurgents. Despite the forces of the much vaunted General David Petraeus. In open self-defence now, the USA

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[218] *Rayburn p.293; 294*

asked the Kurdish pesh merga (of both the PUK and the KPD) to assist – which they did. Of course as we discussed previously, the Kurdish viewed Mosul as their own. By these actions the Kurdish territory grew a bit more. [219] Moreover displaced Kurds moved even more into areas of Mosul and Kirkuk.

226.   Sunni suicide bombings on the Shi'ia community began around March 2004.
But the attacks continued to escalate, reaching down to Shi'ia strongholds in the South.
At its height, the Sunni insurgence developed into the '**Battle of Baghdad'** . This began with Sunni fighters blowing up of the al-Askari shrine in Samarra on February 22, 2006. [220]
Inevitably given the situation, there was Shi'ia retaliation.
In fact, both Sadr, and al-Sistani, tried to prevent this.
But they were able to restrain the ensuing butchery of Sunni – where it is estimated that 1,300 Sunni died within days. [219]
By summer 2007 some 2.2 million Iraqis were internally displaced. [219]

227.   Even in the mayhem of the 'Battle of Baghdad' however, there continued at least one strong 'nationalist' and non-comprador - voice trying to counter sectarian killing.
By May 2007, **Muqtada Sadr** had recovered from when he had been cornered by the USA in Najaf. Then he had been aided by al-Sistani (*See #218*).
After a period of relative quiet, he continued the Friday sermons to re-invigorate his Mahdi Army. He continued to denounce the USA occupation – and was really the loudest and clearest exponent of an anti-USA policy, labeling it as an occupier.
He refused negotiations offered by **Lieutenant General Raymond Odeirno** (Second in Command of USA forces in Iraq) saying:
"I call upon the Iraqi government not to extend the occupation by a single day… I refuse to sit down with the occupation, whether in Iraq or outside." [219]
At the same time he insisted to the Mahdi Army that sectarian killing as '***Takfir'*** (the practice of declaring another Muslim to be a non-believer and thus an enemy of Islam"):
"The enemy of all Islam has become the Takfir. Before they were killing Shi'ites with their car bombs. Now they are killing Sunni with their car bombs. They have become a common enemy…. It is prohibited to spill the blood of Sunnis and Christians. They are our brothers, either in religion or in the homeland." [221]

vii) Other Local State Involvement: Iran and Syria
228.   Meanwhile Iran was reaping gains by further heating sectarianism. For example, the Quds commander, **Suleimani** (see #231) directly *aided al-Qaeda*.

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[219] *Quil Lawrence Ibid; p. 248-9.*
[220] *Patrick Cockburn; Ibid'; p. 175-186; 175; 180;182;*
[221] *Patrick Cockburn; Ibid; p. 194-195*

But this attitude of Iran proved short-lived.

Like the USA's backing of the Taliban in Afghanistan, it proved to be a counter-productive feeding of a terrorism undertaken by Sunni fundamentalism:

"Suleimani's campaign against the United States crossed the Sunni-Shiite divide, which he has always been willing to set aside for a larger purpose. Iraqi and Western officials told me that, early in the war, Suleimani encouraged the head of intelligence for the Assad regime to facilitate the movement of Sunni extremists through Syria to fight the Americans. In many cases, Al Qaeda was also allowed a degree of freedom in Iran as well…..

As it turned out, the Iranian strategy of abetting Sunni extremists backfired horrendously: shortly after the occupation began, the same extremists began attacking Shiite civilians and the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government." [223]

229.   As the above quote shows, Syria was also being drawn in. **Bashar al-Assad** of Syria also used al-Qaeda as a 'bargaining chip':

"(Assad) encouraged Arab mujahideen to enter Iraq from Syrian territory in order to fight against coalition forces." Even at this stage, the Bashar Assad fascist regime had made a pact with al-Qaeda to "disrupt the US forces inside Iraq".

In the words of a prominent Syrian governor, Assad:

"would like to use al-Qaeda as a bargaining chip with the West—to say: "it is either them or us." [222]

230.   Supreme Leader **Ali Khamenei** of Iran was already supporting, as already discussed, the Badr. But the Iranian state also deployed the Islamic Republican Guard Corps (IRGC).

The IRGC included a foreign military arm, **Quds** (or Qods). This Force was led by **Brigadier General Qassem Suleimani** (or Soleimani**). Previously the Ramazan Corps of the Quds Force had operated inside Iraq in the 1990s with the anti-Ba'thist resistance forces of the **Mujahedin e Khalq**. The Quds Force used members of Lebanese Hizballah, the Badr Corps, and, later, Jaysh al-Mahdi.

The Quds force became under Soleimani – a potent weapon against USA:

"Since (*its foundation it*) has given aid to a variety of militant Islamist groups opposed to America's allies in the region, such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The help has gone not only to Shiites but also to Sunni groups like Hamas—helping to form an archipelago of alliances that stretches from Baghdad to Beirut." [223]

It remains now a rapid-strike army of the <u>reactionary Iranian government</u>.

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[222] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid p.186-7*
[223] *Dexter Filkins; "The Shadow Commander- Qassem Suleimani"; September 23, 2013; The New Yorker; https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/09/30/the-shadow-commander*

Yet it is crucial to understand that on key junctures, the goals of the Iranian state, and its Quds forces - coincided with those of the USA. Even if at other times it did not. Both the USA and Iran, saw a benefit in dividing up Iraq into sectarian statelets.

viii) The Interim Government – the USA and Iran 'negotiate'
In reality the Iranian and USA governments shared a joint aim: To splinter the state of Iraq.

But both – began to revise their time scale in which to effect this.
The chaos of the sectarian war; and the determined Sunni opposition to splitting Iraq; had been so intense, that the Iranian state decided to hold Iraq as a unity, until a relative stability could return.
The Iranian state, came to see they could use the fiction of a separate Iraq, to effectively rule Iraq by proxy, via its Shi'ia compradors.

The USA now also wished to temporize; boxed in as they were between a rising number of USA deaths in the field, and the powerful Iranian presence in Iraqi politics.

231.   Bremer had laid the foundations for civil upheaval. The situation continued to deteriorate, with increasing murders and bombings (including suicide missions). Bremer summoned the organisations who had met with the USA in London and Bonn. They often sent very same individuals:
"On June 1, 2003, Bremer met with seven of these leading expatriate political figures (at the time known collectively as the G-7), including **Ahmad Chalabi's** representative for the Iraqi National Congress, **Ayad Allawi** of the **Iraq National Accord**, **Jalal Talabani** of the PUK, **Massoud Barzani** of the KDP, **Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim** and **Abdul Aziz al-Hakim's** Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, **Ibrahim al-Ja'afari** of the Da'wa Party, and **Nasir Chaderji** of the predominantly Sunni Muslim National Democrats. At the meeting, Bremer informed the G-7 that an interim authority, as stipulated by UN Security Council Resolution 1483, would be established within 6 weeks, consisting of a 25 to 30-person political council of non-expatriate Iraqis appointed by Bremer and the G-7 leaders."[224]

An interim **Governing Council (GC)** was to pave the way for the **Iraqi Interim Government** (IIG) - as a 'caretaker' Government until elections.
Bremer hand-picked the members of the IIG, which was appointed in May 2005. This was responsible for a new constitution by the elections of January 2005. Bremer handed over authority formally to the IRG.

But the Coalition Forces remained the real authority in Iraq.

