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## 1950s BAGHDAD — MODERN AND INTERNATIONAL

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*Baghdad is an international capital of ever increasing importance and influence and headquarters of the Council of the Baghdad Pact. It is Iraq's shop window to the world, and many will judge the country by what they see in its capital, both of the layout of the town and its amenities, and of the way in which its inhabitants live, and the provision that is made for their welfare in the form of good housing and social facilities.<sup>1</sup>*

This 1956 observation by British architects and town planners Minoprio, Spencely, and P. W. Macfarlane was in harmony with the outlook Iraq's Development Board brought to the capital city in the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> While an ambitious program to rebuild Baghdad was not among its officially stated missions, the Development Board collectively and through its individual members introduced new ideas to reshape the city's architecture.<sup>3</sup> At the time, the young Middle Eastern nation was captivated by progress and battling for the legitimacy of a "modern" identity. The Iraqis wanted Baghdad to become the symbol and showcase for both (figure 1.1). Starting in 1955, the Board quietly approached several world famous architects, inviting them to participate in selected building projects for the capital city.<sup>4</sup> Based on original research started many years ago, this essay examines some of the underpinnings of that building strategy as it took shape amid the ideas and visions, players and politics



Figure 1.1. Baghdad City Center, View of Southgate Square (circa 1960). This Was the Location of the City's Main Bus Terminal for Both Urban and Regional Public Transport (Published in Iraq Bulletin 1960)

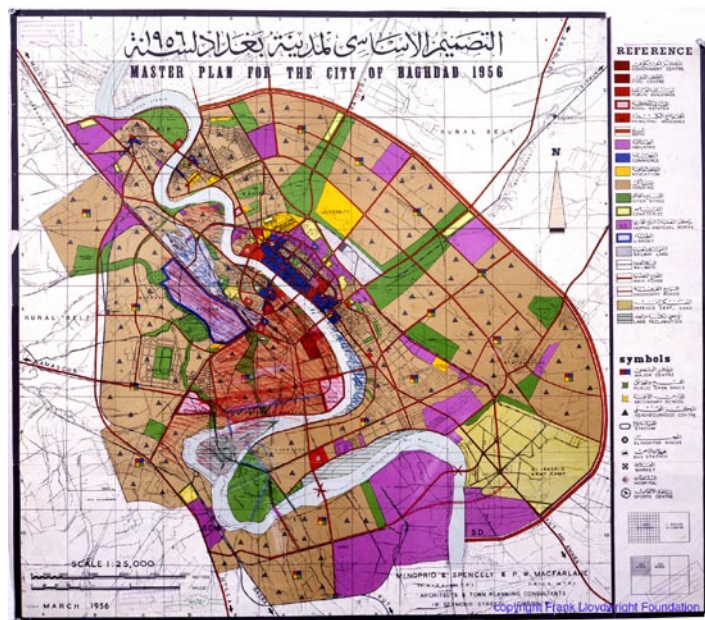


Figure 1.2. "The Master Plan for Baghdad, 1956" by Minoprio, Spencely, and P. W. Macfarlane, Architects and Town Planning Consultants, London. Markings on This Map Are By Frank Lloyd Wright (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation)

of 1950s Iraq in what was to be a unique moment of East-West exchange.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1936 and 1939, the first master plan had introduced linear street patterns with the north-south Rashid Street, parallel to the river, forming the principal avenue for the city's retail and business locations. The next record of urban planning is from 1954, when the Development Board commissioned the Minoprio, Spencely, and Macfarlane master plan. The firm was to study the four older parts of the city — Rusafa, Adhamiya, Karkh, and Kadhimain — to deal specifically with the main road system "including the principal existing roads and bridges and any new major roads or bridges considered necessary."<sup>6</sup> They also were charged to recommend land use, specifying areas for housing, industry, commerce, open space, and to identify the "New Buildings such as Schools, Shops, Clinics, or Car Parks."<sup>7</sup> The master plan completed in 1956 (figure 1.2) presented specific recommendations for a university, a major sports center, and a civic center defined as a grouping "to accommodate headquarter buildings of various Government

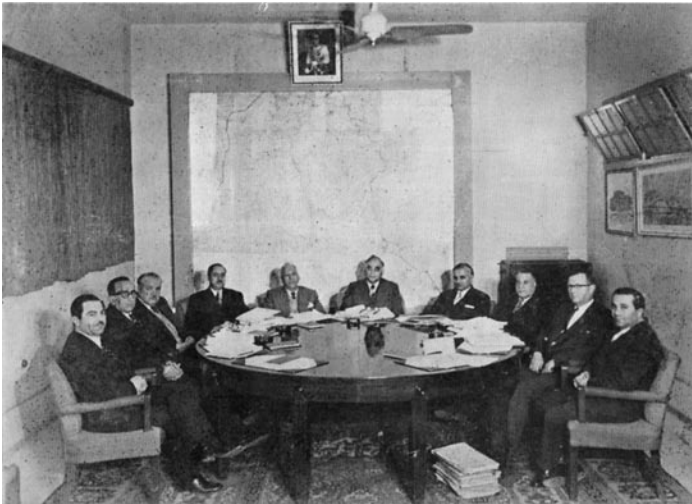


Figure 1.3. Members of the Development Board, including Dr. Dhia Jafar, Minister of Development (left), and Prime Minister Nuri as-Said (center). See Figures 1.10–11 for Names and Portraits of All Board Members in 1957 (Development Week, 1957, pp. 8–9)

Departments.”<sup>8</sup> These were among the buildings designated for commissions to Western architects, most notably Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, Gio Ponti, and Alvar Aalto, each of whom easily ranked among his respective country’s and the world’s best known architects.<sup>9</sup>

The Development Board was created by Iraq’s strongman and fourteen-time Prime Minister, Nuri as-Said, when in 1950 he forged an agreement with the British-American owned Iraq Petroleum Company to share half the oil profits with Iraq. Financing projects with seventy percent of the nation’s new oil revenue (figure 1.3) its initial program (1951–56) targeted such infrastructure basics as irrigation, flood control, swamp drainage, low cost housing, and improvement of village and rural conditions, then moved into land reclamation, agriculture, and upgrading existing areas, including grants of state land to small farmers.<sup>10</sup> By 1955, the Board extended its focus to transportation, intending to “construct a modern communication system for linking the various parts of the country to each other.”<sup>11</sup> Funds were allocated to roads, bridges, airfields, railways, and



Figure 1.6. The New Iraqi Parliament Building, under Construction in 1957

ports. “Iraq’s unique agency,” as *Time* magazine called it, had built, started, or planned sixteen dams, two barrages to catch flood waters, numerous drainage ditches and canals, oil refineries, textile plants, and sugar mills between 1950 and 1957. By the end of the first phase, hospitals, schools, factories, the royal palace, the house of parliament, and an Iraqi national museum were also under construction. The second five-year program (1955–59) saw a budget explosion from 0.3 to more than 1.4 billion dollars based on increased oil revenue.<sup>12</sup>

By the middle of the decade, the Development Board be-



Figure 1.4. Sketch of the Baghdad Medical Center, a Ten Floor Building Containing a 950-bed Hospital, with Ancillary Installations and Medical, Dental, and Veterinary Colleges, Estimated to Cost 3 Million Iraqi Dinars. The board meant to mitigate the lack of hospitals, which, it pointed out, “resulted on several occasions in a catastrophe” (Second Development Week, 1956, p. 30)



Figure 1.5. Modern Primary School Built Under the Development Board Programs, One of “75 constructed according to the most up-to-date designs ... we can easily foresee the effects of these buildings on learning and culture” (Second Development Week, 1956, p. 26)

gan to publicize its successes. The main vehicle was a trio of week-long events, in March of 1956, 1957, and 1958.<sup>13</sup> Each of these Development Week events was both a major international publicity opportunity and a celebratory way to keep the Iraqi people up to date on progress, to mark achievements, and unveil future plans. Publications, news articles, and speeches apprised Iraqis of the scope of ambitions and what Development Board projects would mean for the people of Iraq. Dr. Dhia Jafar, Minister of Development, declared, “We are proud to say that the implementation of these major projects is being carried out within the financial capabilities of Iraq.”<sup>14</sup> Nuri as-Said praised the “efforts in the service of our nation and the prosperity of our country ... to lead our countrymen to glory and prosperity,” with paens to the government’s posture of



Figure 1.7. Sketch of the Development Board Office Building Published in the 1957 Development Week Pamphlet. The Constructed Building of Italian Architect Gio Ponti Resembled his Well-known Pirelli Building in Milan

humble service:

The gold which is being produced from under the earth is your property. It is from the people to the people. This is what the Government believe in, hold fast to, and work hard to achieve ... [W]e have carried out our development programme most eagerly and faithfully.<sup>15</sup>

Iraqi leaders were proud of and vocal about their progress. Summarizing achievements, the new Minister of Development in 1958 grandly announced:

[W]e do feel a justifiable pride in what has been accomplished and is being accomplished ... The participation and support of all the citizens of our beloved country is necessary for the fulfillment of the objectives which have been established. All can contribute to the success of this great national programme of development which will in turn contribute to the prosperity and well being of all of us.<sup>16</sup>

These statements merge the language of public pride and public good “for the betterment of conditions in Iraq.” The development program was seen as both source of wealth and sign of progress and modernity. There was, of course, a political underpinning to this rhetoric. As if aiming to assuage the Western fear of the spread the Soviet-backed development, a senior Iraqi official commented: “In Iraq today there is only one source of wealth: oil. We propose to use our oil income while we have it to create other sources of wealth. We aim to change everything. But we propose to do it by evolution, not revolution. Nasser’s way is not our way.”<sup>17</sup> The meaning would be easily understood. Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser had distanced itself from the West, heightening American concern that other Arab countries might be inclined to follow its lead.<sup>18</sup>

