

An aerial photograph of Baghdad, Iraq, taken during the golden hour of sunset. The city's dense urban landscape is visible, with the prominent TV tower standing out against the hazy, orange sky. The overall mood is serene and historical.

**A
DOCUMENTARY
HISTORY
OF
MODERN IRAQ**

EDITED BY STACY E. HOLDEN

A decorative geometric pattern at the bottom of the cover, consisting of interlocking triangles and polygons in shades of purple and black, creating a star-like effect.

A Documentary History of Modern Iraq



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Edited by Stacy E. Holden

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Introduction

In 1903, a Baghdadi woman named Regina wed a local boy, and the story of their marriage begins this exploration of the history of Modern Iraq via primary source documents. Regina was a Jewish woman educated in a French school called the Alliance Israelite. She adhered to Western traditions, insisting, for example, on getting married in the white dress of Europeans, and not the brightly colored costume normally worn by Jewish brides in Baghdad. In doing so, she went against the wishes of her family, but Regina, touting her status as an educated woman, held firm against their pressures. Her husband, in contrast, chose to wear traditional clothes, until, that is, his young wife took control of his wardrobe and began dressing him in suits. Once they had a son, Regina, remembering the daily lessons learned at the Alliance Israelite, implemented Western concepts of hygiene, and so, much to the chagrin of her mother-in-law, she bathed her child daily. In this way, Regina was much more than a witness to Iraq's history; she was an independent agent of historical process and change.

This anthology relates the story of Iraq's long and complicated history through the stories of many different individuals like Regina, the people who actually experienced historical change and also contributed to it. Although a fairly simple tale, the story of this marriage underscores some important themes in Iraqi history. For example, Regina's story demonstrates the social influence of women, which may surprise those who conceptualize Iraq as a patriarchal society. Further, it shows the early encroachment of the West in Baghdad, a city that was, even at the turn of the twentieth century, cosmopolitan and having non-negligible ties to the outside world. It also illustrates the influence of Jewish peoples in this Islamic land, and Jews would remain an important religious minority in Iraq up until the late 1960s. The story of Regina begs the following questions: How would people in Iraq deal with encroaching Western influences? What role would minorities play in the sociopolitical and economic development of Iraq? How would Iraqis define themselves as a people and even as a nation?

This introduction provides readers with an overview of the Iraqi past and with a glimpse of the documents used to illuminate that history. This anthology follows Iraq's history from Ottoman rule in 1903 to the implementation of the Coalition Provisional Authority in 2003. In detailing the history of modern Iraq, this introduction responds loosely to the following question: How would the diverse population of this multiethnic and multisectarian state forge a coherent nation loyal to a unified state? Based on the documents collected in this anthology, it is clear that the persistence of communal identities based on ethnic and religious affiliation has undermined Iraq's struggle to forge a unified national identity.

The marriage of Regina took place just as the history of modern Iraq begins. At that time, this territory consisted of three distinct provinces in an imperial realm called the Ottoman Empire. Iraq, an area then referred to as Mesopotamia, comprised 168,000 square miles (Marr, 8). The three Ottoman provinces in Mesopotamia each centered on a principal city. There was the province of Basra in the coastal south, the province of Baghdad in the central plains, and the province of Mosul in the mountainous north. By 1903, these three provinces had been under Ottoman rule for almost four hundred years. From their capital in Istanbul, the Ottoman Sultans implemented a system of decentralized rule. In this way, they appointed *valis*, or governors, to act in their stead in the provinces.

In 1903, the three governors ruling over the Mesopotamian provinces needed to mediate the sociopolitical and economic interests of a diverse population numbering approximately 2.2 million people (Marr, 8). Then, as now, the population of this area consisted primarily of three distinct groups: Sunni Arabs, Shi'i Arabs, and the Kurds. Sunni Arabs represented 20 percent of the population, and they were found principally in the Baghdad province. The Arab-speaking Shi'is found in the coastal south represented 60 percent of Iraq's population. And the Kurds of the mountainous north represented as much as 25 percent of Iraq's population (Yildiz, 9). There were, however, also a number of smaller ethnic and religious minorities, and these included not only the Jewish community into which Regina was born but also a number of syncretic and Christian sects. Thus, the provinces were home to small groups like the angel-worshipping Yazidis of the north or the Armenian or Chaldean Christians of the south.