The instability is evidenced by the fast turn over of leadership. From July 2003 to

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[224] *Rayburn JD COL & Sobchak FK Col: The US Army in the Iraq War, Volume 1"; Ibid p.156-7*

May 2006, the named President of the Governing Council was to rotate between individuals. This alone ensured it could achieve nothing. [225]

232.   But the USA was not the only influence upon governmental formation. The Iranians *wanted and got*, leverage over membership. They made clear that they would do their utmost to ensure a Shi'ia head of government.
Ryan Crocker, then a senior State Department official (later USA Ambassador to Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries), was negotiating with Iran. He has acknowledged 'a negotiation' between Tehran and Washington':
"After Saddam's regime collapsed, Crocker was dispatched to Baghdad to organize… the Iraqi Governing Council… he negotiated indirectly with Suleimani. … Crocker passed him the names of prospective Shiite candidates, and the two men vetted each one. Crocker did not offer veto power, but he abandoned candidates whom Suleimani found especially objectionable.
"The formation of the Governing Council was in its essence a negotiation between Tehran and Washington," (Crocker) said. [223]

233.   Iranian representatives also exerted <u>military</u> pressure. Quds Forces worked via the Shi'ia militias associated with Iran:
"In 2004, the Quds Force began flooding Iraq with lethal roadside bombs that the Americans referred to as **E.F.P.s**, for "**explosively formed projectiles**." The E.F.P.s, which fire a molten copper slug able to penetrate armor, began to wreak havoc on American troops, accounting for nearly twenty per cent of combat deaths. E.F.P.s could be made only by skilled technicians, and they were often triggered by sophisticated motion sensors.
"There was zero question where they were coming from," **General Stanley McChrystal**, who at the time was the head of the Joint Special Operations Command, told me. "We knew where all the factories were in Iran. The E.F.P.s killed hundreds of Americans."[223]

But as **Dexter Filkins** notes:
"Still, Iran's policy toward the Americans in Iraq was not entirely hostile - both countries, after all, were trying to empower Iraq's Shiite majority." [223]

Obviously the USA was also exerting pressure both diplomatically and in military form. This is a given, since it was an occupying army. Diplomatic pressure, came from smokescreens of public USA rhetoric (Iran part of an 'Axis of Evil' etc).

<u>In reality, a cooperation between the USA and Iran emerged, despite the public war of words between them.</u>

The Iranians worked through their compradors, such as Dawa, SCIRI – and to a

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[225] *Quil Lawrence Ibid p. 216*

far lesser extent – Sadr.

As we saw above, although a Sh'ia, Sadr was a determined Iraqi nationalist, and not pro-Iranian. But Sadr had become more compliant towards Iran, after having been cornered at Najaf by the USA, when al-Sistani bailed him out. (*See #218*)

234.   Both the pro-Iranian factions, and Kurdish political representatives shared an agenda, in ensuring a regional control or autonomy. In fact, both the Kurd representatives - Barzani and Talabani; and key Shi'ia clerics -**Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani** and **Ayatollah Muhammed Bakr al-Hakim**- and their Shi'ia allies (Maliki), wished to divide Iraq into their own spheres of their control. [226]

All factions understood that between the Kurds and the Shi'ia, their spheres of influence controlled most of Iraq's oil, if Kirkuk was included in this sum.

ix) Constitutional wrangles and elections

235.   The Interim Government quickly faced controversy on the details of a constitution.

The first was whether elections would be held first, or whether a constitution would be written by the USA first.

In addition, the Shi'ia Al-Sistani pushed to frame the constitution in a religious context. [95] He was also supported by the state of **Iran**. But, Al-Sistani was forced to concede on this point.

The Kurds were wary during these discussions, since the KRGs were basically already in place. They therefore insisted to insert Clause 61C. This allowed them a veto if any 3 provinces rejected the constitution by a two-thirds majority.
It so happened that the Kurds had 3 provinces under their control already. [227]

Kurdish representatives fought off any suggestion that the Kurdish regional Governments were to be excluded from interim governance. They were able to propose demands already sanctioned by their own Kurdish Regional Parliament. This was a far more 'democratic' façade than could be offered by any of the other groups in the Governing Council at Baghdad. [228]

Both Shi'ia parties and Kurds talked openly about possible 'autonomous regions', while the Sunni President Ghazi al-Yawar denounced such talk.

To resolve the constitutional quandry, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani simply issued a *fatwah* stating that the constitution should be written first to be "put to a referendum". [229] This forced Bremer to accede, and a new time-table was put

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[226] *Quil Lawrence Ibid; p. 218-220; 235; 263-7;*
[227] *Quil Ibid p. 240.*
[228] *Quil Lawrence p 239; 253; 259*
[229] *Patrick Cockburn Ibid; p. 140.*

with an election to set Iraqi sovereignty, which would also consider a "set of principles of government… that would eventually lead to a new constitution." [230]

The Interim Iraqi Government was to stand until the elections of January 2005. After these constitutional controversies were 'solved' by al-Sistani's fatwah, Bremer left Iraq. But Bremer first ensured that a trusted comprador was put in charge:
"On June 28, 2004, Bremer handed Iraq's executive authority to the Iraqi Interim Government. On the same day, **Ayad Allawi** was sworn in as Iraq's interim Prime Minister, having been selected by his fellow Iraqi Governing Council members. Allawi was a secular Shi'a politician who had been a member of the Ba'ath Party in the 1960s and early 1970s before conflicts with Saddam Hussein resulted in his fleeing to London.. he ultimately led the Iraqi National Accord... After the collapse of the regime, he had returned to Iraq and served as defense minister on the Iraqi Governing Council. With Allawi sworn in, the CPA disbanded and Bremer departed Iraq the same day." [231]

x) The first elections of January 2005

In January 2005, the first highly anticipated elections were held. They were structured to elect a permanent government, which would subject the constitution to scrutiny.

236.   The Kurdish leaders ran a single list of candidates, including even Kurdish Islamist parties – as '**The Kurdish Coalition List'**.
The two main leaders decided they could divide posts between them, Talabani would be the ceremonial Iraqi President leaving Barzani as the president of the KRG. [227]

The Shi'ia parties joined forces in the **United Iraqi Alliance** (UIA).

The expatriate comprador, **Ayad Allawi** – formed the **Iraqi List** composed of his own party (**Iraqi National Accord**) and three other secular parties, including the **Peoples List** (dominated by the remnants of the Iraqi CP).

A Sunni party known as the **Iraqi Islamic Party** also took part.

Despite threats from Ansar al Sunna and from Zarqawi, the turnout for the election was high – 8.5 million Iraqis or 58% of the population.[232]
But the Kurdish areas, had a higher participation of around 80% of their votes, gaining a total of 26% of all the votes cast. [227]

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[230] *Rayburn & Sobchak Ibid; P. 233*
[231] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid p.317*
[232] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid; p.368-9; 397; 485*

The Shiite UIA had gained some 60% of the total vote. Since to rule required a two-thirds vote, a deal between the Kurds and the Shi'ia representatives was necessary. [227]

But Sunni voters had largely boycotted the polls, partly from fear of attacks. The Allawi party did poorly, getting only 14% of the vote.

The prior bargain held, and <u>Talabani became President of Iraq</u> while the real powerbase of the Prime Minister would be the Shi'ia nomination.
Initially <u>Ja'afari</u> – of the Da'wa party was made <u>Prime Minister</u>.