An interesting question here arises as to whether and how the Baghdad buildings earmarked for international architects fit within this public rhetoric of strategic development as advancement of the people of Iraq.<sup>19</sup> Although events connected with Baghdad building are well reported by Iraqi newspapers over the next five years, the employment of world famous architects to build in the capital gets short shrift in official pub-

lications by the Board, never clearly brought into focus as an element of the strategy of national advancement. Images of a future Baghdad Medical Center (figure 1.4) and the Kharkh Hospital in Baghdad, a new primary school (figure 1.5), a new Parliament building, and a Mosul educational unit and bitumen refinery appeared in a central color spread of the *Second Development Week* booklet. Throughout the publication, images of primary schools and housing projects were printed along with the predominating pictures of dams and bridges. As to building projects that would soon be commissioned to major master builders of modern architecture from around the world, there is no specific mention of this as a program or strategy in official Development Board pamphlets.<sup>20</sup> Color plates included images of housing projects and examples of hotels, rest houses, and industrial buildings but no representations of the public buildings reserved for renowned architects. Under the category of “buildings” was an interesting, symbolically-tinged reference to one project, the Parliament building:

The Development Board has given much attention to health establishments and to educational and public buildings ... A number of these buildings have already been constructed ... This number includes government buildings such as the Parliament, which is the most important building constructed so far by the Development Board. It was designed according to the latest architectural style, and will cost ID. 2,750,000 (\$7,700,000) so as to render it compatible with the glory of the country.<sup>21</sup> (figure 1.6)

A number of hospitals and their building budgets were also listed; while most had been assigned to specific architects, the Board felt it sufficient to note that the “responsibility for planning these hospitals is entrusted to Consulting Engineers of international repute who are also entrusted with other important hospitals.”<sup>22</sup>

When the projects commissioned to Westerners were mentioned in official publications, it was usually as miscellany. Exceptions were the university and the Iraqi Museum,<sup>23</sup> identified as specific projects with budgets allocated for each. A small perspective captioned “Building Planned for the Ministry of Development” appeared on page seven of the *Second Development Week* pamphlet without reference to the fact that the

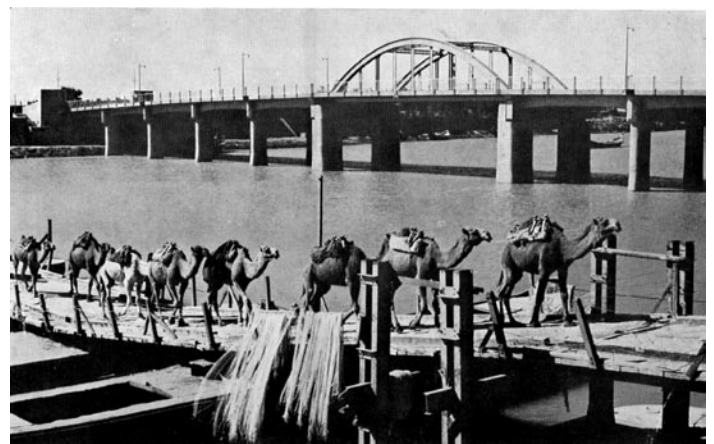


Figure 1.8. The Old Twaireej Bridge, an Image Used by the Development Board in 1957 to Highlight the Contrast between Past and Present

Board had approached the well-known Italian architect Gio Ponti for this project (figure 1.7). The sketch is not by Ponti; likely it was produced in house by the Board's technical staff. Under the catch-all category of "other projects," the pamphlet listed student hostels, a new "Law Court building and public library," slaughter houses, and "a fine arts building, an opera house, and a large sports stadium" without mentioning either allocation of funds for these last three projects or the fact that they were to be designed by selected architects from Western nations.<sup>24</sup>

The tone and emphasis of official Board publications thus remained dedicated to infrastructure projects couched in terms of utility and advancement for the largest number of Iraqi people. It is difficult to fit the Board's buildings designated for famous architects into the same strategic frame as schools and hospitals, projects readily publicized as "from the people and to the people." The nature of the commitment to prestigious Baghdad projects was more publicly conveyed in the pages of the *Iraq Times*. "Baghdad Will Become a Beautiful City" was the title of a 1957 *Iraq Times* article describing recent changes to the city:

A vast street building and expansion programme is underway in Baghdad which in a few years time will transform the Iraqi capital into one of the most modern and beautiful cities in the Middle East.

The article, and others like it, went on to note budgets and plans for street construction "being carried out in accordance with the new city plan."<sup>25</sup>

Baghdad's rebuilding seems indeed to have had an impulse and dynamic different from the rest of the development strategy. It was typical for Middle Eastern nations, in late colonial and early postcolonial periods, to focus on their capital cities.



Figure 1.9. View of the New Adhamiyeh Bridge, One of Twenty New Bridges Built throughout Iraq under Development Board Oversight by 1957

Baghdad was no exception. A central feature of the Baghdad story is that rebuilding was championed by individual Board members and motivated by the climate of modernity that was emerging in the city as a young Western educated elite returned to Iraq.

This strong stance from the Development Board makes sense since a majority of Board members were educated in the West, mostly in America or Great Britain. Throughout their tenures on the Board, many were traveling to the West on vacations, on specific missions related to their professions, or to observe development in the West; a number had foreign wives.<sup>26</sup> Socially, most were also among the country's elite, frequently members of a traditional landowning class or the well-established merchant upper middle class enjoying strong connections to the Hashemite government.<sup>27</sup> A number of Board members also served as government department ministers, sometimes switching ministries rather fluidly. A leader among Western-educated Iraqis, Khalil Kanna was Minister of Finance and as such also a member of the Development Board and later served as Minister of Education.<sup>28</sup> Some of the nuanced political tensions of the period would be reflected in comings and goings among Development Board members, although the tenure of Nuri as-Said as Prime Minister brought a certain stability to the group, as did Minister of Development, Dr. Dhia Jafar, who served lon-



Figure 1.10. From Left to Right: Sayyid Fakhri Bakr (Secretary of the Board), Michael Ionidis (Executive Member from Great Britain), Sayyid Jalal Baban, Dr. Dhia Jafar (Minister of Development), and Nuri as-Said (Chairman of the Development Board)



Figure 1.11. From Left to Right: Taha El Hashimi (Vice Chairman), Khalil Kenneh (Minister of Finance), Abdul Majid Allawi, Abdul Jabbar Chalabi, Abdul-Rahman El-Jalili (All Executive Members). Not Pictured: Clifford Wilson, American Board Member and Point IV Program Administrator, who on March 23, 1957, Replaced Former American Member, Wesley Nelson

gest as head of the Board. Jafar himself was a mechanical engineering graduate of the University of Birmingham who was also president of the Society of Iraqi Engineers for 1957–58.<sup>29</sup> Not only Board members but also members of the Technical Divisions (coordinating the work of the Development Board), many of them not native to Iraq, were Western educated. Another related aspect of Iraq's development strategy was a systematic program of sending students abroad for higher education and training. This program accelerated to the point that in May 1957 there were at least 880 Iraqi students studying in Great Britain alone; an equal number if not more were studying in America.<sup>30</sup>

The Iraqi vision and commitment to a modern identity for Iraq is key to understanding the dynamics of major building projects in Baghdad after 1955. Despite internal politics and membership changes in a government continually under pressure, throughout the Development Board's existence there was a cohesive element insofar as virtually all members shared a desire to achieve progress by a Western standard. They envisioned a modern Iraq emerging from a medieval shell and proceeding, at speed and on a grand scale, down the path to modernity (figures 1.8–9). Baghdad would showcase their vision of modernity. Under the subtitle, "We Aim to Change," *Time* magazine summarized the Development Board's approach through the words of an anonymous senior Iraqi official:

We have a good word in Arabic. It is *eamar*. It means when you finish a house or complete some worthwhile thing, it has a quality of progress. We call our program *eamar*.<sup>31</sup>

The selection of particular kinds of buildings for Baghdad, and the choice of architects to design them, thus reflects the intellectual climate of Iraq at that time, especially among an educated class of people who were either decision-makers or influential advisors. Architect Rifat Chadirji recalls:

Baghdad was not so sophisticated in food and fashion as in Beirut but we were far ahead in architecture and art. We were the first in the Arab world to absorb the major international trends and marry them to local traditions.<sup>32</sup>

While there were occasional references to traditions or glories of the past, most of these appeared in statements framed by politicians and diplomats largely for consumption by media in the West. Seasoned Iraqi politician, Khalil Kanna, for instance, put the development program in an interesting historical and political context for a United Nations group:

Iraq spread civilization and culture to humanity twice in history, in ancient times and in its Golden Arab period in the Middle Ages. The awakening of Iraq after the eclipse, coincided with a return to democratic rule. The fundamental trends of modern Iraq are in keeping with its psychological and historical set-up: the Arab revival, the democratic way of life and the parliamentary system of Government. External factors and international potentialities diverted attention outside, and it is fairly recently that great efforts were put to internal reconstruction. The establishment of the Development Board marks the turning point ...<sup>33</sup> (figures 1.10–11)

This narrative providing a genealogy of democracy out of a distant historical-cultural past did not represent a pervasive orientation among a younger generation of Western-educated

design professionals. Nor were history and tradition valorized in the terms of the Board's explicit infrastructural development strategy. This is notably different from Iran, where the use of archaeological finds and their application to new government buildings had provided a major framework for a government strategy and rhetoric adopted by Reza Shah Pahlavi (r. 1921–41) with the ultimate goal of political and cultural self-assertion underwritten by historical legitimization.<sup>34</sup>

By contrast, reference in Iraq to archaeological artifacts was strongly linked to the British presence. Their domination of archaeology was apparent in the Baghdad Museum.<sup>35</sup> Further, the young generation of Iraqi architects was critical of British architects who had used historical elements on otherwise neo-classical public buildings. This "regionalized" style grafted onto Beaux Arts design was specifically seen as colonial, inextricably associated with the British imperial tradition in India and the French in North Africa.<sup>36</sup> The young generation of Iraqi architects was more inclined toward modern architecture championed by leading architects in the West.