The Ottoman world into which Regina was born privileged Sunni Arabs, even though they were a distinct minority when compared to the Shi'i Arabs. The difference between Sunnis and Shi'is is not a spiritual one, for both subgroups follow the basic precepts of Islam set out by the Prophet Muhammad in the early seventh century. Instead, the historic division between these two subgroups, at

least in Iraq, stems from a set of very temporal political considerations focused on the wielding of power within the empire. The Ottomans questioned the loyalties of Shi'is because they, unlike the Sunnis, adhered to a doctrine of the Imamate. According to Shi'i beliefs about this doctrine, clerics are conceptualized as divinely inspired and so worthy of wielding tangible political influence in this world. Such a doctrine may well lead Shi'i clerics to believe that they have the authority to question the policies and practices of rulers.

The Ottoman Empire fought several wars with Persia in the nineteenth century, and this aggravated and deepened intersectarian divisions in Mesopotamia. Many of the most influential Shi'i clerics resided in Persia (present-day Iran), an imperial territory to the east of Iraq. And so, the Ottomans kept the Shi'is out of the empire's army and administration for a set of very temporal reasons, namely they feared that Shi'i loyalties lay with the clerics and rulers in their erstwhile Persian enemy found to the east. Thus, the officer corps and state administration was filled with Sunnis, not Shi'is. Jafar al-Askari, for example, served the Ottomans with honor, even though he recognized a corruption in the administration.

The Kurds of Iraq live in the north, and they have long held secessionist aspirations. Indeed, many Kurdish tribes, like the Hamavads, fought the Ottoman army in the early twentieth century in order to avoid efforts to centralize the imperial polity. Large numbers of Kurds are also found in Syria, Turkey, and Iran, and together these lands are often called Kurdistan. These lands are mountainous, and the resulting isolation has allowed the Kurds to maintain their own language and their own cultural traditions. Most Iraqi Kurds are Sunni, but there has historically been tension with their Arab counterparts, who monopolized the structures of the state.

The diverse world into which Regina was born does not end with these three large ethnic or religious groups, for there were also a number of smaller minorities residing in the three Mesopotamian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Presently, 3 percent of the Iraqi population is either a syncretic sect or Christian. A syncretic sect, like the northern Yazidis, a small group numbering 100,000 people, mixes elements from different religions (Ghareeb, 247). Yazidis, for example, who practice a form of angel worship, have incorporated dietary regulations from Judaism, pilgrimage practices from Islam, and eucharistic rites from Christianity (Ghareeb, 247). And many Iraqis were—and still are—Christian. These groups include: Chaldeans, Assyrians, Armenians, Jacobites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, and Latin Catholics (Marr, 17).

The overall percentage of religious minorities used to be much higher, for, as depicted in Regina's story, a thriving Jewish community once lived in Iraq. Indeed, when Regina got married in 1903, 53,000 residents of Baghdad, and

this out of 150,000 total, were estimated to be Jewish (Issawi, 124). Not all Jews, however, lived in Baghdad, for at least 2.5 percent of the general population was Jewish. For example, 20,000 Jews were also ethnic Kurds, and they lived in the mountainous north (Ghareeb, 125). The slow exodus of members of this religious minority takes pride of place in this anthology, for it exemplifies modern Iraq's difficulties to forge a multiethnic and multisectarian national identity transcending communalism.

In retrospect, the world into which Regina was born seems a Golden Age in Iraqi history. The Ottomans tolerated religious diversity within their population, and many Baghdadi Jews thrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Ghareeb, 125). As also revealed in this anthology, Mesopotamia was becoming ever more connected to the West. Thus, Mosul, a seemingly remote corner of Mesopotamia, was visited by British diplomat Lt. Colonel Mark Sykes, who dreamed of uniting the people of these territories via a railroad. Further, the political system of the Ottoman Empire seemed poised to become liberal, which would allow for the formation of political parties transcending communal groupings based on ethnic or religious loyalties. This happened in 1908, when the Sultan Abdelhamid, under pressure by a group called the Young Turks, instituted a parliament in which members were elected within the provinces. In Baghdad, many educated elite welcomed this liberal transformation, sending petitions to the government that called for even more local control over their city. Mesopotamia, it seemed, was building the foundation necessary to develop into a stable democracy with a multiethnic national identity that would unify the diverse groups of this territory.