237. Naturally the effect of the Sunni election boycott was to reduce its governing representation:
"In the weeks after the election, the extent of the Sunnis' miscalculation became clear. Their boycott guaranteed the election spoils would go to Shi'a Islamist and Kurdish nationalist parties whose aims were antithetical to those of the Sunnis. Of 275 seats in the transitional national assembly that would write their country's constitution and (move Iraq) toward independence, Sunni Arabs earned only 16 seats, a dramatic underrepresentation. Estimated by the UN and the coalition to be roughly 20 percent of Iraq's population, Sunni Arabs would hold just 5 percent of the seats in the assembly. By comparison, Turkomans earned 13 seats and Christians earned three seats, even though both groups combined made up about 5 percent of Iraq's population…. the Sunni boycott would prove to have far-reaching negative consequences. Almost as soon as the election results were tallied, Sunni Arab leaders began to realize that their gamble on a boycott had been a horrible mistake…. Sunni Arabs became terrified that they had enabled the handing over of the country to the Shi'a… One of the most notable political consequences of the Sunni boycott of the January 2005 election was that Sunni leaders found themselves frozen out of the writing of the Iraqi constitution." [229]

238. The marginalization of the Sunnis from their boycott, and the new deliberations on the constitution – forced a new referendum on the constitution, and then new elections – in the fall of 2005.
Unsurprisingly the referendum showed there was a major sectarian split – but Sunni opposition did not overwhelm the combined Shi'ia and Kurdish vote:
"The vote included near-universal Sunni rejection of the draft constitution in the Sunni-majority provinces... Despite the strong opposition in these provinces, Iraqi voters nationwide approved the constitution by a clear majority of 78.6 percent. Sunni opposition fell just short of the referendum requirement that two-thirds of the voters in three provinces had to reject the draft constitution to block its adoption. The constitution drafted mainly by Shi'a and Kurdish political parties in

the late summer became Iraq's new foundational law." [233]

xi) The second elections

239.   The second election so soon after the first, was forced by the recognition that the Sunni electorate had been effectively dis-enfranchised. Albeit by their own leaders and by the Zarqawi threats of terrorist disruption and reprisals against voters. Opposition from within the Sunni community to the al-Qaeda terror grew. Rank and file elements of Sunni communities, organised against al-Qaeda (AQI): "Sunni opposition to al-Qaeda in Iraq (grew). By November, the **Anbar General Conference**—the Sunni political organization formed in September—had expanded and renamed itself the **Anbar People's Conference**. The group, now claiming nearly 100 politicians, tribal sheikhs, technocrats, and insurgent leaders, began organizing municipal security committees to protect and facilitate the December parliamentary elections. In Ramadi, for example, Mohammed Mahmoud Latif's followers in the 1920 Revolutionary Brigades forcibly drove AQI from several neighborhoods to protect the electoral process…. These efforts culminated in the merging of Sunni political parties into the Iraqi **Tawafuq Front**, as Sunni leaders believed they could garner more seats in the National Assembly by pooling their resources and running together. The Tawafuq Front ran on a platform that called for insurgent disarmament and coalition withdrawal …
Voter participation increased significantly, from 58 percent in January to 66 percent in October and 75 percent in December.… Sunni participation in Anbar, (rose) to a 86 percent in December." [231]

But even a huge turn out for elections by the Sunni electorate, was not enough to change the government. Moreover a coalition of parties was needed to rule: "Because of a 75 percent overall voter turnout and significant Sunni participation, the makeup of Iraq's governing body shifted. Across the country, Iraqi voters overwhelmingly cast their votes along sectarian lines, ..
The Shi'a **United Iraqi Alliance** (UIA) dropped from 140 to 128 seats, the **Kurdistan Alliance** decreased from 75 to 53 seats, and **Ayad Allawi's** secular **Iraqi National Accord** decreased from 40 to 25 seats. The **Tawafuq Front** and another new Sunni party, the **Iraqi National Dialogue Front**, obtained 44 and 11 seats, respectively. The expanded Sunni parliamentary bloc was led by Tariq Hashimi, the former Muslim Brotherhood leader Adnan Dulaimi, the former Ba'athist Saleh Mutlaq, and Jaysh al-Islami insurgent leader Khalaf Ulayan. With a total of 275 seats in the Council of Representatives, Iraq's new Parliament, no bloc achieved an out-right majority, meaning that Iraq's next government would be a coalition of parties from different sects and ethnicities. " [234]

240.   The government was formed basically, with the same leadership, after intense

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[233] *Rayburn & Sobchak; Ibid; 487-8; 495-496*
[234] *Rayburn and Sobchak: Ibid; p. 509; 534; 556-7*

negotiations. Even then divisions between Talabani and the PM soon became evident. Ja'afri proved overtly anti-Kurdish, especially on Kirkuk's territory being held by Kurds. [229] He also sanctioned brazen attacks on Sunni under cover of 'law', especially in the **Jadriyah bunker** scandal. In this many Sunni were simply held and killed in a facility run by the Interior Ministry's Special Interrogations Unit. [230]

After the Samarra bombings, al-Ja'afri refused to impose a curfew as Shi'ia violence exploded, saying: "The Shi'ia have to blow off steam right now". [231] This fueled retaliatory Sunni violence in a cycle.

Because of his belligerence, he was removed from contention as the leading Shi'ia representative, in May 2006.[229]

Nouri al-Maliki – had been earlier Prime Minister for the Interim Council. He had been an important leader of the Da'wa since 1970. He continued as PM for a total of 8 years, *under pressure from Iran* (*See #230*).

Sadr's faction within the **UIA** – the Shi'ia United front - now tilted the balance, by voting for **Nouri al-Maliki** to be Prime Minister. Al-Maliki was appointed Prime Minister (PM) in 2006.

Sadr would come to regret this support of Maliki, obtained by a crude Iranian promise to ensure Sadr representation in ministries. [223]

A pronounced pro-Shi'ia government from herein on, could only further inflame Sunnis. This was evident by al-Maliki's very sectarian behavior.

Just as Ja'afri had, Maliki obstructed attempts to either restrain Shi'ia violence, or, to arrest Iranian Quds commanders – who were illegally organizing on Iraqi territory.[220, 235]

Despite the support that Sadr had given him, Maliki now pressured the USA to arrest Muqtada, during the so-called "USA Surge" of January 2007.

Maliki assisted here USA imperialism, but also Iranian neo-colonial aspirations. [220, 223] (*see also #230*).

241. Simultaneously, the Iranians demanded and obtained the departure of the USA forces. They also ensured then, that the quid-pro quo - Talabani as the President of Iraq – still applied:

"On December 22, 2010, **James Jeffrey**, the American Ambassador to Iraq, and **General Lloyd Austin**, then top American commander there, issued a note of congratulations to the Iraqi people on the formation of a new government, led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. The country had been without a government for nine months, after parliamentary elections ended in an impasse. …

there were still nearly a hundred thousand American troops in the country, and

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[235] *Patrick Cockburn Ibid; p. 188; 192*

U.S. commanders were still hoping to leave a residual force behind. "We look forward to working with the new coalition government in furthering our common vision of a democratic Iraq," the two men said. …
the crucial deal that brought the Iraqi government together was made not by them but by Suleimani.
In the months before, according to several Iraqi and Western officials, Suleimani invited senior Shiite and Kurdish leaders to meet with him in Tehran and Qom, and extracted from them a promise to support Maliki, his preferred candidate….
In order to bring the cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in line, Suleimani agreed to place his men in the Iraqi service ministries.
Most remarkable, according to the Iraqi and Western officials, were the **two conditions that Suleimani imposed on the Iraqis.**
The first was that Jalal Talabani, a longtime friend of the Iranian regime, become President." [223]
The **second condition** was the withdrawal of USA or coalition troops:
"Suleimani said: no Americans," the former Iraqi leader told me. "A ten-year relationship, down the drain." [223]

242.   Clearly the Iranian negotiators were also exerting pressures on the Kurdish leaders as well:
"The leaders of the two main Kurdish parties, **Massoud Barzani** and **Jalal Talabani**, met regularly with both Suleimani and the Americans. While the Kurds' relationship with the U.S. was usually warm, their ties to Iranian leaders like Suleimani were deeper and more complex; the Iranian regime had sheltered Iraq's Kurds during their war with Saddam. But it was never an equal relationship. Kurdish leaders say that Suleimani's objective has always been to keep Iraq's political parties divided and unstable, insuring that the country stayed weak: the Iran-Iraq War was never far from his mind. "It is very difficult for us to say no to Suleimani," a senior Kurdish official told me. "When we say no, he makes trouble for us. Bombings. Shootings. The Iranians are our neighbors. They've always been there, and they always will be. We have to deal with them." [223]