It thus makes sense to see the Development Board approach to key buildings and architects for the capital city as an expression of the cultural universe of the Iraqi elite — highly sophisticated, educated people who valued their Western educations and enjoyed Western entertainment, whether it was sports, music, or art. It is unsurprising that Baghdad's symbolic modern buildings would be a university, opera house, sports stadium, and art museum and that these buildings in particular would be commissioned to leading world architects, none of them British. Selecting international architects, Board members asserted their sophistication as present and future leaders of the modern nation they envisioned. They claimed an international modernity and, by significant choices, signaled their participation in it. With the exception, perhaps, of the university, the Baghdad projects were not so much beneficial buildings for the masses as they were culturally symbolic buildings expressing national prestige and the coming of age of Iraq as a nation among world nations. All reflected a particular group's perspective on the Baghdad of the future. The viewpoint was beautifully summarized in Fahim Qubain's chronicle of that period:



Figure 1.12. Housing Project Planned by the Development Board, Published in the 1957 Development Week Pamphlet without Reference to Its Well-known Designer, Greek Architect Constantine Doxiadis

Iraqi society is also undergoing a cultural reorientation. Until recent years the aspirations of Iraqis, as well as those of most Arabs, were anchored in the past. Today, preoccupation with the glories of the past among the vocal public is restricted mainly to religious divines, historians and antiquarians. Most educated Iraqis are concerned with the future and are groping for solutions to immediate problems. Generally, they are interested in establishing a new kind of society that will equip them to live the good life in the twentieth century world.<sup>37</sup> (figure 1.12)

More practically, a reaction to the historicizing British tradition brought a young generation of Iraqis together to influence the Development Board to commit to internationally prominent, modernist architects. These Western-trained architects actively engaged in reshaping the attitudes of the Board. Many were children of prominent Iraqis politically well connected to the power hierarchy. Among those who played significant roles were the son of the then Prime Minister Ali Jawdat, Nizar Jawdat, and his American wife, Ellen, both of whom had studied under Walter Gropius at Harvard's School of Architecture<sup>38</sup> (figure 1.13). Mohammad Makiya, a young architect educated in England, was another who informed the Board of alternatives to the standard practice of engaging British architects.<sup>39</sup>

Rifat Chadirji, who went on to build a successful international practice, joined the Board's technical division in 1952 as a young Iraqi architect returning from Britain. He has shed clear light on the process of selection for building in Baghdad:

I noticed they had some projects like Baghdad Central Station, the Parliament, and the Palace, which were commissioned to British architects whose work were conventional and not modern, among which was Cooper. This was a concern among us, young architects. In a meeting between Allen [sic, Ellen] Jawdat, Nizar Jawdat, Qahtan Awni and myself, we decided to approach the authorities and state our concerns. A meeting was arranged to see the then minister of planning, Dr. Nadeem Pachachi. We met him privately in his home and after expressing our concerns, it was agreed that a list of international architects be prepared and submitted to him. I do not recall the exact date. I prepared the list and it was submitted personally by Qahtan Awni to Dr. Nadeem Pachachi. (May [have] been submitted by Ellen Jawdat) The list comprised of the following names, as far as I remember:

Frank Lloyd Wright  
Corbusier  
Gio Ponti  
Alvar Aalto  
Oscar Neimeyer

Amongst which all answered and would be willing to do work in Iraq except Oscar Neimeyer who said he would not work for oppressive regimes.<sup>40</sup>

Chadirji's recollection corroborates those of other participant observers such as Makiya and the Jawdats. Iraq of the 1950s was an unusually rich environment for a young generation of artists and architects to exert influence on the shape of their society, a level of influence not then found even in the West. Collectively, these young professionals felt empowered by their training and their connections to participate in reshaping their country and their capital city. Their values were shared by the Iraqi decision-making elite to whom they were connected by family or by profession. Their exposure to Western influences



Figure 1.13. Ellen and Nizar Jawdat circa 1950s (Photograph by and Courtesy of Rifat Chadirji)

both abroad and within Iraq predisposed them to prevailing paradigms of progress and modernity. The future they anticipated did not look to an ancient past, even if it was an age of glory. The Baghdad of their imagination was a cultural showcase of a new Arab identity in which the Iraqis saw themselves not as torchbearers of a glorious Mesopotamian past but as the representatives of a progressive, modern nation that could afford the best. Theirs was an international and forward-looking impulse.

In the words of Ellen Jawdat, Iraq was “whirling through years of progress overnight.”<sup>41</sup>

\* To contact this author with questions or to provide information about this period, please email her at [drmarefat@gmail.com](mailto:drmarefat@gmail.com).

<sup>1</sup> London firm of Minoprio, Spencely, and P. W. Macfarlane, Architects and Town Planning Consultants, “The Master Plan for Baghdad, 1956 Report,” (London, 1956), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The reconstruction/modernization of Iraq during this period remains one of the most ambitious in the region at the time and is attracting scholarly attention in fields beyond political history. A Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Conference panel sponsored by TAARII in November 2006, “Remembering 1950s Baghdad,” chaired by Magnus Bernhardsson and Mina Marefat, presented five papers addressing various aspects of Iraq's cultural and political awakening during the 1950s. See the Caecilia Pieri and Mina Marefat, “Remembering 1950s Baghdad,” *TAARII Spring Newsletter*, Issue 02-01 (2007), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> This paper is condensed from the first chapter of an in-depth investigation of the 1957–58 Baghdad building projects. I am indebted to the National Endowment for the Humanities for their support of my research toward a forthcoming book focusing on Frank Lloyd Wright's work in Baghdad, an elaboration of my chapter, “Wright's Baghdad,” in *Frank Lloyd Wright, Europe and Beyond*, edited by Anthony Alofsin (University of California Press, 1999), pp. 184–213. My current TAARII grant permits deeper investigation of the role of Iraqis in Baghdad's development.

<sup>4</sup> I was able to trace the first letter sent by the Development Board to Le Corbusier in late June 1955. Correspondence between Ellen Jawdat and Walter Gropius indicates that Gropius was also considered for commissions in Iraq as early as 1955.

<sup>5</sup> Due to the lack of access and destruction of archival repositories in Iraq, obtaining precise information from Iraqi sources is difficult. Contemporary publications and newspapers are important sources, supplemented by personal interviews. I am grateful to Ellen and Nizar Jawdat, Rifat Chadirji, Mohammad Makiya, and Fahim Qubain for

generously allowing me to interview them. I also thank Paul Arthur who shared with me insights from his Fulbright teaching sojourn in Iraq. Still seeking eyewitnesses and participant observers involved in the extraordinary experiment that was Iraq's Development Board, I am interested in additional contact information from readers of this paper.

<sup>6</sup> Minoprio, Spencely, and Macfarlane, "Master Plan," p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Other published articles on these projects include my "Architecture Baghdad: Les Dessins de Frank Lloyd Wright," *Beaux Arts Magazine* 2003: 68–74; and idem "Walter Gropius Master Project for Baghdad University," *Docomomo*, (*International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement*) 35 (2006): 78–86.

<sup>10</sup> Throughout much of the 1950s Americans were involved in the Middle East and in Iraq's development as part of an overall Cold War policy aimed to combat the rise of Communism in the region.

<sup>11</sup> *Development Week, 1958: Special Number* (Baghdad: The Iraq Times, 1958), p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> The first five-year program budget was 168.74 Iraqi Dinar (ID) of which 164.64 ID came from oil revenue and the rest from an International Bank loan and other sources. The Board came nowhere near spending the allocation.

<sup>13</sup> *Development Week, 1958: Special Number* (Baghdad: The Iraq Times, 1958), p. 25. The idea of *Development Week* was likely inspired by existing programs; Iraq's Education Week, for example, held its thirty-seventh annual event the second week of November 1957. See "Baghdad Diary," *Iraq Times*, November 12, 1957.

<sup>14</sup> See Dhia Jafar's "Introduction," in *Development of Iraq: Second Development Week, Sha'ban 1376–March 1957* (Baghdad: Board of Development and Ministry of Development, 1957), p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> "Praises Iraqi Achievements," *Iraq Times*, March 28, 1957, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> "A Message from Senator Salih Saib al Jeburi, Minister of Development," *Development Week, 1958: Special Number* (Baghdad: The Iraq Times, 1958).

<sup>17</sup> "A Quality of Progress," *Time Magazine*, April 8, 1957. Iraq was the only Arab member of the Baghdad Pact and as such Nasser's chief rival in the Arab world.

<sup>18</sup> A discussion of the many technical, advisory, and educational relationships, such as the Four Point Mission of 1951, forged between the United States and Iraq during this period is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this paper. The key point is that Iraq, the Middle East, and oil occupied newly strategic posi-

tions in the ideological and economic battles of the Cold War world, and Iraqis were well aware of it.

<sup>19</sup> My early treatment of the Board-sponsored Baghdad building projects (cf. Anthony Alofsin, *Frank Lloyd Wright, Europe and Beyond* [University of California Press, 1999]), assumed that the Baghdad work was a component of the Development Board's strategy just like the infrastructural projects. Subsequent scholarship has also presented Baghdad building as "a strategy" (see Panayiota Pyla, "Rebuilding Iraq 1955–58," *Docomomo* 35 (2006): 71–76; Joseph Siry, "Wright's Baghdad Opera House and Gammage Auditorium: In Search of Regional Modernity," *Art Bulletin* 2005). As is so often the case, further research has led me to question and revise an initial notion to yield a more nuanced view of how the Baghdad building program came about, developed, what sort of "strategy" it amounted to, and how it differed from other aspects of the Board's work.

