

NOT YOUR “AVERAGE” COUP D’ÉTAT

The 14 July Revolution and the “True Coup” Question

What distinguishes a “true” revolution from a coup d’état? Which title best describes the so-called 14 July Revolution? This paper explores the origins, events, and aftermath of this pivotal period in Iraqi history. The author would like to thank Dr. Alexander Maxwell for his many useful comments and encouragement in writing this paper.

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Leaders of the July 14th, 1958 Revolution
Source: Anonymous (Commons Wikimedia)

On 14 July 1958, the first Iraqi Republic was formed, the result of a swift revolution that swept away the Iraqi monarchy and took the world by surprise.¹ Led by ‘Abd al-Karīm Qāsim, the Hāshimite Monarchy was brutally deposed through the execution of King Faisal II and most of the royal family.² The ensuing power vacuum saw Qāsim himself assume the position of Prime Minister of Iraq; however, his regime lasted just under five years, from 14 July, 1958, until 8 February, 1963.³ While this may fit the description of the “average” revolution or coup d’état, down to its leader’s grisly demise, there are many differing narratives of the 14 July Revolution that disagree on everything from its origins to the reasons for the resulting regime’s eventual failure. However, what sets the Revolution and Qāsim’s regime apart is what both managed to accomplish during their short lives. Such historical debate begs the following question: how representative of Iraqi society, or how “true,” was this revolution? This paper endeavors to ascertain the origins, events, and aftermath of the 14 July Revolution. It will discuss key events leading up to the Revolution, the drama around the

Revolution itself, and the manner in which Qāsim ruled the first Iraqi Republic. While scholars and historians today continue to argue over the finer details, there is little doubt that the 14 July Revolution, the demise of the monarchy, and the birth of the First Iraqi Republic constituted a period of rapid change and upheaval in Iraqi history.

ROAD TO REVOLUTION: ‘ABD AL-KARĪM QĀSIM AND THE FREE OFFICERS’ MOVEMENT

Today it is acknowledged by both the participants themselves and modern historians that the Free Officers’ Movement in Iraq was inspired by Gamal Abdel Nasser’s campaign of the same name and the success of the 1952 Egyptian Revolution.⁴ While the 14 July Revolution did not occur until 1958, the first signs of dissent allegedly emerged as early as September 1952.⁵ The clandestine movement – formed by those officers in the Iraqi Armed Forces who were keen to emulate Nasser’s success in Egypt – followed the Egyptian example, advocating pan-Arabism and building on the “tide of Arab nationalism” that so threatened the British monopoly of the Middle East.⁶ The movement challenged the rule of the young Hāshimite Dynasty, one of several monarchies established by the British in 1921 following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, and Prime Minister Nuri al-Sa’id’s regime, which today is remembered as ‘al-‘ahd al-fāsid’, the “Corrupt Regime.”⁷ Nuri’s regime was indeed authoritarian. However, it is likely that his sympathy for the British and his compliance with their demands was what condemned him in the eyes of many Iraqis.⁸

To understand the origins of the Revolution and the immense popularity that Qāsim’s regime enjoyed in its early days, several key events in Iraq’s history must be explored. Iraqis were especially opposed to their government’s commitment to the controversial Baghdad Pact, formalized in 1955.⁹ A treaty made between Britain, Iraq and Turkey, and later, Iran and Pakistan, the pact was intended to ensure collective defense in the Middle East, not only to “contain” the Soviet Union and protect the region against the perceived threat of encroaching communism, but also to safeguard Britain and the United States’ own security interests in the Northern Tier.¹⁰ Known first as the Turkish-Iraqi Pact of Mutual Co-operation, the pact was advocated strongly by

American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who saw the futility in establishing a successful regional defense strategy against the Soviets without the cooperation of the Arab states.¹¹ The “winning over” of Iraq was especially important, given her proximity to the strategic pass through the Zagros Mountains and access to the Tigris-Euphrates valley, the acquisition of which would establish vital lines of communication with Turkey.¹² Despite its heavy investment, the United States never officially joined the pact, a disappointment to which many historians attribute the pact’s eventual failure.¹³ While Iraq benefited somewhat from the pact (a key incentive being the return of the Habbaniya and Shaiba air bases to Iraqi sovereignty), the British ultimately gained far more from the arrangement.¹⁴ As scholar Richard L. Jasse notes, Nuri’s attempts to “negotiate” the conditions of the pact were cleverly circumvented by the British to their advantage, only confirming Nuri’s reputation as Britain’s “stooge” to Iraqis.¹⁵