243.   The deal between the USA and Iran – and the Iraqi leaders - was a heavy blow to **Ayad Allawi**, the pro-American secular politician:
"The Americans pushed him aside in favor of Maliki. He told me that Vice-President Joe Biden called to tell him to abandon his bid for Prime Minister, saying, "You can't form a government."
Allawi said he suspected that the Americans weren't willing to deal with the trouble the Iranians would have made if he had become Prime Minister...
"I needed American support," he said. "But they wanted to leave, and they handed the country to the Iranians. Iraq is a failed state now, an Iranian colony."[223]

244.   Having had their wings clipped by Iran, the USA largely withdrew – that is to say
        most of their troops left - Iraq in 2011.
        However by 2014 the USA again had formal 'boots on Iraqi ground'.
        By 2014, the responding Sunni antagonism had fueled a more violent rebellion
        (termed 'the insurgency') of Sunni and Islamic fundamental elements.
        In 2014, the city of Mosul was captured by **Islamic State in Iraq and Syria**
        (**ISIS**); also known as **Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL).** ISIS conducted
        massacres in Sinjar, where thousands of Yazdi men were killed, abducted; while
        Yazdi women were raped and killed or enslaved. **Dr Noori Abdulrahman**, of the
        Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government, commented that ISIL's actions aimed to
        Arabize the Kurds out of strategic Yazidi areas. [236]

245.   By August 2014, the USA had conducted air-attacks. But much more significantly
        Kurdish ground troops of the PKK and YPG had counter-attacked. It was Kurdish
        fighters who saved many Yazidis (some 50,000). The December 2014 Sinjar
        offensive of the Peshmerga, PKK and YPG forces crippled ISIS's
        communications routes between Mosul and Raqqa. As this battle raged, the Iraqi
        Civil War continued. It was obviously fueled by Maliki's sectarianism.

        We discuss these events in more detail in *Part Three*.

246.   However the anger at al-Maliki's sectarianism, would ultimately force him to step
        down. For periods, there was collaboration against the al-Qaeda forces between
        otherwise opposing major power forces. Air-strikes from the USA and Iraq,
        received Turkish, and Iranian, and Russian assistance:
        "Iraqi Su-25s, manned by Russian or Iranians—or *maybe* Iraqis…. Iraq's skies
        are crowded. A former high-ranking CIA official in Baghdad told Jeff Stein of
        Newsweek that Turkish jets carried out the airstrikes. "There's no question about
        it," he said, adding that "certainly we (i.e. the USA) are giving them targeting
        data." [237]
        By the 9 December 2017, a new Iraqi Prime Minister **Haider al-Abadi** was
        announcing a victory over ISIL. While this was likely premature, no doubt ISIL
        was now reverting to lower scale guerrilla actions, instead of the massed direct
        assaults they had become accustomed to.

247.   Finally, there is now again a mass rising in Iraq.
        Astonishingly after all the sectarian recent history, yet again an 'Iraqi' national
        consciousness has asserted itself.

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[236] *Kurdish official: ISIS Capture of Shingal 'was part of Arabization campaign'". Rudaw.net, 29
December 2014; Cited https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinjar_massacre).*
[237] *Michael Kelley, 'Who else, besides Americans, are flying fighter jets in Iraq?', Business
Insider, 8 Aug 2014; in 'Slate' at: https://slate.com/business/2014/08/who-else-besides-
americans-are-flying-fighter-jets-in-iraq.html*

This time, it is directed **against Iranian hegemony over Iraq**.
Moreover it appears to be a joint Shi'ia and Sunni uprising.

In light of its significance, it is worth citing a lengthy report:
"After weeks of mass protests in Iraq, there are signs that the government's patience is waning. Its current response — a mixture of spending and reform promises combined with violent security measures (at least 320 have been killed and approximately 15,000 injured) — has not placated the demonstrators. Scared by the threat to its interests, the political elite is shifting to sticks alone to quell the protests.

"An incremental crackdown may temper protesters in the short term, but it is unlikely to break the spirit of Iraqi demonstrators. Something has happened in Iraq these past few weeks... Iraqis' patience with a self-serving, inept ruling elite is over. They are no longer scared to demand their rights, … As an Iraqi protester from Baghdad told Al-Monitor, it is a "wakeup call. And there are no more red lines."

… In Baghdad's Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the demonstrations, where protesters have displayed their collective spirit and capabilities in ways that are quintessentially Iraqi….

The demonstrators are showing they are a nation in search of a homeland, and in Tahrir Square, they have shown the world how they want it to be.

While the streets of Baghdad are in disrepair, Tahrir Square boasts a trash service and volunteer street cleaners. Services that the Iraqi state has failed to provide comprehensively, despite multibillion-dollar budgets, have been established: health care, electricity and water. … Outdoor buffets offer free food, and the square has at least one newspaper that publishes the protesters' demands. Signs display an Iraqi humor that has persisted in the face of adversity. The scene has a carnival air similar to the amusement parks all over the country. People dance. They recite poetry and sing historic, patriotic, modern and religious songs. Nearly every wall is covered with murals and clever graffiti depicting protest scenes and slogans. Halls and paintings that have sat in disrepair for years have been brought back to life.

This is rule by the people for the people. Protesters are seizing their country, which was wrenched from them by a corrupt government. In doing so they reaffirm their Iraqiness in the most positive ways. They have even set up reverse checkpoints that welcome citizens but exclude the armed forces. Communities intermingle; different sectors of society stand side by side. Patriotism is on full display. Iraqi flags are everywhere. Women are highly visible. There is a clear rejection of sectarianism, as "Iraqi" identity is emphasized. Everyone helps each other by whatever means — money, chaperones, medical care, internet. There is even a laundry service. And those who cannot or will not protest help in other ways, through donations and supplies.

… It is a show of what Iraqi society could be — al-Iraq al-Musagher (mini Iraq) set on an iconic roundabout.

None of this comes as any surprise to those familiar with Iraq and its people. …Despite their travails, most shared a deep patriotism, one that trumped the religious and communal identities that the mainstream political parties have deployed since 2003 to cement their power. "I never knew if I was Sunni or Shiite growing up" is a common refrain when identity is brought up in conversation." [238]

10. The PKK or KADEK ("Freedom and Democracy Congress of Kurdistan"), or 'Workers' Party of Kurdistan'

In the first part of this section, we again follow Altinoglu's accounts; [239] and his further views from 2003:[240]

The PKK was formed in 1978. It soon showed it would take an opportunist path.

It then followed a policy of overt capitulation vis-a-vis Turkish reaction after the capture of its leader **Abdullah Ocalan** (nicknamed 'Apo') in February 1999. This was accentuated during and after his trial in June of the same year.

Its swings in policy have ranged from ultra-left to right, and reflect its petit bourgeois roots.

The Kurdish question remains at the core of grossly exaggerated Turkish concerns over 'security'. Turkey, one of the most militarized states in the world, waged a 15 year-long (between 1984 and 1999) dirty war against the Kurdish people. The Turkish Kurds were then led by the **PKK (Workers' Party of Kurdistan**). That dirty war rolled over from the cities of Western Turkey where Kurds were attacked in Istanbul, right over into Turkish (or Northern Iraq) Kurdistan (i.e. the 'Safe Havens').

In 2000, **Altinoglu** pointed out:

"The PKK's recent open collaboration with USA imperialism, has long been signalled."