<sup>20</sup> *Second Development Week*, p. 33.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 27. The caption for the building under construction described the facade as "depicting Arab architecture."

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> The museum was designed by a noted German architect, Werner March, and inaugurated by King Faisal, according to the *Iraq Times*. The *Second Development Week* (p. 28) reported that "1,600,000 square meters at Jadriyah" were being acquired for the university site.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> *Iraq Times*, May 28, 1957. There was clearly a focus on cityscape revision, which had not yet moved to the level of detailing plans for the new buildings. The subsequent comings-and-goings of famous architects, however, were carefully tracked in the *Times*.

<sup>26</sup> The "Baghdad Diary" of the *Iraq Times* reported, for example, a two-month trip of Dr. Abdul Rahman al-Jalili to Austria, West Germany, and Scandinavia (Denmark, Sweden, and Norway). Iraqi officials often went to U.S. universities for meetings and training purposes. Harvard University and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations were very active in organizing such conferences during this period including, for example, a May 1957 conference on "Entrepreneurship in the Middle East." This continued until the 1958 demise of the kingdom, when the military came to the forefront and education was no longer a distinctive characteristic of decision makers.

<sup>27</sup> Fadhil Jamali, who as Prime Minister was chair of the Board for two years was married to Sarah Palmer.

<sup>28</sup> *Second Development Week* identified Kenna as Minister of Finance. By May of the same year, he was serving as Minister of Education.

<sup>29</sup> "Baghdad Diary," *Iraq Times*, January 27, 1956, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> "Baghdad Diary," *Iraq Times* May 14, 1957, p. 8, mentions the creation of a social club for the graduates of Great Britain aiming to "bring together Iraqi students and their British and other friends and serve to inform the latter on this nation's modern program."

<sup>31</sup> "A Quality of Progress," *Time*, April 8, 1957, "Foreign News — Iraq."

<sup>32</sup> *New York Times*, June 18, 2003, interview with Rifat Chadirji by Hugo Lindgren. I suspect that melding international and local was a later development in the practice of Chadirji and other young architects.

<sup>33</sup> *Iraq Times*, September 28, 1957.

<sup>34</sup> See Mina Marefat, "Fractured Globalization," in *New Global History and the City*, edited by Elliott Morss (Boston: New Global History Press), pp. 137–75; idem "Building to Power, The Architecture of Tehran, 1921–1941" Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1988); and idem "Pioneers of Modern Architecture in Tehran," in *Teheran, Capital Bicentenaire*, edited by Chahryar Adle and Bernard Hourcade (Paris: Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique, 1992), pp. 95–125.

<sup>35</sup> For a detailed and insightful analysis of the politics of archaeology in the first half of the twentieth century, see Magnus Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

<sup>36</sup> I differ with some of my colleagues (among whom I count a distinguished friend, Joseph Siry) who conclude that Iraqis consciously sought an Arab or regionalized modern architecture. I believe this did not happen until after the 1958 coup, and more specifically when many of the young generation of Iraqi architects reached maturity in their professional lives.

<sup>37</sup> Fahim Qubain, *The Reconstruction of Iraq 1950–1957* (New York: Praeger Inc. Publishers, 1958), p. 260. Qubain's book, originally a University of Wisconsin dissertation, was later published with a grant from the Foreign Policy Institute. It remains a key source of information on Iraq's Development Board, 1951–58.

<sup>38</sup> Nizar and Ellen Jawdat contributed many interviews over the course of some ten years for which I thank them. More detailed discussions of their comments appear in my chapter on Baghdad mentioned earlier and in my forthcoming book.

<sup>39</sup> I am grateful to Mohammad Makiya, interviewed in London in 2004, who offered insight only possible from first-hand experience.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from Chadirji to the author, October 18, 1997; information verified in follow-up to telephone conversation on October 10, 1997, as well as in interviews in 2003 and 2004.

<sup>41</sup> Ellen Jawdat, "The New Architecture in Iraq," *Architectural Design* March, 1957, p. 79.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MCGUIRE GIBSON

The situation in Iraq looks even grimmer, and the life for academics is virtually impossible. You become aware of the conditions in Baghdad from a few media reports, especially on National Public Radio (NPR) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). And of course, the internet is fundamental to gaining any news at all. A recent report detailed the hour-long crossing of the Tigris River because only one bridge is still open. The simple filling up of a petrol tank still takes hours of waiting in the heat. How can people be expected to report to work or to attend classes? But some people still try to lecture or at least go to the universities enough to help students finish their degrees. The brain drain continues, and the neighboring countries are increasingly full of Iraqi scholars. The Scholars at Risk program can aid a handful, but all intellectuals in Iraq are at risk.

TAARII continues to try to help in a small way by supplying research funds to individual scholars. We also want to continue sending new books to our colleagues and to the university and research libraries, but we have now been made aware of a change in the U.S. Postal Service whereby book shipping by sea has been discontinued, meaning that all books will now cost four or five times more to send than had been the case only a month ago. We are looking for alternate ways of getting the books to Amman, where our resident director will be able to send them on to Iraq.

There is some good news. We have received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to continue and expand the Iraqi Oral History Project. Additionally, a small group of Iraqi and American archaeologists will work together this summer to finish preparing Iraqi excavation reports for publication. Already two articles have appeared and one is in press. Our fellowships for U.S. scholars continue, and we urge faculty and students to apply.

We hope to receive a number of good dissertations to consider for the TAARII prize this year, thereby helping to keep vibrant U.S. scholarship on ancient, medieval, and modern Iraq. That betterment of scholarship and our commitment to a continuing co-operation with our Iraqi colleagues comprise our purpose, and we will keep seeking new ways to realize it.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

STEPHANIE PLATZ

In this issue, we feature research on Iraq in the twentieth century by current TAARII Fellows. Sara Pursley summarizes research toward her dissertation at the City University of New York on the subject of the origins and consequences of legal reforms in Iraq circa 1959. In her essay, Pursley tells a new story of conflict and controversy surrounding the Personal Status Law of 1959, in which familiar oppositions of left and right, progressive and traditional, secular and religious cannot adequately encompass the complex views and changes at stake in reform. She outlines these stakes, illuminating their significance for personal self-hood, as well as modern, national statehood. The picture of intersecting interests portrayed holds relevance for analysis of Iraq in the present moment.

Like Pursley, Haytham Bahooora studies the years between 1950–1963, for a dissertation at Columbia University. Emphasizing Iraqi culture in the period, Bahooora looks to literature and architecture, among other fields of cultural efflorescence, to illustrate the development of a new Iraqi identity in relationship to both modernism and modernity. Likewise, scholar and architect, Dr. Mina Marefat, considers Iraq in the 1950s. She outlines the origins and history of Iraq's Development Board, which linked architecture, transportation, public health, and other systems in a grand effort to modernize the country. Embracing modernism, in this setting, the Development Board aimed to position Iraq for a modern future and the departure from its legacy of British colonialism. Taken individually and together, these three studies represent a major contribution to the understanding of modern Iraq in the twentieth century.

Also in these pages, TAARII Resident Director, Lucine Taminian updates TAARII readers on the status of TAARII's Iraqi Oral History Project (IOHP). As President McGuire Gibson mentions in his report, we are happy to announce that we have received support from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the first three-year phase of our three-phased project. This award will enable six interviewers to conduct 180 interviews by the summer of 2010, in Jordan, Yemen, Lebanon, the U.S., and Western Europe. A large segment of the interview texts will be translated and we hope to begin making them available for research through a new archive well before the end of the grant period.

This autumn, TAARII will jointly sponsor with the Hollings Center a conference entitled, "Unity and Diversity in Iraq: The Nation's Past and Future." This meeting, to be held in Istanbul, will convene scholars from Iraq, its neighbors, the U.S., and Western Europe to examine regional influences upon Iraq and ties of its minorities to the broader region. Grounded in historical scholarship, this multi-disciplinary meeting will be forward-looking and aim to identify trends that, if nourished, could increase stability within Iraq itself.

Finally, in this issue, as in previous issues, we want to acknowledge — with feeling — the conditions of intolerable difficulty within which our Iraqi colleagues are working. Their dedication and perseverance inspires us and their suffering grieves us. We solicit suggestions from our readership for programs that will meet their needs and further TAARII's aim to support academic cooperation between Iraqi and American scholars.



## CULTIVATING THE NATION-SPACE: MODERNISM AND NATION BUILDING IN IRAQ, 1950–1963

HAYTHAM BAHORA, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Current political discussions of Iraqi identity, in the media and among policy makers and academics, emphasize the sectarian nature of the Iraqi nation, a mode of analysis that eternally forecloses the possibility of Iraq ever establishing secular cultural and political institutions that would transcend sectarian and religious affiliations. But even prior to the American invasion and occupation of Iraq, this view of Iraqi identity prevailed among historians, vindicated, it would appear, by the sectarianism that not only structures the new Iraqi government, but pervades cultural and social life in Iraq today. Iraq, so the argument goes, is a tribal nation cobbled together from three Ottoman provinces by a European power, held together through brute force alone. The disintegration of the Iraqi state and its inability to cultivate a public sphere through which all Iraqis, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation, could participate, is considered incontrovertible evidence that Iraq is not only a failed state, but cannot be properly considered a *nation*. What we are witnessing today, then, is a historical corrective, a redrawing of borders that were originally imposed by a colonial power due.