The West, however, began to assert a pernicious influence in Mesopotamia during World War I, and this arguably impeded the development of a multiethnic and multisectarian national identity. During World War I, the Ottomans sided with the Central Powers, which consisted of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and not the Entente alliance, which consisted of Great Britain, France, and, eventually, the United States. The British, fearing the closure of their access to oil fields in Abadan, immediately occupied coastal Basra and set up a system of foreign rule there. The British then fought to assume control of the rest of Mesopotamia, which impoverished many people and drove them to extreme measures of survival. Lt. Gen. Sir Stanley Maude, however, who led British troops into Baghdad in 1917, promised to take into consideration the political aspirations of local residents. Indeed, after the Entente powers won World War I, Great Britain and France broke up the Ottoman Empire with the intention of creating a series of independent Arab states in the Middle East.

And so, after World War I, Mesopotamia, renamed Iraq, did indeed become a

formal state, albeit one dominated by a foreign power. The West's purpose in creating states in the Middle East was not necessarily to guarantee independence to individual nations, but instead to prevent the rise of a single large imperial entity, like the Ottomans, for this would challenge European domination in the region. Thus, Europe implemented a mandate system under the auspices of the new League of Nations, whereby Great Britain, ostensibly tutoring Iraq in modern state formation, became in essence the colonial overlord of Iraq. At first, Great Britain instituted a system of direct rule over Iraq, which gave local people little say in their governance.

The Iraqi response to this policy of direct rule offers one example of the diverse peoples of these former Ottoman provinces coming together in ways that transcended communal loyalties. In the large cities, the educated elite among Sunnis and Shi'is organized joint religious ceremonies that protested British rule. In the countryside, rural tribes actively fought British troops. Iraq poets lauded these efforts to forge a single nation intent on eliminating the rule of a foreign overlord. In light of the money and manpower expended to quell this widespread revolt, some British citizens, including the celebrated T. E. Lawrence (a.k.a. Lawrence of Arabia), chastised their government for inefficient policies that did not sufficiently allow for Iraqi self-determination.

After this revolt and the criticisms from the British public, the British decided to establish a system of indirect rule in Iraq, creating, at least in appearance, a constitutional monarchy. Unfortunately, this decision would fragment the nationalist coalition and also reaffirm the primordial place of the minority Arab Sunnis in the structures of government. As colonial secretary, Winston Churchill spearheaded this initiative at the Cairo Conference of 1921, afterward telling British representatives that a constitutional monarchy offered a more efficient and less costly way to rule. He and his colleagues chose Faysal I (1885–1933) as the sole candidate to put forward in a plebiscite to legitimize a brand new royal dynasty, the Hashemites. Faysal I, a Sunni claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad, was born on the Arabian Peninsula and had no previous ties to this place. Faysal I, however, did understand the multiethnic and multisectarian nature of Iraqi society. As embodied in his coronation speech, he promised to forge a state based on respect for all citizens regardless of their faith or ethnicity. Nevertheless, he brought with him to Iraq a Sunni cohort composed of officers trained by the Ottoman Empire, thereby perpetuating the privileged position of Arab Sunnis.

Faysal's appointment as king led to the dissolution of the nationalist movement, and communal identities began to rear their head once again in Iraq. Many Kurds, for example, wanted their own country, and so they resisted endorsing

Faysal I as the king of Iraq. At the end of World War I, and as embodied in articles 62 and 64 of the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, Europeans had promised Kurds self-rule of their own country of Kurdistan. Such a promise, however, soon became politically inconvenient, since it required commitments of money and manpower that the British did not want to expend in forging a new landlocked state. So, the British welded Kurdistan's southern regions into northern Iraq. British officers stationed in the north then bullied Kurdish leaders to accept Faysal I as their king.

And Shi'is, too, did not want to accept the Sunni Faysal I as their king. It was clear to this majority that such a royal administration would privilege the Sunni group to which his closest advisors belonged, thereby perpetuating Sunni dominance in Iraq. For this reason, the Shi'i cleric Mahdi al-Khalisi called upon his brethren to boycott elections in the British mandate of Iraq. In response, the British engaged in policies that reaffirmed Sunni dominance of the structures of government. They sent, for example, a number of Shi'i clerics into exile, men like al-Khalisi and his son, for they feared the anti-British influence of these clerics. And so, the British mandate deliberately perpetuated Sunni dominance in the state.