This view finds much resonance in 2019.

i) Early opportunism

248.   Soon after the **PKK** was established in 1978, an extremely **sectarian** line, was pursued. Especially in 1979 and 1980, the PKK launched physical attacks against almost all other revolutionary groups, including the TKP/M-L Harcketi and various Kurdish nationalist groups. Dozens, possibly hundreds of people, from different groups either died or were injured. In response, in 1979 the TKP/M-L

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[238] *Christine McCaffray van den Toorn; "Iraq on display"; al-Monitor ; November 22, 2019;* *https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/11/iraq-protests-government-leadership-crackdown.html#ixzz679Duh873*

[239] *Notes On The History Of MLKP And The Revolutionary Movement In Turkey By Garbis Altinoglu; Alliance Marxist-Leninist (North America) Number 35: August 2000 Http://Ml-Review.Ca/Aml/Allianceissues/All35mlcp%28turkey%29ga2000.Htm*

[240] From: *http://ml-review.ca/aml/PAPER/March2003/KURDISTAN.html Garbis A. As Clouds Gather: Turkey and Kurdistan on the Eve of the US War with Iraq; Alliance Marxist-Leninist (North America); Volume 1, Issue 3; March 2003*

Hareketi CC dubbed the PKK as an "Apoist fascist gang", and argued that the struggle against the PKK was a part and an extension of the struggle against the Turkish state. This, of course, was incorrect, but this line was held until May 1991, even after guerilla warfare had started in 1984. The MLKP, also adopted this latter position, in violation of its Programme and the directives of the Unity Congress.

249.   Yet an opportunist behaviour of the PKK leadership soon emerged. In October the 13th, 1995, **Ocalan** sent a letter to US President **Bill Clinton** urging him to "exert his persuasive weight" on Turkey, and to assist in "stopping the massacre of a people." In that letter, Ocalan also stressed that his party was "ideologically different from classical communist parties" and his party was:
"not insisting on changing the frontiers of Turkey and were not for secession from that country."

250.   At least from 1995, if not before, the PKK leadership was continuously underlining its aim to come to terms with Turkish reaction and imperialism in return for the simplest of democratic reforms, such as the recognition of the national identity of Kurdish people.
It was systematically trying to assure them (i.e. Turkish reactionaries) of the PKK's "peaceful" intentions and its readiness and eagerness to cooperate in maintaining "stability." For example, in an interview given in December 1995, Ocalan called on all political forces in Turkey to come to a "concensus".
In an interview given in December 1995, Ocalan called on all political forces in Turkey to come to a consensus.

He stated a collaborationist theme as following:
"We will call on the army, we will call on the bureaucracy. If you are in favor of a peace project with us, please come together. We will call on socialists, we will call on liberals. Let's give an end to this foolish course of events; there exists a common ground. We can find a consensus, a conciliation; we all have our stake in this." [241]

Later phrasing used the term a "united left party" or a "democratic bloc". As late as 2002, **Cemil Baylik**, of the Presidential Council of the PKK stated:
" PKK is for the establishment of such a party, which is urgently needed in Turkey; it wants to accomplish this task together with all left and democratic forces... " [242]

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[241] *Dirilil Tamamlandi, Sira Kurtulusta, p. 284*

[242] *Ozgur Politika, 3 February 2002; Cited by Garbis Altinoglu in "A Proposal For A Revolutionary Way Out Of The Crisis; (Slightly Abridged Translation Of The Original Turkish Document "Bunaluntlan Devrimci Cikis Onerisi"); in Alliance 50 December 2002; at: http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALLIANCE50_TURKISHREVOLUTIONARYMOVEMENT.htm*

251.   Regrettably but consistently, the Marxist-Leninist left _unquestioningly_ followed the PKK. A Menshevik and democratist line of the **Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Turkey (MLKP)** leadership showed itself in the case of the **Kurdish national question.** Here, right from the start, it followed a tail-ist policy and kowtowed to the leadership of the Kurdish national movement.
By this is meant that it restricted the Party's role almost solely to supporting the just demands of the oppressed nation and its petty-bourgeois leadership.

Besides, the Party leadership followed a progressively more conciliatory line concerning Kurdish nationalism, which as time passed began bordering on unconditional support and outright flattery. Disgracefully caving in to the PKK leadership and in accordance with its inherent tendency to worship spontaneity, other sections of the left followed.
For example, the MLKP underestimated the revolutionary potential of Turkish working class and toilers and went as far as blaming and censuring them, especially for not actively supporting Kurdish national movement. It failed to criticize firmly and openly the growing flirtations of the PKK leadership with imperialists and certain sections of Turkish bourgeoisie; further, the Party leadership failed to recognize and therefore expose the growing reformism and approaching treason of A. Ocalan.

ii) The 1999 capture of Ocalan and his public recantation – call it treason

252.   The line of reformism and compromise followed by the Kurdish national liberation movement led by the PKK further deepened in the wake of the **capture** of its autocratic leader Abdullah Ocalan in February 1999.

The Kurdish resistance inside Turkey, came to an end after the capture of A. Ocalan, was effected with the assistance of the CIA.
Despite strong denials from the United States and Israel, it appears that Ankara was able to call on the service of the American and Israeli intelligence services to keep track of Mr. Öcalan's movements across Europe and to provide positive proof that he was in hiding inside a Greek diplomatic compound in Nairobi…
(Although) the full story behind the plot to kidnap Mr. Öcalan was being deliberately 'muddied' yesterday by all involved (*The Times, 18 February 1999).* [243]

253.   The PKK line evolved into a line of capitulation and alliance with imperialism and Turkish reaction.

Unfortunately, the pro-Kurdish **HADEP ("People's Democracy Party**"), which is very close to the **PKK/KADEK**, followed a similar line of collaboration with Turkish reaction and imperialism, despite being systematically snubbed,

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[243] *Özcan, Ali Kemal. Turkey's Kurds : A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan, Routledge, 2005; p.13.*

humiliated and persecuted by the former.

HADEP has been campaigning for the membership of Turkey in the EU and trying to present this course as the panacea for all the economic and political problems Kurdish and Turkish workers and toilers have been facing.

254.   Regrettably, several leading Marxist-Leninist organisations filed into blind alleys behind the PKK. The MLKP leadership, in effect became *subservient* to the leadership of the PKK.

Even after Ocalan, openly and shamefully capitulated to Turkish fascism at the court and called for the cessation of armed struggle and in fact of all struggle, against Turkish colonialism, the MLKP CC still hesitated and vacillated before condemning him openly. The pro-Kurdish nationalist and tailist policy of the MLKP leadership distorted and enabled degeneration of the united front policy. In 1998, the MLKP played a very important role in the formation of a block (**BDGP)** of a number of revolutionary and progressive forces. [244] Yet it was passive and allowed the PKK to be the main force.

255.   This reformist viewpoint, was contrary to the Programme of the MLKP Party, which stated:

"31- The communist movement considers the struggle for democracy an extremely important, but always and under all circumstances a subsidiary task; a transitory task to be subordinated to the aim of socialist revolution. For this reason, while on the one hand supporting Kurdish national, democratic peasant, democratic women's and other general democratic people's movements and defending their demands, on the other hand, it unites Kurdish workers, agricultural workers and woman workers in class organizations separately from the general democratic movement. Revolutionary proletariat subordinates struggle for reforms to struggle for revolution and treats democratic tasks with a socialist perspective."

256.   Since 1999, the PKK stopped its armed struggle, or rather any struggle against Turkish fascism and colonialism.

It renounced its political line of resistance against national oppression.

It renounced almost all its national-democratic demands, save the recognition of Kurdish national identity and the right to use Kurdish language.

This line of appeasement and capitulation, however, did not produce any "positive" response on the part of Turkish reaction. The moves left Kurdish masses as angry and distrustful of their oppressors as ever.