The problem with this view is that it is ahistorical; certainly it is important to consider the British role in producing the modern state of Iraq, the typical



Figure 2.1. The Rafidain Bank, Baghdad, 1959. Latif al Ani Collection (Copyright, Arab Image Foundation)

colonial maneuverings that privileged certain groups at the expense of others, and the ethnic tensions that have been manifested as a result of this, but the danger of such an approach is to read Iraq entirely through the window of tribal and sectarian identity, a tautological approach that attributes any and all problems to some inherent essence rather than to specific historical and political conditions. “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness,” writes Ernest Gellner, “it invents nations where they do not exist.”<sup>1</sup> My project suggests that the production of Iraqi identity, like any national identity, is dependent upon particular political, economic, and cultural factors, and must be historicized to reflect the contingent and unstable factors that produce identities with multiple affiliations (national, religious, tribal, etc.). The period my project scrutinizes (1950–1963) is, I argue, formative in the production of a secular, middle class Iraqi identity, a period that is regarded by many, perhaps uncritically, as a golden era in Iraqi political, economic, and cultural development. Whether it was Baghdad’s leading role in the free verse movement in Arabic poetry, the innovation of its sculptors and painters, or its rapid physical and architectural transformation, Baghdad was rapidly embracing all things modern. My work attempts to

resituate discussions of Iraqi identity by considering the relationship between this modernist cultural production — primarily in literature and architecture — and the national development projects that were evidence of Iraq’s rapid industrial development.

What were the origins of aesthetic modernism in Iraq? What was the relationship between industrial and economic development financed by an oil economy and orchestrated by the Iraq Development Board (1950), on the one hand, and the almost coterminous explosion of modernist aesthetic innovation? In other words, can we correlate the economic and physical transformation of Iraq, what most historians have regarded as Iraq’s embrace of “modernity,” with the rise of modernism in architecture and the arts? In answering this question, it is important to differentiate the terms themselves — the processes of modernization, modernism in the arts, and the nebulous category of modernity are not coterminous, though they are often employed interchangeably. One way of differentiating between these different concepts is to critically assess the politics of aesthetic forms — when, how, and why aesthetic objects take the forms that they do. My project emphasizes Baghdad’s modern architectural renaissance for several reasons: Architecture is limited by its materiality, its essentially symbolic character, and its reliance on fi-



Figure 2.2. Housing Project, Mamoun District, Baghdad, 1960. Latif al Ani Collection (Copyright, Arab Image Foundation)



Figure 2.3. Baghdad, 1960. Latif al Ani Collection (Copyright, Arab Image Foundation)

nancial capital. Reflecting the historical circumstances of its production in an over-determined way, as an object of study, architecture exposes the impact of politics and ideology in a more transparent way than literature or the plastic arts. In Baghdad, the spectacle of architecture, its material as well as its symbolic impact, reordered not only the spatial organization of the city and its landmarks, but also people's relationships to the built environment, to each other, and most importantly, to the state. The most significant changes to Baghdad's spatial organization in this period were the construction of new, wide avenues that connected districts of the city on opposite sides of the Tigris River to new bridges that spanned it. The building of these roads and bridges and their distinctly modern forms — characterized by their width, linearity, and efficiency — suggests that, for a nation newly flush with oil revenues, the control and care of *national* space was viewed for the first time as being intimately tied to the nation's success. Moreover, the nation's success hinged on the ability of the state to discipline its population in a more effective manner. As such, I suggest that the control and development of the nation's physical space — which included the material process of altering the capital city — was reliant on the devices of international architectural modernism and urban planning. The Development Board's vision was of a new city, and a new national order, built on the rational and efficient organization of its structures.

The urban plans for Baghdad and the Development Board's celebrated recruitment of internationally renowned modernist architects (Walter Gropius, Gio Ponti, Le Corbusier, and Frank Lloyd Wright) to design signature buildings in the city were more than innocuous attempts to build a modern city with its appropriate modern structures. These plans had, first, to be staged in the imagination. How was the spectacle of modernity staged? How was it narrated and rationalized? What sorts of discursive dialogues with European modernity took place? Was the Iraqi modernity that was fashioned a derivative modernity, one

that followed the logic of European progress and development entirely, or one that was distinctly local? How, precisely, was the dialectic between the universal and the local resolved? On the architectural level, the work of Rifat Chadirji provides the most instructive example of the attempt to combine vernacular Iraqi architecture with the demands of modernism in international architecture. My project interrogates what I claim becomes a mechanized use of the vernacular, suggesting that the attempt to integrate the region into an international modernist order while simultaneously claiming a regional particularity became nothing more than an appendage to that order. In other words, the attempt to carve out an independent space, what today is termed an "alternative modernity," was, in the end, a material impossibility.

While the history of the Iraqi Development Board and its many projects<sup>2</sup> and commissions has been documented, very little attention has been paid to its place in the history of modernization studies in general, and even less to its problematic origin as a joint British-Iraqi project staffed with American advisors. My aim is to locate the Iraq Development Board, with its grand vision of placing Iraq firmly in the modern world, within discourses of development and progress that are a reconstitution of the colonial relationship. The role of international modernist architectural practice, expressed through Le Corbusier's International Style and Walter Gropius' Bauhaus, far from being neutral or objective, produced in Iraq as elsewhere in the world what philosopher Henri Lefebvre has called a "worldwide architecture of the state."<sup>3</sup>

The contradictions of Baghdad's enchantment with modernity are apparent when juxtaposing the celebratory narratives of progress and development put forth by the Development Board with writers whose literary works were oppositional, registering unease, ambivalence, and discontent with dominant, celebratory narratives of a utopian, technological future. This is not to suggest that many writers of the period, such as Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, did not also view the modernization

process as a necessary and ultimately enabling moment in Iraqi — and Arab — history. But while the modernist architectural production of this period closely mirrored the ideology of the state, the realm of literature was one of the few mediums through which unease and opposition to the changing physical and social worlds would emerge. The literary modernisms of the period, produced by the poets of the free verse movement as well as prose writers like Jabra, often express vehement reactions against modernization while simultaneously replicating its tendencies through their formal insistence on novelty, innovation, and the updating and reconstitution of older forms. If modernization as we understand it today is about industry, progress, the building of dams and irrigation projects, the building of bridges and roads, linking villages to the electric grid — in other words, technological progress — then it becomes clear that one aspect of modernization is the aesthetic modernism that is created as a protest precisely against this modernization. We can conceive of these anti-modern modernisms as a symbolic intervention into the social world, and they register a deep unease with the material transformations of the modern.<sup>4</sup> This is apparent, for example, in Badr Shakir al-Sayyab's idyllic portrayals of his home village of Jaykur, near Basra, as a trope through which the corruption of the modern city is critiqued. We see similar gestures by other poets and writers of the period, and part of my project is to consider Iraq's modernization through the complex and contradictory portrayals, sometimes ambivalent, sometimes oppositional, of its most celebrated poets and writers.

In retrospect, we can today claim that a secular, ascendant Iraqi middle class identity has its roots in this period, when the convergence of oil wealth and the consolidation of state power produced entirely new relationships between the state and its subjects. I suggest that the innovations of modernism in Iraq constituted the medium through which the bureaucratic control of the state was strengthened through the 1950s, leading to the coup of 1958. This leads to a fundamental question about the relationship

between aesthetics and politics: In the case of the arts, how did modernism function as an appendage to the nation building projects of the state? How do state apparatuses direct development toward international markets in a neo-colonial manner, yet do so in the name of popular nationalism? These questions are one way of addressing what has become a contested issue in debates about the advent of “modernity,” namely, the problem of its historical progression, its supposed elaboration from Europe to the global south, and the various attempts to account for its uneven manifestations around the world. Is it even possible to speak of modernity as a process? Is “modernity” to be analyzed as a world-historical event, originating in Europe, that structures the political, economic, and cultural spheres in the Third World? Or as Fredric Jameson contends, is modernity only valid as a conceptual category when it is discussed in association with capitalism?<sup>5</sup> Can we speak of alternative, non-European modernities? While these are broad theoretical questions, my project undertakes a historically specific analysis of the role of the arts in the production of the modern Iraqi citizen, and the complicated negotiations of identity — secular, sectarian, and modern — that took place as a result.

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), pp. 169.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Lord Arthur Salter, *The Development of Iraq: A Plan of Action* (London: Caxton Press, 1953). See also, Abbas Alnasrawi, *Financing Economic Development in Iraq: The Role of Oil in a Middle Eastern Economy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Henri Levebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson Smith (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), pp. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Critic Fredric Jameson considers the question of anti-modern modernisms at length in his seminal book *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (New York: Verso, 2002).

## BOOK DONATIONS

TAARII seeks donations for its permanent library. Currently located in the Amman office, this collection will be relocated when the Institute moves to Iraq. To date, TAARII has received the gift of a substantial collection of archaeological sources. TAARII welcomes book donations in this and other fields. In particular, TAARII seeks the donation of *The Encyclopedia of Islam* and the *Index Islamicus*. Please visit the TAARII website for the current catalog of the TAARII library ([www.taarii.org](http://www.taarii.org)). Contact us regarding new donations at [info@taarii.org](mailto:info@taarii.org).

Thanks to those individuals and institutions who have donated books to Iraqi institutions of research and higher learning through TAARII. We sadly announce that due to changes in the United States Postal Service M-bags program, we will no longer be able to cover the cost of transporting donated books to Iraq.

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS, COMMENTS, & SUGGESTIONS

To submit articles, images, or announcements in either *English or Arabic*, please email Katie Johnson at [info@taarii.org](mailto:info@taarii.org) for submission details. The deadline for the spring issue of the TAARII Newsletter is **December 1, 2007**.

For all other inquiries, comments, and suggestions, please visit our website, [www.taarii.org](http://www.taarii.org).

## FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The annual deadline for submission of applications to the *U.S. Fellows Program* is **November 15** for projects beginning as early as March 2008. Applications from Iraqis and collaborative teams are welcomed on a **ROLLING** basis. Individual Iraqis may request up to \$4,000 and teams of individual U.S. and Iraqi scholars wishing to collaborate may request up to \$14,000. For additional information, please visit the TAARII website: [www.taarii.org](http://www.taarii.org). To submit a collaborative proposal, contact [info@taarii.org](mailto:info@taarii.org).

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## (RE)FORMING INTIMACY IN REVOLUTIONARY IRAQ: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE PERSONAL STATUS LAW OF 1959

SARA PURSLEY, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

On July 14, 1958, power in Iraq changed hands through a military coup, but historians (as well as Iraqis) have generally agreed that the event is better described as a revolution. The events of the day certainly looked like a revolution to those who witnessed them. Within hours of the coup, the streets of Baghdad were filled with crowds celebrating the overthrow of the thirty-seven year old British-made monarchy, while the body of the king himself was dragged through the streets and the British Embassy went up in flames. In the days and months that followed, the new regime implemented the kinds of political and social change often associated with nationalist revolution and postcolonial rebuilding. The monarchy was officially abolished, a republic was declared, the government's political and economic subservience to Britain was terminated, land reforms were implemented, (some) political parties and newspapers were (briefly) legalized, and there was a proliferation of political, social, and civic organizations of all kinds. Abdul-Salaam Yousif writes that July 14 was an "explosive rupture in the very fabric of Iraqi society."<sup>1</sup>

Five years later, in February 1963, Iraqi prime minister and 1958 coup leader 'Abd al-Karim Qasim was overthrown and assassinated by members of the Ba'ath party. Historians have made a number of arguments to help explain the fall of Iraq's first post-monarchical government, pointing to the geopolitical dynamics of the Cold War, Qasim's increasingly dictatorial tendencies, and deep political differences within the revolution's initial base of supporters, especially the well-known conflict between the communists and the pan-Arab nationalists. Some of the most important battlegrounds of the years 1958–63 were formed around two laws

promulgated by Qasim's regime. The first was the Agrarian Reform Law of 1958 setting limits on the size of individual landholdings, the struggle over which has been a serious consideration of historians. The second was the Personal Status Law of 1959, which removed family law from the domain of religious authorities and brought it under the control of the state. Among other provisions, the new civil codes set a minimum age on marriage, restricted polygyny and unilateral male divorce and, most controversially, mandated equality in intestate inheritance between male and female heirs.

In spite of the fact that the law immediately became a flashpoint for many of the country's political and social conflicts, that the controversy produced around it has sometimes been seen as a factor in the destabilization of Qasim's government, and that its revision (including the repeal of its equal inheritance clause) was one of the first legislative acts of the new Ba'ath regime in 1963, it has received scant, and mostly superficial, historical analysis.<sup>2</sup> It is often posited as a well-intentioned but doomed attempt to force liberal progress on a traditional country in too rapid and heavy-handed a manner, or as a somewhat absent-minded and naive assault of the secular state on Islamic authority. Either way, it appears as something inauthentic, imposed on an uncomprehending or just plain hostile Iraqi public by the new regime. My dissertation research suggests instead that the conflict over the personal status law engaged many different actors at all levels of Iraqi society, and that it did so because it both reflected and activated real differences within that society over the rights of women, the forms and priorities of intimate relationships, and the roles of masculinity, femininity, sexuality, law, and religion in the project of build-

ing an independent nation-state. Taking these differences seriously, my project examines modes of reasoning and forms of political intervention employed by a number of overlapping groups involved in the struggle over personal status reform in Iraq from 1958–63.

Three of these groups will be briefly discussed here, to give a sense of the direction of my research: 1) Iraqi communists, especially female members of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), who drafted and were the main non-state advocates of the Personal Status Law; 2) students and artists of what has been variously described as the youth movement, the counterculture, and the "Baghdad Renaissance" of the 1950s; and 3) Shi'i intellectuals of the emerging political revivalist movement centered in Najaf. The activities and aims of these groups reflected conflicting conceptions of family, gender, and sexual equality, and one of the early ideas behind my dissertation was that such conceptions would come most clearly into view when they appeared on opposing sides of the political conflict over the 1959 law. The further I get into my research, however, the more aware I become that many of the issues at stake in this struggle may actually be obscured if our analytical approach adheres unquestioningly to the political division of the conflict into two sides, especially if these are assumed to neatly correspond to categories such as progressive/traditional, liberal/conservative, left/right, secular/religious.

During the first year of the 1958 revolution, the ICP was, by nearly everyone's account, the most powerful movement in Iraq and the new government's strongest base of support.<sup>3</sup> It either controlled or had significant influence within the majority of popular organizations that had emerged after the revolution, in-

cluding the League for the Defense of Women's Rights (LDWR). Founded in 1952 by young female members of the party, the League operated more or less underground, along with most of the other communist front organizations, until the July revolution. During those years, it distributed clandestine literature defending women's rights and was involved in organizing women during the 1952, 1954, and 1956 rebellions. In March 1959, after less than a year of open operations, it reported a membership of 25,000, and by 1960 claimed 43,000 official members. The mid-twentieth century feminist movement in Iraq was inseparable from the communist movement (which may help explain why the former has not generated much interest on the part of Western historians). One small but remarkable sign of just how linked the two were can be found in U.S. State Department records from the Baghdad embassy in 1959. An embassy official reported with alarm a recent statement by Qasim that he planned to appoint a woman to the highest levels of the Iraqi government. The American official predicted (correctly, as it turned out) that this almost surely meant Qasim was about to appoint a communist, since "among women currently active on local scene, it would be difficult [to] find one not far left."<sup>4</sup>

The LDWR drafted a version of the Personal Status Law, which was then submitted to the government; it is not known to what extent it matched the version promulgated by Qasim's government in 1959. In addition, similarities and differences between the Iraqi law and personal status reforms in other Arab countries during this time period have not really been examined. The most important difference may be the equalization of inheritance law; the legal reforms of no other Arab country during this time period included such a provision. While some historians of Iraq have dismissed the 1959 law as the naive work of a well-intentioned minority of government reformers, it may turn out that the law's origins in large, popular, and influential political organizations (and thus its arguably greater connectedness to the actual society)

made it lean *more* radically towards sexual equality than it would have had it been solely the work of state reformers.

On the other hand, the intent of the Iraqi law was clearly not restricted to the promotion of sexual equality. As with reforms in other Arab states during this time, it was also (and perhaps primarily) concerned with discouraging certain kinds of associations and intimate relations (e.g., extended family ties, polygyny, temporary marriage) as well as divorce. (A drive for sexual equality could have simply expanded women's rights to divorce, but the law in Iraq, as in many other states, seemed more interested in curtailing men's rights to divorce.) The aim was undoubtedly to encourage the formation of what is often called the modern bourgeois family, which in its classic form — and certainly its dominant form during the 1950s in the West — was characterized by marital companionship and an ideal of permanence, monogamy, domesticity, new and comparatively rigid forms of sexual morality, and a gendered division of labor corresponding to the modern division of society into public and private spheres. It is likely that this aim was shared by the state reformers who promulgated the law and the leaders of the LDWR who drafted it, the former because this family type has historically been seen as important to the formation of a unified and loyal citizenry in modern nation states, and the latter because they believed it was in the best interests of women to replace extended patrilineal kinship structures with smaller nuclear families based on marital cooperation.

But the restrictions and sexual moralities involved in promoting this new family structure may have existed in some sort of tension with other elements on the Iraqi left. Hanna Batatu, one of the foremost historians of twentieth century Iraq, expresses a well-known truism that communism in that country "did not implant itself in the visible citadels of power but in the hearts and minds of youth."<sup>5</sup> Iraq's youth movement of the 1950s, and the artistic renaissance that is often linked to it, were associated not only with communism but with radical

sexual experimentation, and many of the important artists of the time (most of whom were either card-carrying communists or fellow travelers) explored gender roles, sexual moralities, and various types of family structures as repressive human inventions, generating a discourse of (often male) longing for sexual liberation. Iraqi novelist Khalid Kishtainy gives a sense of this counterculture when he describes how he and his friends took to haunting Kallachia, the brothel ghetto of Baghdad, in the 1950s: "We used to stroll into the nooks and crannies of the old lanes reciting passages from the *Communist Manifesto* and verses from Bahr al-Ulum's poem on the prostitute's grave. There was the painter who paid a black whore only to sit for him. There was the story writer who invited a blind one to a meal of kebab only to hear her story ... There was the real political writer who actually went to bed with Zahra and came out crying."<sup>6</sup> Conversations with Iraqis who lived through the 1950s often suggest that the youth movement was an important base of support for the Personal Status Law of 1959, or even that the "generation gap" was at the root of the whole conflict, and there is undoubtedly some truth in this. But what interests me here is whether different Iraqi conceptions of family and sexual intimacy are masked by viewing the very public struggle over legal reform in simple pro and con terms (and not just on the "pro" side, as I will discuss below regarding the Islamists). Whatever else it might have been, it seems clear that the 1959 law, with its emphasis on restricting temporary marriage, polygyny, and men's right to divorce, was not exclusively or even primarily concerned with extending individual freedoms or rights of choice over one's intimate relationships, creating some potential dissonance between it and the concerns of at least some of the well-known artists and activists of this generation.