Sunnis continued to dominate state institutions after Iraq gained independence in 1932. Upon independence, Faysal I again expressed an intention to protect all religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq. Nevertheless, Faysal I and many Sunnis in his administration supported a pan-Arab ideology. Pan-Arabism proposed that Arabs of Southwest Asia and North Africa should have close political and economic ties, eventually unifying as a single state. For Faysal, who came from the Arabian Peninsula, this ideology legitimized his rule over Iraq. Pan-Arabism obviously leaves out Kurds from nation-building initiatives, but it can also set aside the interests of Shi'is, who may well be culturally constructed as "Persians." According to the political scientist Malik Mufti, the Iraqi proponents of this ideology were indeed "trying to suppress particularistic identities such as those of the Shi'is, Kurds, Christians, and Jews" (Mufti, 29). Thus, pan-Arabism conceptualized Sunni Arabs as the norm and inherently provided an ideological basis for maintaining Sunni dominance within Iraq's political structures.

Pan-Arabism shaped both foreign and domestic policy in independent Iraq. Faysal I did not go so far as to propose an amalgamation of Arab states, which the former British overlord would have vetoed, but he did propose holding a pan-Arab conference in Baghdad in order to have Arab countries discuss social and cultural issues of import. The fact that the king felt compelled to run this idea through the British Embassy underscores the neocolonial role of Great Britain

in Iraq. In the domestic sphere, the Hashemite monarch appointed the pan-Arab ideologue Sati' al-Husri (1880–1970) as a professor at the Higher Teachers College. From his key position in the Ministry of Education, he propagated the pan-Arab ideology to young students in the Iraqi educational system. Given the Sunni identity of the political elites who constructed these policies, the pan-Arab initiatives inherently downplayed the contributions and local identities of non-Arab Iraqi citizens.

Certainly, intersectarian political violence immediately threatened the building of a functional state and coherent nation in independent Iraq. This violence occurred in August 1933, when some Assyrians began calling for regional autonomy vis-à-vis the national state. Assyrians are a Christian people with their own Syriac language. The British had relocated about 50,000 Assyrians from Turkey to northern Iraq during World War I, because they were being persecuted for their support of the Entente powers. The establishment of these refugees brought new demographic pressures to northern Iraq, and relations with the surrounding Kurdish tribes were tense. The British decision to arm 7,500 Assyrian men, forming special military levees outside the purview of the monarchical state, increased these tensions, for the British used these Assyrian levees to quell rebellions among Shi'i and Kurdish tribes.

When Iraq became independent, the Assyrian's religio-political leader, the Mar Shimun, who feared the Sunni-dominated Hashemite state, demanded regional autonomy. Many Iraqis construed such a demand as treason, for the demands for self-determination seemed to undermine the nationalist project of the Hashemite rulers. And so the Iraqi government sent troops to the north. Bakr Sidqi (1890–1937), a Kurdish officer, led these troops. The Iraqi troops brutally repressed the Assyrians, and the army was complicit in the slaughter of unarmed Assyrian peasants who were not necessarily active in an armed struggle to secure Assyrian rights. In this way, one of the first acts of the army of Iraq was the massacre of members of a small minority group.

The Assyrians, however, were not the only ethnic or religious minority to suffer at this time at the hands of the Sunni-dominated state, and this did not bode well for the forging of a unified national identity. In 1935, the Kurds of the mountainous north revolted against the Iraqi state under the aegis of the young leader Mustafa Barzani (1903–1979). In Baghdad, a rabbi recounted rising anti-Semitism, with the police thus bogusly reporting that a memorial service was a political meeting with antistate overtones. As for the marginalized majority, meaning the Shi'is, they celebrated with particular fervor the holiday of Ashura, which, marking the Sunni-Shi'i split of 680, commemorates the battle in which

Husayn, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, was killed along with seventy-two of his followers. In this way, it seems that the Shi'is publicly highlighted their difference from Sunnis.

The rising sectarian and ethnic sentiments of the 1930s undoubtedly contributed to the political instability that marked these interwar years. In October 1936, there was a coup against the existing government, and this was the first coup d'état in the Arab-Islamic world. This coup complicates the picture of marginalization of some ethnic minorities, for its leader Bakr Sidqi was a Kurd. He had become a national hero in 1933, when Iraqi troops violently quelled any discussion of Assyrian autonomy. Further complicating this portrait of Sunni Arab dominance, Sidqi supported Hikmat Sulayman as prime minister. Sulayman was of Turkish origins, and his family had been quite influential during the final days of the Ottoman Empire. These men both represented minority groups, and, further, they worked to integrate more Shi'is (Fattah, 176). In this way, they tried to make "a clean, if temporary, sweep of the old ruling group that had governed the country since its founding" (Marr, 46). As the historian Phebe Marr points out, the new government contained "few Arab Sunnis and not a single advocate of the pan-Arab cause on which all previous governments had been founded" (47). The cabinet that they formed, however, would resign in 1937, after Sidqi's assassination by pan-Arab officers in the army. In retrospect, this coup marked the start of the military's domination of Iraq's political life.