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[244] *This block included the PKK, the TKP (M-L) and the TKP/M-L "plus some extremely weak groups trying to maintain themselves by leaning on and extolling the PKK"; Altinoglu Ibid.*

257.   On Iraq, the PKK leadership tried to manufacture consent among the Kurdish masses for two counter-revolutionary, but at the same time - somewhat contradictory aims of US imperialists and Turkish militarists.
For instance, the declaration of the 5th Plenum of the Party Assembly of the PKK (held in late January 2002) stated:
"The ongoing struggle over the character of the system in Iraq shall determine that of the Middle East and that in turn shall determine the basic criteria and features of the international system. We can clearly see the fact that the struggle being waged on Iraq has a regional and international character and this struggle is a one between the old system and the new system, between the old status quo and the new status quo. In the coming period, the struggle shall continue to further intensify both on political and military planes and without doubt our Party and our people shall side with the front for change which aims to establish a new system and not with that of old status quo, which reject the Kurds and want to destroy them. Our Party and people shall not side with the front for repression, division and terror, but with that of democracy, peace and free union. They will do so, because the interests of both Kurdish people and those of the peoples of the region and of the democratic forces of the world dictate such a turn of the events." [245]

iii) The PKK Complicity with the USA Iraq war aims

258.   But at the same time **Murat Karayilan** – a member of the Presidential Council – made this statement after 9/11 2001:
"It now has become clear that, the US is promoting a new concept in the wake of this event. It wants to make a rearrangement in several countries and regions of the world, especially in the Middle East and Caucasia... Therefore, Kurds have to follow these new developments carefully and seize a place for themselves. This is our approach....
"If a plan is put forward with regard to Iraq, this new step shall have its impact on Southern Kurdistan (Northern Iraq). Now there are two alternatives: In the operation against Iraq, who shall be assigned the main task, Kurds of the South or the Turkish arm),?" [246]

259.   Reiterating its support for the US intervention in and coming aggression Iraq, the declaration of the 5th Plenum of the Party Assembly of the PKK (held late January 2002) told us:
"The struggle for the nature of the system in Iraq shall determine that of the Middle East and that in turn shall determine the basic criteria and features- of the international system. We can clearly see the fact that the struggle waging on Iraq has a regional and international character and this struggle is a one between the old system and the new system, between the old status quo and the new status quo. During the coming period, the struggle shall continue to sharpen even more

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[245] *Ozgur Politika, 6 February 2002*
[246] *Ozgur Politika, 2 October 2001*

both on political and military planes and *no doubt our Party and our people shall side with the front for change which aims to establish a new system, not with that of old status quo, which reject the Kurds and want to destroy them. And our Party and people shall not side with the front for repression, division and terror, but with that of democracy, peace and free union.* They will do so, because the interests of both Kurdish people and those of the peoples of the region and of the democratic forces of the world lie in this state of affairs." [247]

PKK/KADEK maintained this **pro-imperialist position** vis-a-vis the solution of the Middle Eastern question.

260. In an article published in the July 2002 issue of the central organ of the organization, the PKK/KADEK leadership defended an American intervention in the region as a whole and went so far as to criticize the PUK and the KPD for not giving full and whole-hearted support for an imperialist war against Iraq:
"KADEK, the vanguard of democracy, is fighting regional reaction. Ruling forces, who bear responsibility for the exacerbation of problems, do not approve of an intervention by the US and its allies in the region and attempt to prevent such an eventuality. Ruling forces in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria and other countries of the region feel obliged to form an alliance among themselves in an attempt to prevent intervention. The PUK and the KDP, which represent the local power in Southern Kurdistan are vacillating on the question of supporting the intervention." [248]

It is obvious that, the PKK/KADEK represented a *more* pro-imperialistic, *more* war-mongering and *more* rightist political line than that of the traditional reactionary parties, such as the KDP and the PUK.
On the other hand, it was doubtful, whether the PKK/KADEK, which had been losing the trust of Kurdish people, could gain the trust of imperialism and reaction by preaching such an extremely disgraceful and disgusting stand.

261. However, even so, the Turkish army was not able to defeat and rout the 15,000-strong guerilla force militarily despite conducting massacres, torture etc. on a massive scale, with the support of the US and Western Europe.
The war craze of Yankee imperialism and their designs over the Middle East both raised the spirits of, and alarmed - the Turkish ruling classes.
They were (and are today) very afraid of a revival of Kurdish national liberation war within Turkey and that of the united struggle of Kurdish people in Turkey and Iraq.
Even in October 2002, **H. Kivrikoglu**, the Turkish Chief of Staff was already warning the USA:

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[247] *Ozgur Politika, 6 February 2002*

[248] *"At the Root of the Impasse in Middle East Stand the Exhausted Regimes", Serxwebun ("Independence"), July 2002*

"We cannot know what the US thinks about the current situation in Iraq. But we cannot accept the de facto establishment of a Kurdish state in any case." [240]

iv) Turkey and PKK inside the 'Safe Havens'

262.   In the course of American plans of war against the peoples of Iraq and the region, PKK (whose name was changed to **KADEK**) was compelled to change its tactics vis-a-vis the US and Turkey. As discussed above, since 1999, PKK/KADEK became openly capitulationist.
It strived either for a so-called democratic compromise with Turkish reactionaries in return for a few crumbs; or,
it tried to offer the US its services for the USA plan of invasion of Iraq.
In return, KADEK leadership expected nothing more than to be in Washington's good graces and some minor concessions for Iraqi Kurds.
Not only Turkey, but the USA as well, rejected the overtures of the KADEK, whose guerillas had stopped armed struggle since 1999; and withdrew from Turkish soil and remained in their bases in Northern Iraq.

263.   In conjunction with its war on Iraq and due to the pressures of Turkey (their old ally and lackey) and their own preference to favor the reactionary Kurdish pro-US groups (**Democratic Party of Kurdistan** led by **Barzani** and **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan** led by **Talabani**), the US imperialists decided to allow a systematic Turkish operation against KADEK guerillas.

264.   With no more room to maneuver, KADEK leadership began in January 2003, to issue warnings that it would restart a legitimate struggle against Turkey, including armed struggle.
Such warnings, however, were of dubious value, especially in view of the level of degeneration of the KADEK leadership and its continued efforts to beg the Americans for a place in the crusade against Iraq.
Later, the Turkish authorities admitted to the presence of thousands of Turkish troops inside Iraq, which they planned to support by a further 120,000 massed on the Turkish-Iraqi border.
It seemed that, the Turkish plans were that as the eyes of the world were fixed on the American war against Iraq, the Turkish army would regain its prize: the destruction of the KADEK guerilla force in Northern Iraq. This was not going to be an easy task.

265.   The US imperialists deftly played on the fear of their Turkish vassals with respect to the Kurdish question, to ensure Ankara's participation in the war against Iraq.
In the aftermath of the Gulf War of 1991, the power vacuum in Northern Iraq helped the PKK to grow rapidly, acquire heavy weapons and to pose a real threat to Turkish fascists.

Under today's (circa 2003) explosive conditions prevailing in Turkey, any such revival might have provided an aperture through which the accumulated discontent of workers and toilers in Turkey itself, could be translated into mass action.

That is why, Turkish fascists were (and still are now) so opposed to any moves towards the establishment of a Kurdish state and even any semblance of Kurdish autonomy in Northern Iraq. They are also suspicious of the arming of Kurdish fighters of Barzani and Talabani factions by the US, and are insistent on disarming them at the end of the war against the Baghdad regime.

266.   Turkish preparations to deploy an even greater number of troops in Northern Iraq, on the other hand, infuriated the Kurdish factions, who stood to lose the virtual autonomy they have enjoyed over the last 12 years. Kurdish factions, who have declared themselves in favor of 'a united federal democratic Iraq' raised their voices over Turkey's expansionist plans.

On February 22nd, **Osman Ocalan**, a member of the Presidential Council of KADEK, criticized the other Kurdish factions for their hostile attitude towards KADEK and called for 'national unity.'