Perhaps the most unexpected aspect of my research so far relates to forms of intervention concerns women's rights and family structures from within the incipient political Shi'ci movement in Iraq after 1958. In part, this movement

was represented by the political mobilization of senior *mujtahids* outraged by the Personal Status Law as well as the land reform law, but these conservative clerics were by most accounts fighting a losing battle with the *Zeitgeist* due to their opposition to the revolution in its entirety. An arguably more significant component of the Shi‘i movement was led by a younger generation of radical Islamists such as the famous Shi‘i scholar Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and his sister Amina Bint Haydar al-Sadr (more commonly known as Bint al-Huda), who opposed the Personal Status Law but supported other revolutionary initiatives such as land reform, the expulsion of the British, and the overthrow of the monarchy. This group engaged simultaneously and self-consciously with the senior clerics over the interpretation of Islamic law and with the Marxist-influenced Shi‘i youth who filled the ranks of the ICP and the student movement.

My research focuses especially on the fictional and non-fictional writings of the prolific Bint al-Huda. Her works, which are widely available in Arabic but have not been translated into English, promote certain rights for women as well as a model of companionate marriage; she is sharply critical of arranged marriages, emphasizes the importance of compatibility and cooperation between spouses, and argues that a woman has the right to divorce her husband under Islamic law (though male clerics have corrupted the law over the centuries to deprive women of that right). Given her unflinching criticism of the *‘ulama* on a number of issues concerning women’s rights, as well as the logical rigor of many her arguments, I find it difficult to dismiss her opposition to the Personal Status Law of 1959 as mere apologetics. She argues that the law was derived from the concept of marital partnership in Western jurisprudence, which reinforces the economic dependency and exploitation (*istighlal*) of women by joining the property of husband and wife and then giving the husband disproportionate rights over the supposedly joint property created by the marriage. (A wave of feminist movements in Western societies would soon take up

this legal issue and its many social consequences as major concerns of women — but that was in the future.) In Islamic law, a daughter inherits half the share of a son because the latter as an adult is legally responsible for the economic maintenance of a household, while the daughter’s property is and always remains her own, to use as she wishes. In Western family law, Bint al-Huda continues, a woman is free to inherit from her father an amount of property precisely equal to that of her brother, under the minor condition that she deliver it all to her husband the instant she is married. Bint al-Huda was not troubled by sexual inequality in the law, but she was, arguably, concerned with women’s economic autonomy, particularly in relation to their husbands. Her many novels and short stories, which are full of unhappy women in bad marriages, both traditional and modern, reinforce this interpretation. (Bint al-Huda, incidentally, never married and worked her entire adult life as a teacher and writer while living with her more famous brother, until they were both arrested, tortured, and murdered by Saddam Hussein’s security forces in 1980.)

In this brief discussion of some of the complications in viewing the conflict over the Personal Status Law in binary terms, I do not mean to suggest that the different sides in the dispute somehow wanted the same thing, or that they did not know what they were doing when they lined up on one side or the other. On the contrary, I trust — and my research has continuously affirmed — that the many Iraqis who focused their energies on a conflict over family law, at a time when their country was beset by a great many problems, were correct in their perception that the stakes involved in it were high. The aim of my project is to help unravel some of the conflicting views of selfhood, ideals of intimacy, and hopes for a national future that made this so.

<sup>1</sup> Abdul-Salaam Yousif, “The Struggle for Cultural Hegemony during the Iraqi Revolution,” in *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited*, edited by Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 1991), p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> For a recent exception, see Noga Efrati, “Negotiating Rights in Iraq: Women and the Personal Status Law,” *Middle East Journal* 59:4 (2005).

<sup>3</sup> Prime Minister Qasim, in spite of initial American and British concerns, as well as the erroneous statements of some writers of Iraqi history today, was not a communist with either a capital or a lower-case “C”. To the extent that he had a political ideology, and he liked to claim that he did not, Qasim was an economically liberal Iraqi nationalist (as opposed to a pan-Arab nationalist). He tried to use the communists to combat the Arab nationalists and vice versa.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Embassy Baghdad to Secretary of State, July 10, 1959, USNA, RG84/787.

<sup>5</sup> Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 465.

<sup>6</sup> Khalid Kishtainy, *The Prostitute in Progressive Literature* (London: Allison & Busby, 1982), p. 10, quoted in Yousif, “The Struggle for Cultural Hegemony.”

## DISSERTATION PRIZES

The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII) announces annual prizes for the best U.S. doctoral dissertations on Iraq. Dissertations defended during the 2007–2008 academic year are eligible and may come from any discipline for the study of any time period. One award of \$1,500 will be made for the best dissertation on ancient Iraq and one award of \$1,500 will be made for the best dissertation on medieval or modern Iraq. Letters of nomination should come from dissertation advisors or committee members, should explain the importance of the dissertation, and should accompany a complete copy of the dissertation manuscript. **Please send all nominations/submissions by July 1, 2008**, to The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq, 1507 E. 53rd Street, Suite 920, Chicago, IL 60615. Queries may be addressed to [info@taarii.org](mailto:info@taarii.org).

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## THE IRAQI ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN IRAQ

LUCINE TAMINIAN  
TAARII Resident Director and Senior Scholar in Residence

Begun in 2005, TAARII's two-year oral history project aims to record Iraqi's accounts of their lives in Iraq. During the years 2005 and 2006, Dr. Hala Fattah, the then Resident Director of TAARII, interviewed thirty-eight Iraqis living in Amman, Jordan, all of whom are of upper middle class. To include other social groups of Iraqis living in Jordan, I joined the project with the task of interviewing Iraqis of lower socio-economic status. This report concerns only the interviews I carried out.

Out of an initial twenty interviews, eighteen were digitally recorded and transcribed. Six were joint interviews, so the total number of people I interviewed is twenty-six: thirteen males and thirteen females. The majority of the interviewees are of lower socio-economic status or impoverished middle class Iraqis who live on their pension salaries, which have devalued tremendously since the 1990s embargo. Some survive on money sent by relatives living in the West. As the table given below shows, the interviewees represent the cultural and ethnic diversity of Iraqi society, however, the data collected to date permit only limited generalization.

The open-ended questions posed solicit information on education, marriage, social relations, and residency for four or five generations (the informant, his/her siblings, parents, uncles, aunts, children, grandchildren, and grandparents), and allow for comparison across generations, education, class, ethnicity, and religion.

### *Religion*

Muslim/Sunni	6
Muslim/Shi'ite	9
Christian	11

### *Ethnicity*

Arab	13
Kurd	2
Assyrian/Chaldean	6
Armenian	5

### *Historical Background*

During the years 1991 to 2005, Jordan received two distinct and substantial waves of Iraqi immigrants, who fled their homes in search of security. The first of these waves consisted predominantly of Shi'ites, who were either middle class professionals or low-ranking army deserters, fleeing southern Iraq after the 1991 uprising. The majority of the immigrants eventually left Jordan for other Arab countries that offered them jobs, or for any Western country that would grant them refugee status. The second wave of immigrants consisted mainly of affluent Sunnis or poor Christians (Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Armenians) who fled for their lives after the collapse of the regime in 2003, or after the subsequent spread of sectarian violence. Today, more than 700,000 Iraqis live in Jordan, dispersed in various neighborhoods and refugee camps of the major cities. The rich, known as the investors, move freely in and out of the country, whereas as the poor are relatively immobile and live with the continuous threat of deportation for illegal residency.

### *Methodological Issues*

Three issues of methodological significance have arisen in the interviews.

First, due to their past and present experiences, Iraqis live in constant fear and are very hesitant to speak about the recent past or the present. The more violent the situation in Iraq gets, the

more hesitant they become. The poor among them who earn their living as street vendors and thus face the harassment of local authorities are more occupied with their present struggles than with their memories of their past lives. "Let me solve my problems with the Municipality first and then I can talk to you about my life in Iraq," was the response of a female street vendor when I suggested an interview. I had to make many calls and pay visits to the Municipality in Irbid to help her solve her problems before she agreed to be interviewed. Moreover, the recent international interest in the condition of Iraqi "refugees" in Jordan and Syria and the intent of the Jordanian government to do a survey study of Iraqis living in Jordan made Iraqis more cautious. One Iraqi whom I approached for an interview told me that a priest had warned not to speak to foreigners and to be cautious in doing so. In sum, fear and the burden of their new lives in Jordan silence Iraqis' memories and make the task of the researcher more difficult.

Second, the dispersal of Iraqis in the neighborhoods of major cities adds to the challenges of field research, especially if the researcher is an anthropologist who is used to living in the research "community" and building good relations with the informants before starting the research. Yet, I can tentatively say that temporary "communities" of Iraqis do exist in Jordan. For instance, 120 poor Assyrian families live in a neighborhood in eastern Amman and meet in a "Jordanian" church everyday to pray, run Assyrian language classes, and to voice their grievances to the international visitors. These Assyrians constitute a community in transit, whose members have either applied for immigration visas to



Western countries or plan to go back to Iraq when things settle down. In the same way, more affluent Iraqis have created their own public spaces and set up Iraqi restaurants and cafe shops in western Amman that are mainly frequented by other affluent Iraqis. The Iraqi Shi'ites, who gather during their annual religious ceremonies in a shrine built recently on a historical site in southern Jordan to commemorate the death of Ali and Hussein, create their own community, as well. However, due to recent animosity towards the Shi'ites in Jordan, this community now prefers to celebrate in Damascus rather than in southern Jordan where they are hailed with stones. It was easier for me as a woman to get to know the community centered on the church than to acquaint myself with the ones centered on restaurants, cafe shops, or the shrine.

Third, the majority of Iraqi men between the ages of 45 and 60 spent twelve to fifteen years of their lives serving in the Iraqi army. Therefore, remembering the past is painful. When I told a fifty-two year old man about the research project, he smiled sadly and said, "I had no life, I spent the best part of my life serving in the army; fifteen years of fighting, first in the north, then in the south, then back to the north. All I remember is destruction and dead bodies!" In such a case, interviewing was a painful task for the interviewees, as well as for the interviewer.