Indeed, only four years later, in April 1941, another coup rocked Iraq. The coup's leaders—Rashid Ali al-Kaylani (1892–1965) and a group of officers referred to as the Golden Square—held pro-German leanings. They espoused a radical pan-Arab vision, which stemmed from their desperate desire to disencumber Iraq from its neocolonial dependence on Great Britain. They overthrew the cabinet and deposed the regent Abd al-Ilah, who favored a close relationship with Great Britain. With Europe fighting World War II, Great Britain could not afford to renegotiate its binational rights and obligations. Great Britain resumed direct control of Iraq in May 1941, and it occupied the country directly for the duration of World War II.

This Anglo-Iraqi Thirty Days War fostered increased intersectarian divisions among Iraqis. Baghdad experienced what is remembered as "the Farhud," which signifies an anti-Jewish riot of two days. Some Muslim Iraqis, it seems, though certainly not all, saw Baghdad's Jews as complicit in the British takeover. This was at least in part because Jewish merchants were responsible for 95 percent of all Iraqi imports (Ghareeb, 125). In this way, some Iraqis thought Jews would benefit from the British takeover. The two-day riot left at least 187 people dead

and led to the destruction of untold amounts of property (Shamash, 209). The shock of this anti-Semitic riot led many rich Jewish families to leave Iraq.

Great Britain ended its direct occupation of Iraq soon after World War II, but this did not bring an end to the political violence that marred the postwar experiences of independent Iraq. Great Britain sought to maintain its neocolonial role in Iraq. It therefore convinced leaders in the Hashemite regime to sign the unpopular Treaty of Portsmouth in January 1948, which allowed this European power extraterritorial rights in Iraq. The postwar Hashemite regime was corrupt, so existing state institutions, though liberal in theory, did not fully allow for popular participation in the government. Increasingly, the streets, rather than the ballot boxes, became the forum in which ordinary people expressed a desire for political change.

Communists in particular found a ready ear among the impoverished masses. In postwar Iraq, poverty was on the rise, and at least one poet chastised the poor for being politically passive. Communism provided an ideology that could mobilize these masses. And according to one Communist leader, this party transcended communal affiliations, bringing together Jews, Christians, Sunnis, and Shi'is against the Hashemite corruption. Indeed, the party played a large role in the riot that followed the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth, a tumultuous few days remembered as "al-Wathba," or "the rising." The government made a concerted effort to wipe out the intersectarian Communist party, with many leaders going into exile. Thus, the construction of a political party transcending ethnic and religious affiliation threatened the Sunni-dominated state.

Despite the promise of Communism as a cure-all for intersectarian and interethnic rivalries, anti-Semitism was on the rise in Iraq in the years following World War II. This is due in some part to the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948, a situation that led Iraq to go to war in order to preserve this land for Palestinian Arabs. In the wake of this war, which led to the trouncing of Arab troops, many in Iraq conceptualized all Jews as complicit in what they perceived as anti-Arab policies of Israel. Responding to this populist outlook, the Hashemite government, clearly looking for easy ways to appease the restless masses, decided to pass a law in 1950 that seemed to encourage Jewish migration to this new country. The passage of this law led many Jews to immigrate. Nearly all Jews in the Kurdish town of Zakho, for example, felt compelled to migrate to Israel after the passage of this law. In this way, an international war fought against Israel in 1948 acted as a catalyst for further fragmentation of Iraqi society.

Despite the formal influence of the Hashemite elite or the informal pressures of the masses, it was ultimately the back rooms of military headquarters where

political change was decided. Iraq experienced another military coup in 1958, one led by Gen. Abd al-Karim Qasim (1914–1963), who intended to take Iraq out of “the pocket” of Western powers, like the former British overlord and the ascendant American superpower. This coup differed from that of 1936 and 1940, when military officers sought only to force a change in government. This coup instead aimed at razing the Hashemite monarchy. Thus, Qasim’s coup was a violent affair, leading to the assassination of the entire royal family in the courtyard of their palace. Qasim then expressed an intention to establish a republic that would distribute more equitably the country’s increasing oil wealth. Fearing disenfranchisement, some Arab Sunnis plotted Qasim’s overthrow the next year, though the coup attempt by Abd al-Wahhab al-Shawwaf in Mosul failed to dislodge Qasim.