The Kurdistan Regional Government's deputy Prime Minister, **Sami Abdul Rahman** said in a press conference on February 24th, that there were "disturbing" signs emerging from talks between the US and Turkey, as the Turkish military pushed for a key role in Iraqi Kurdistan. Rahman added: "We feel less threat from the regime of Baghdad than from the current threat of Turkish occupation. Saddam has killed many of our people. He can kill more Kurds ... but this Turkish occupation, if it happens and I hope it will never happen, is aimed at strangling the hopes and aspirations of our people. Turkey is responsible for killing more than 100,000 Kurds in its bloody war with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). More than 5000 Kurdish villages have been destroyed by Turkey in North Kurdistan (Turkish Kurdistan)." [240]

v) Continuing Kurdish kow-towing to the USA – the Kurdish Regional Governments as 'outposts' of the USA

267.   On February 25th 2003, the Kurdish parliament in Northern Iraq held an extraordinary session after the Turkish cabinet approved a decision to allow the deployment of foreign forces and of sending Turkish troops abroad. The Kurds rejected the entry of foreign forces into the region by an overwhelming vote. The same day **Massoud Barzani** and **Jalal Talabani** sent a letter to the Bush administration requesting protection from Turkish forces in the region. [240]

268.   The new balance of forces in favor of US imperialists, emboldened Barzani and Talabani factions in their opposition to Turkey. As was expected, they planned to enjoy the fruits of their cooperation with the Americans. Nevertheless, in view of their unstable, inconsistent and constantly shifting positions and policies, Barzani and Talabani factions remained open to cooperation with Turkish reactionaries.

Until very recently, there were reports to the effect that, these two parties were once again working together with Turkish troops in Northern Iraq in their efforts to encircle and destroy KADEK guerillas.

269. The efforts of Turkish fascists to bolster the position of a small **Turkoman** minority as a counterweight against Kurds; to insist on according the same political status to Turkomans as Arabs and Kurds in a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq; and their long-term plans to change the population composition of Northern Iraq, contributed to the legitimate doubts of Kurdish people and parties.

270. The KPD and PUK rightfully feared the negative consequences of a possible American-Turkish action against Iraq and therefore they also vacillated.
They knew that, whatever the result of such an operation, it would greatly endanger their own position because, it would bring death and destruction to peoples of Iraq, including Kurdish people, encourage permanent Turkish occupation of at least part of their territory and lead to the radicalization of the Kurdish masses.
Therefore, the **KPD and PUK** wanted international guarantees to join the war on the side of the USA. Apart from being manipulated and repressed by Turkish, Iraqi, Iranian and Syrian ruling classes, they had been repeatedly betrayed by US imperialists. They were especially anxious about a possible Iraqi reprisal, as well as the aggression of Turkish expansionists.

271. And yet, shortly after, a new alliance between the Kurdish factions (including the PKK/KADEK) and the USA, was mooted. Again, this was better described as the subjection of the Kurdish groups to American strategy.
Cooperation of this or that particular Kurdish faction with the US for the dismemberment of Iraq was always unacceptable in principle, and a very short-sided act. At least – from the point of view of the true interests of the Kurdish people as a whole.

In 2003, it was already clear that whatever the results of the US campaign, this kow-towing of Kurds to the USA, would further strain the relations between Arab and Kurdish peoples. The Kurds did struggle with the perception, that they were seen as "American outposts". It also rendered an alliance of the just struggles of Palestinian and Kurdish peoples, much more difficult.

In 2003, **Altinoglu** advised: "In the present circumstances of the US-led imperialist crusade against Islamic peoples, Kurdish people cannot risk being portrayed as part of an "imperialist-Zionist campaign to weaken the Arab nation". As to the US or international "guarantees", they have never been worth the paper they are written on anyway."

272. International guarantees cannot help Kurdish people or any other oppressed

nation. As the historical experience has abundantly shown, only through an alliance of workers and toilers of the oppressed and oppressing nations and through relying on the masses, under the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, can oppressed nations realize their democratic and national aspirations. **Altinoglu** predicted: "If the KPD and PUK leaderships continue to tread the treacherous road of alliance with or rather servility to imperialism, they will lead their nation once more to a defeat, calamity and massacre." This has come to pass now in 2019.

273.   Marxist-Leninists and all consistent democrats are against the interference of the imperialist powers in the internal affairs of other and weaker countries and entirely reject their attempts at changing the regimes and frontiers of these countries, under the pretext of assisting oppressed nations or minorities.

   In 2003, they opposed the ongoing criminal trade embargo and imposition of so-called no-fly zones on Iraq and the bombing of this country by the US and British bandits with impunity. They also opposed the dispatch of the UN weapons inspectors and definitely rejected all US plans to attack Iraq, break it up, depose its government and install a puppet regime there.

274.   In the concrete circumstances, when the KPD and PUK became part of the strategy of US imperialists to "destabilize" and break up Iraq, to strengthen Washington's control over the oil resources of the Middle East:
   it was incorrect in 2003, to support the then struggle of the KPD and PUK for greater autonomy or independence within the semi-autonomous Iraqi regions of the Kurdish Regional Governments. It remains incorrect now.

275.   In 2003, the only truly and consistent democratic solution to the Kurdish and Iraqi questions was then (and is now) through the advance of the independent struggle of Kurdish, Arabic, Shiite, Turkoman etc. workers and toilers not only against Saddam Hussein fascist clique, but also against the US and other imperialists, Turkish expansionists etc.
   Now in 2019, this path against imperialism, <u>still</u> remains the only way, to foil the Middle Eastern plans of the USA imperialists and the local imperialism such as Iran.
   Only this can ensure the success of the national and social liberation struggles of workers and toilers of all nationalities. This is also the only way, to truly defend the sovereignty of Iraq in the face of both USA imperialist aggression and Iranian control. Reactionary semi-feudal warlords, such as Barzani and Talabani cannot accomplish this task.

11. Conclusions
We said in the preface that rather than cite the classics, we would evaluate the historical facts, when considering the Kurdish movement. We have done this. Still, against the

liberals and skeptics, it is remarkable just how robust the classics prove to be, in regards to the national liberation struggle – of Iraq – or of Kurdistan.

Therefore we take the liberty, to here succinctly remind Marxist-Leninists of key lessons from the classics, that bear upon our findings in the recent history of the Kurdish movement and Iraq.

First: we should recall that nations have their own history – that they both come into being and some can and do, pass away:

> "It goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end..." [249]

> "There is no doubt that in the early stages of capitalism nations become welded together. But there is also no doubt that in the higher stages of capitalism a process of dispersion of nations sets in, a process whereby a whole number of groups separate off from the nations, going off in search of a livelihood and subsequently settling permanently in other regions of the state; in the course of this these settlers lose their old connections and acquire new ones in their new domicile, and from generation to generation acquire new habits and new tastes, and possibly a new language. The question arises: is it possible to unite into a single national union groups that have grown so distinct? Where are the magic links to unite what cannot be united? Is it conceivable that, for instance, the Germans of the Baltic Provinces and the Germans of Transcaucasia can be "united into a single nation"? But if it is not conceivable and not possible, wherein does national autonomy differ from the utopia of the old nationalists, who endeavoured to turn back the wheel of history?" [250]

Second **not all** 'nations' in development necessarily serve the progressive cause. For example, for Marx and Engels, Poland was a situation where the revolutionary cause in Europe depended partly, upon a national liberation. But in their view, this was explicitly not the case for the so-called pan-Slavic movement. For Poland:

> ""Indeed, the reunification of Poland lies in the interests of revolutionary Russia….Marx spoke to this effect:
> 'The workers' party of Europe takes the most decisive interest in the emancipation of Poland and the original programme of the International

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[249] *J. V. Stalin; "Marxism and the National Question. I. The Nation'; 1913; In Works; Moscow 1946; p. 307; ; at: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03a.htm#s1*

[250] *J. V. Stalin; "Marxism and the National Question. iv. Cultural-National Autonomy'; 1913; In Works; Moscow 1946; p. 334-335; at: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03a.htm#s1*

Working Men's Association expresses the reunification of Poland as a working-class political aim. What are the reasons for this special interest of the workers' party in the fate of Poland?

'First of all, of course, sympathy for a subjugated people which, with its incessant and heroic struggle against its oppressors, has proven its historic right to national autonomy and self-determination. It is not in the least a contradiction that the *international* workers' party strives for the creation of the Polish nation. On the contrary; only after Poland has won its independence again, only after it is able to govern itself again as a free people, only then can its inner development begin again and can it cooperate as an independent force in the social transformation of Europe. As long as the independent life of a nation is suppressed by a foreign conqueror it inevitably directs all its strength, all its efforts and all its energy against the external enemy; during this time, therefore, its inner life remains paralysed; it is incapable of working for social emancipation. Ireland, and Russia under Mongol rule, provide striking proof of this.