### General Findings

The collected data allow for some generalizations that deserve further investigation. In this report, I'll briefly discuss three major issues.

*The Politics of Memory.* The act of remembering by the majority of the interviewees was quite often shaped by the current events in Iraq. In narrating the past, they repeatedly underlined the fact that Iraqi society previously had never been sectarian and took pains to prove this to me, telling me about the numerous intermarriages that occurred

and about the friendly relations among neighbors of different sects and religions. Their stories constitute a comment on the current situation in Iraq and a refutation of the sectarian violence shattering its social fabrics rather than nostalgia for the past.

*The Politics of Identity.* All the interviewees identify themselves as Iraqi, but for non-Arabs the ethnic identity prevails over a national one. The underlining of an ethnic identity quite often constitutes an invention of a national identity that involves a re-reading of the Iraqi history and/or a reclaiming of a suppressed ethnic identity. An Assyrian who identified himself as Assyrian considered Iraq the land of the Assyrians: "What is Iraq? Iraq is Assyrian. The Assyrian civilization constitutes the spirit of Iraq. When I say I am Assyrian, it is implied that I am Iraqi." Whereas an Armenian insisted, "I am Armenian first and then Iraqi. During the Ba'ath era we were not allowed to say we are Armenian. They [Ba'athists] claimed whoever lives in the Arab countries is an Arab. Now, I want to say loudly I am Armenian, an Iraqi Armenian."

*The Politics of Marriage.* A comparison among the marriage patterns of the three or four generations covered by the TAARII questionnaire indicates a change in marriage practices and in the family politics of marrying daughters out. Whereas the generation of parents or grandparents of the interviewees tended to marry in, the generation of interviewees themselves tended to marry out. No intermarriage across groups was recorded in the first and second generations, whereas more than six occurred in the third generation: a Sunni marrying a Shi'ite, a Chaldean marrying an Armenian, a Shi'ite marrying a Sunni (three cases), and an Armenian marrying a Chaldean.

Quite a few number of the women who reached marriageable age (20+ years) during the Iran-Iraq war (1980–1989) chose not to get married for fear of losing their husbands to war. A single female interviewee said, "When I graduated from the university many

men showed interest in me. I did not want to marry; they were all well-educated but they had to serve in the army. They had to leave and go to the front to fight. I didn't want to live the same experience my sister had. Her husband was called up a month after their marriage. He fell in captivity and remained in a jail in Iran for twelve years. Marriage has no meaning in such a case. She was miserable; as a single woman I was better off."

Arranged marriages did occur in the generation of 60+ years, dwindled in the younger generations (40+ years), but are increasing in the youngest generation. For a good number of families, marriage is now seen as a path to security not just for their daughters, but also for the whole family. Such families tend to arrange to marry their daughters to someone living in a Western country with the hope that, once she settles there, she can secure immigration visas for the whole family. Such marriages are more noticeable among Assyrian, Chaldean, and Shi'ite families who regard their respective diasporic communities as a pool of prospective husbands for their own daughters. A young Shi'ite woman of twenty-five who is engaged to a Shi'ite living in California explained the arrangement to me: "He is a friend of my cousin who lives in California; my cousin arranged the marriage. He talked to my parents, and they said fine. I have never met him, but I now correspond with him through the internet: he sent me his photo and I sent mine to him. I know how he looks." Her sister smiled approvingly, "Hopefully she will manage to get us there, too." An Assyrian pointed out to me, "This is the beginning of the wedding season, it is the time when Assyrians living abroad come to be wed to Assyrian women living here. Their families hope that they [daughters] can secure visas for them. Iraqi girls now prefer to marry someone living abroad. He opens the way for her to live in a secure country. They have no reason to marry Iraqi men living in Jordan or Iraq; they are jobless and can't feed them."

## تقرير الرئيس ميجواير جيبسون

يبدو الوضع في العراق مثيراً للاشمئزاز بشكل كبير، وتبدو حياة العلماء والأكاديميين عملياً مستحيلة. وبالإمكان الاطلاع على ما يحدث في بغداد من خلال التقارير الإعلامية القليلة و خاصة من خلال راديو القناة الوطنية ( أن بي آر)، ومحطة البث البريطانية (بي بي سي). وبالطبع فإن الانترنت هو المصدر الأساسي للحصول على أية أخبار أو معلومات. وقد شرح تقرير إخباري حديث تفاصيل الرحلة التي تستغرق الساعة لقطع نهر تجريس، حيث ما زال هناك جسراً واحداً فقط مفتوحاً. وتستغرق تعبئة صهريج بالبنزين فقط ساعات من الانتظار الطويل تحت حر الشمس. فكيف نتوقع أن يصل الناس إلى أعمالهم أو مدارسهم أو جامعاتهم في الوقت المطلوب؟ ولكن مع ذلك ما زال البعض يحاول المحاضرة أو على الأقل الحضور إلى غرف التدريس. نرح العقول ما زال مستمراً، والدول المجاورة أصبحت تغص وبشكل متزايد بالعلماء والمفكرين العراقيين. إن بإمكان برنامج "العلماء في خطر" مساعدة عدد قليل من هؤلاء، لكن كل المتعلمين والمفكرين في العراق في خطر.

ويستمر معهد "تاري" في محاولة تقديم المساعدة بشكل متواضع من خلال تقديم التمويل للعلماء وطلاب العلم الأفراد. كذلك نود الاستمرار في إرسال الكتب الجديدة لزملائنا ولمكتبات البحوث والجامعات، ولكن تم إعلامنا الآن أن هناك تغيير في خدمة البريد الأمريكي، وتبعاً لذلك فقد توقف البريد البحري، وهذا يعني أن تكلفة كل الكتب سترتفع الآن إلى أربعة أو خمسة أضعاف ما كانت عليه قبل شهر واحد فقط من الآن. ونقوم حالياً بالبحث عن طرق بديلة لإرسال الكتب من خلالها إلى عمان، ليقوم مديرنا المناوب في عمان بشحنها من هناك إلى العراق.

وهناك بعض الأخبار السارة؛ حيث تلقينا منحة من برنامج "المنح الوطنية للنواحي الإنسانية" لإكمال وتوسيع مشروع التاريخ الشفوي. إضافة إلى ذلك، وإن لم يعيقنا أي طارئ، فسنقوم بمجموعة صغيرة من علماء الآثار العراقيين والأمريكيين بالعمل سوية هذا الصيف لإنهاء إعداد تقارير الحفريات العراقية للنشر. وهناك الآن تقريران جاهزان، وآخر قيد الطبع. ومازلنا نتطلع إلى تمويل إضافي لإكمال هذا البرنامج. أما المنح الدراسية التي نقدمها لطلاب الولايات المتحدة فما زالت مستمرة، ونشجع هيئات التدريس والطلاب على تقديم الطلبات.

نأمل أن نتلقى عدد من الأطروحات والأبحاث الجيدة لترشيحها لنيل جائزة "تاري" لهذا العام، والمحافظة بالتالي على منحة الولايات المتحدة المتأرجحة حول تاريخ العراق القديم، الأوسط والحديث. ويشكل تحسين المنح هذا والتزامنا بتعاون مستمر مع زملائنا العراقيين أحد أهدافنا، وسنواصل السعي لإيجاد طرق جديدة لتحقيق ذلك.

Due to the length of the contributions of this issue of the TAARII Newsletter, we are unable to include all of the articles in Arabic in the print version. However, there will be a full Arabic version available online in October 2007.

### الأعضاء من المؤسسات المختلفة

متحف كمبيل للفنون	المدارس الأمريكية للبحوث الشرقية
جامعة ميريلاند	جامعة أريزونا
جامعة نيويورك	جامعة بوسطن
جامعة نوتيردام	جامعة كاليفورنيا، بيركلي
متحف جامعة بنسلفانيا	جامعة كاليفورنيا، لوس أنجلوس
جامعة رنجرز	جامعة كاليفورنيا، سانتا باربارا
جامعة الدولة في نيويورك، بافالو	جامعة شيكاغو
جامعة الدولة في نيويورك، ستوني بروك	جامعة كولومبيا
جامعة تكساس، أوستن	جامعة دوك
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### الإحالات لنشرة تاري الإخبارية والتعليقات والاقتراحات

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يعلن المعهد الأمريكي للبحوث العلمية في العراق (تاري) عن جوائز السنوية لأفضل أطروحات بحثية حول العراق. الأطروحات التي يتم مناقشتها خلال السنة الأكاديمية 2007-2008 هي مؤهلة للانتخاب وهي قد تأتي من أي فرع من فروع المعرفة لدراسة أية فترة زمنية. ستقدم منحة مقدارها 1500 دولار لأفضل أطروحة حول العراق القديم، ومنحة أخرى بقيمة 1500 دولار أيضاً لأفضل أطروحة مقدمة حول العراق في العصور الوسطى أو العراق الحديث. ويجب أن تأتي رسائل الترشيح من قبل مرشدي الأطروحات، حيث تشرح أهمية الأطروحة، ويجب أن يرفق معها نسخة كاملة لمادة الأطروحة. الرجاء عدم التأخر عن إرسال أية ترشيحات/إحالات عن الأول من شهر تموز الحالي 2007، للمعهد الأمريكي للبحوث العلمية في العراق (تاري): على العنوان التالي:

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## IN THIS ISSUE

“1950s Baghdad — Modern and International” <i>Mina Marefat</i>	1
President’s Report	8/17
Executive Director’s Report	8
“Cultivating the Nation-Space: Modernism and Nation Building in Iraq, 1950–1963” <i>Haytham Bahoora</i>	9
“(Re)forming Intimacy in Revolutionary Iraq: A Social History of the Personal Status Law of 1959” <i>Sara Pursley</i>	12
“TAARII’s Oral History Project” <i>Lucine Taminian</i>	16

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