It was during the five-year reign of Qasim that the Iraqi state’s relations with northern Kurds again broke down. Qasim’s regime seemed at first to promise the further incorporation of Kurds into the Iraqi nation. Thus, Qasim allowed Mustafa Barzani, who had been exiled after a revolt in 1945, to return to Iraq. Also, Qasim appointed a Kurd to a three-man governing council (Yildiz, 16). And yet, the Iraqi government could not tolerate discussion of any autonomy around the oil-rich northern areas surrounding the northern cities of Kirkuk and Arbil. By 1961, Barzani understood that Qasim would never permit any form of Kurdish autonomy, and he withdrew his support for Qasim’s republic. Instead, he decided to round up his soldiers, called *peshmergas*, and fight the Iraqi government. In this way, the policies of the reactionary government established to decrease Western influence in Iraq deepened ethnic tensions.

By the early 1960s, the Arab Ba’th Socialist Party became a force with which to contend. This party espoused a secular pan-Arab ideology that was supposed to reflect the will of all people in the Arab world, regardless of their religious belief. Indeed, the founding ideologue of the Ba’th Party, the Syrian Michel Aflaq (1910–1989), was a Christian. Aflaq argued that European powers had artificially divided the Arab nation. Thus, members of the Ba’th adhered to an anti-imperial ideology, and so opposed European and American meddling in the Middle East. In the economic sphere, the Ba’th enunciated a desire to evenly spread the wealth of the old elite fostered by colonialism. At first, it seemed that the secular Ba’th Party would incorporate Shi’is into the leadership of the party, and more than 50 percent of the party’s civilian leaders were Shi’i in the early 1960s (Ghareeb, 222). Such intrasectarian power sharing did not endure, for Sunnis reasserted their dominance in the party after it took power.

The Ba’th organized two coups in Iraq during the 1960s. In 1963, the Ba’th organized a coup against the government, and the ruler Qasim was immediately

executed. The Ba'th, however, at this time, ruled for only eight months, before it too was overthrown by Abd al-Salam Arif (1921–1966). It was not until 1968 that the Ba'th had enough strength to organize the coup that resulted in the thirty-five-year Ba'thist regime. The Constitution promulgated by Iraq's Ba'th Party in 1970 suggested that the party's leaders—President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr (1914–1982) and Vice President Saddam Hussein (1937–2006)—would adhere to the basic tenets of this socialist and populist ideology, even while acknowledging the ethnic and religious diversity of Iraq.

Despite this Constitution, the Ba'th Party constructed a totalitarian state that privileged Sunni Arabs. Hussein led behind the scenes until 1979, when he assumed the presidency and became Iraq's official president. Under his aegis, the Ba'th sought to bring all aspects of the lives of its subjects under its control, including such intellectual pursuits as the writing of history. The Ba'th Party also manipulated networks of patronage in order to ensure loyalty to the state, and this policy led Hussein to improve the status of women. Although some people balked at the state's interference with daily life in Iraq, others wholeheartedly supported the Ba'th. The poet Hameed Said, for example, who was also the editor of the Ba'th's official newspaper *al-Thura*, believed wholeheartedly in a pan-Arab ideology that would bring together Arab peoples in order to block rising Israeli power in the Middle East.

It was, however, the Ba'th's absolute monopoly on violence that allowed its leaders to use fear to maintain control, and ethnic and religious minorities as well as the Shi'i majority did not fare well. In 1969, for example, two years after a crushing Arab defeat by the Israeli army, the Ba'th manufactured a spy scare that led to the public hangings of Jewish citizens falsely accused of espionage. In the wake of this tragedy, most of Iraq's remaining Jews decided to emigrate from Iraq.

Jews, however, were not the only communal group to suffer during the early years of Ba'thist rule. In the north, Barzani came to see that initial Ba'thist conciliation had been no more than a way to consolidate power. So, once again, he organized a revolt against the Iraqi state in 1974. This war led to the displacement of thousands of Kurds, who wound up in poorly provisioned Iranian refugee camps for much of the 1970s.

The Ba'th in particular targeted the beleaguered Shi'i majority, for they were beginning to organize against the injustice of the Iraqi state. Networks of patronage evolved under the Ba'th that favored Sunnis, particularly those of Tikrit, Hussein's hometown, as well as other Sunni-dominated places in Iraq's central regions. By the 1970s, Shi'is, increasingly disillusioned by Sunni sway, represented no more than 5 percent of party leaders (Ghareeb, 222). In response to this uneven distribution of power and resources, some Shi'is began to turn to religion