'Another reason for the sympathy felt by the workers' party for the Polish uprising is its particular geographic, military and historical position. The partition of Poland is the cement which holds together the three great military despots: Russia, Prussia and Austria. Only the rebirth of Poland can tear these bonds apart and thereby remove the greatest obstacle in the way to the social emancipation of the European peoples.

'The main reason for the sympathy felt by the working class for Poland is, however, this: Poland is not only, the only Slav race which has fought and is fighting as a *cosmopolitan soldier of the revolution*. Poland spilt its blood in the American War of Independence; its legions fought under the banner of the first French republic; with its revolution of 1830 it prevented the invasion of France, which had been decided upon by the partitioners of Poland; in 1846 in Cracow it was the first to plant the banner of revolution in Europe, in 1848 it had a glorious share in the revolutionary struggles in Hungary, Germany and Italy; finally, in 1871 it provided the Paris Commune with the best generals and the most heroic soldiers….

'*Long live Poland!*' [251]

In contrast was the istuation for the pan-Slavists:

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[251] *Marx's Speech as reported by Engels; 'For Poland'; delivered on 24 March, 1875; From: "Speeches by Marx and Engels on Poland"; at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/03/24.htm*

"The Russian Pan-slavs… take Russia's Pan-slav vocation for granted… In reality however Pan-slavism is an imposture, a bid for world hegemony under the cloak of a non-existent *Slavic* nationality, and it is our, and the Russians' worst enemy.… A Pan-slav war, as the last sheet-anchor of Russian Tsarism and Russian reaction, is presently in preparation; … if (war) does break out there is one thing of which we may be certain, namely the splendid progress in the direction of revolution in Germany, Austria and Russia itself, will be totally disrupted and forced into other, and quite unpredictable channels... Hence, Pan-slavism is now, more than ever our mortal enemy, despite.. its having one foot in the grave. For the Katkovs, Aksakovs, Ignatievs and Co. know that their empire will be gone for ever the moment Tsarisdom is overthrown and the stage taken by the Russian people. Hence this ardent desire for war, at a moment when the treasury contains less than nothing and not a banker is willing to advance the Russian government so much as a penny. That is precisely why the Pan-slavs have a mortal hatred for the Poles. Being the only *anti*-Pan-slav Slavs, they are consequently traitors to the sacred cause of Slavdom and they must be forcibly incorporated into into the Greater Slav Tsardom, of which the the future capital is Tsarigrad, i.e. Constantinople.Now you, may perhaps ask me whether I have no feelings of sympathy for the small Slav peoples, and fragments thereof which have been split apart by those three wedges driven - the Germans, the Magyars and the Turkish – driven into Slav domains? To tell the truth, damned little. The Czecho-Slovak cry of distress '*Boze ach nikdo nenj' na zemi Ktoby Slavum* [sic] *spravedlivost cinil?*' ['Oh God, ther's no man on earth who would see that justice be done to the Slavs?'] has answered by Petersburg, and the entire Czech national movement cherishes the aspiration that the Tsar should *spraviedlivost ciniti* [see that justice be done d]. The same applies to the others - Serbs, Bulgarians, Slovenes, Galician Ruthenes (at least some of them). But these are aims of a kind we cannot support. Only when the collapse of Tsarism frees the nationalist aspirations of these diminutive peoples from their entanglement in Pan-slav hegemonic tendencies, only then we can let them do as they please and, in the case of most of the Austro-Hungarian Slavs, I am sure that six months of independence will suffice to bring them begging for re-admittance. But in no cirucmstances will these little nationalities be grnated the right they are presently arrogating to themselves in Serbia, Bulgaria and East Rumelia - of preventing, that is, the extension of the European railroad network to Constantinople." [252]

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[252] *Engels F; 'Engels to Karl Kautsky, 7 February 1882, London; 'Collected Works';*

The political meaning for progressives and Marxist-Leninists of the national question in any specific country was critical:

> "The dismemberment of Poland established the Holy Alliance which acted as a mantle for the ascendancy of the czar over all the governments of Europe. For that reason, therefore, the cry, "Long live Poland" indicated: death to the Holy Alliance, death to the supporters of militarized Russia, Prussia and Austria, death to the Mongolian rule over contemporary society." [253]

Thirdly: Support for a national liberation movement by Marxist-Leninists is not contingent on whether that movement is led by proletarian revolutionaries or not:

> "The revolutionary character of a national movement under the conditions of imperialist oppression does not necessarily presuppose the existence of proletarian elements in the movement, the existence of a revolutionary or a republican program of the movement, the existence of a democratic basis of the movement. The struggle the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for the independence of Afghanistan is objectively a revolutionary struggle, despite the monarchist views of the Emir and his associates, for it weakens, disintegrates and undermines imperialism... "[254]

Fourth: the communists in a country of either colonial or neo-colonial type, undergoing the national liberations struggle must join in principled united fronts:

> "Hence the task of the communist elements in the colonial countries is to link up with the revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie, and above all with the peasantry, against the bloc of imperialism and the compromising elements of "their own" bourgeoisie, in order, under the leadership of the proletariat, to wage a genuinely revolutionary struggle for liberation from imperialism." [255]

Finally, the communists in assessing such fronts must consider and avoid two

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Volume 46; New York; pp.193-196; 1992; [NB: A version of differing translation is at: "Nationalism, Internationalism and the Polish Question"; at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1882/letters/82_02_07.htm]

[253] *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Paul Lafargue, F. Lessner, "A Letter to the Polish Socialists"; London, 27th September, 1880; at:* https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/11/27.htm

[254] *J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", Problems of Leninism, Moscow, 1940, p. 53*

[255] J. V. Stalin; "*The Results of the Work of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) Report Delivered at a Meeting of the Active of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B.) May 9, 1925 The Immediate Tasks of the Communist Elements in the Colonial and Dependent Countries;" In Works Volume 7; Moscow 1954; p.108-9. Also at: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1925/05/09.htm#III_*

deviations:

> "The first deviation lies in an under-estimation of the revolutionary potentialities of the liberation movement and in an over-estimation of the idea of a united, all-embracing national front in the colonies and dependent countries, irrespective of the state and degree of development of those countries. That is a deviation to the Right, and it is fraught with the danger of the revolutionary movement being debased and of the voices of the communist elements becoming drowned in the general chorus of the bourgeois nationalists. It is the direct duty of the University of the Peoples of the East to wage a determined struggle against that deviation.
>
> The second deviation lies in an over-estimation of the revolutionary potentialities of the liberation movement and in an under-estimation of the role of an alliance between the working class and the revolutionary bourgeoisie against imperialism. It seems to me that the Communists in Java, who not long ago mistakenly put forward the slogan of Soviet power for their country, arc suffering from this deviation. That is a deviation to the Left, and it is fraught with the danger of the Communist Party becoming divorced from the masses and converted into a sect. A determined struggle against that deviation is an essential condition for the training of real revolutionary cadres for the colonies and dependent countries of the East." [256]

In the next final installment of this work, we examine Syria's fascist regime of the Assad family, the dreadfully brutal civil war, the stomping out of the Syrian revolution, and the games of imperialists (primarily the USA, Russia and Iran). We will also better characterize the nature of the Iranian state. Finally we will bring our account of the PKK up to date, with its descent into anarchy – and describe how Rojava fitted the plans of the USA imperialists. That is to say, until Trump decided they didn't…..

December 15, 2019

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[256] *J.V. Stalin; "The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East - Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East II. The Tasks of the Communist University Of the Toilers of the East in Relation to the Colonial and Dependent Countries of the East"; Works Moscow 1954; Volume 7, p. 154. Also at:* https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1925/05/18.htm