Another blow to the popularity of the Hāshimite Dynasty was the formation of the United Arab Republic (U.A.R.) in 1958. This union of Nasser’s Egypt and Shukri al-Quwatli’s Syria, while brief, has been described, naturally, as “one of the most important victories in contemporary Arab history” by the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party.¹⁶ The Hāshimite response to Nasser’s “greatest triumph yet” was the formation of the Arab Federation of Iraq and Jordan in 1958, an alliance between cousins King Faisal II and King Hussein of Jordan that lasted a mere six months.¹⁷ The brief alliance irretrievably damaged the reputation of the monarchy in Iraq; as scholar Uriel Dann notes, Iraqis did not appreciate their own “unloved and alien royal house” aligning with “its needy relations abroad.”¹⁸ Of particular concern to Iraqis was whether they would have to assimilate Jordan’s considerable debt, thus again rendering Iraq at a disadvantage, the result of an “imperialist manoeuvre masquerading as virtue.”¹⁹ In comparison to the U.A.R., the Arab Federation was a poor substitute, a cheap attempt at unity that left much to be desired.

The social composition of the Free Officers’ Movement reflects the class divisions that had been allowed to flourish in Iraqi society under the monarchy. The majority of the movement’s membership were educated military men who usually also belonged to the broad social stratum known as the *effendiyya*. A vague categorization, *effendiyya* refers to anyone who has received an education of any form. Described as “westernized,” the *effendiyya* typically wore Western dress and did not conform to traditional customs.²⁰ Despite the term *effendi* originating from the Byzantine Greek word meaning *seigneur*, or master, whence it passed into Ottoman Turkish, the *effendiyya* were in the majority from the working middle class, the sons of merchants who, through Western education, came to hold such positions as teachers, officials, health workers, engineers and officers—the social opposite of the ruling Hāshimite elite.²¹ Belonging neither to the ruling elitist class nor the traditional masses, their relative lack of identity in Iraqi society, as scholar Michael Eppel

points out, “made the *effendiyya* ripe for absorbing a nationalist ideological response,” as was the case with the Free Officers.²² As historian Phebe Marr states:

The fourteen members of the central committee may be taken as fairly representative of the movement. The overwhelming majority were Arab sunnī. There were only two shī’ah and no Kurds... Most came from the middle or lower middle class, although three – Qāsim and the two ‘Arifs, ‘Abd al-Salām and ‘Abd al-Rahman – came from poor families... All had been educated at the Baghdad Military Academy; one, Qāsim, had been a school-teacher first.²³

While its origins suggest that the Free Officers’ Movement was a “genuine” reflection of the voice of the Iraqi middle class, this assumption is challenged by the fact that, by 1957, it only had between 170 and 200 members.²⁴ Furthermore, Marr alleges that the Revolution “succeeded more because of luck and audacity than as a result of long planning or extensive organisation.”²⁵ This condemnation of the movement as “unorganised” both confirms and contradicts descriptions of the countenance and leadership capabilities of de facto leader Qāsim, which differ radically from source to source.²⁶

Qāsim’s character has been analysed in depth by those that knew him personally and by historians today; some attribute the success of the Revolution to him while others blame him for the failure of Iraq’s first Republic. A significant figure, Qāsim was born in 1914 in Mahdiyya, one of many poor quarters in Baghdad. He was, according to records published during his regime, of pure Arab descent, and was thus praised for his racial purity. However, he was later condemned by his rivals as the mixed offspring of a Kurd and a Turcoman.²⁷ Despite his impoverished upbringing, it is widely acknowledged by friend and foe alike that Qāsim was a successful soldier, having attained the status of brigadier by 1955.²⁸ Regarding his personality, however, agreement is not universal; descriptions of him as “jumpy, moody and unpredictable, but capable of exercising much personal charm” do not reflect the memories of those that orchestrated the Revolution alongside him, specifically that of General Ismail Al-Arif.²⁹ In his so-called “first hand account,” titled *Iraq Reborn: A Firsthand Account of the July 1958 Revolution and After*, Al-Arif details his participation in the 14 July Revolution and his dealings with Qāsim, his alleged friend of fifteen years.³⁰ He describes Qāsim as a brave, shrewd, and courageous officer who was “beloved by all his troops for his courage and simplicity.”³¹ Of Qāsim’s home life, General Al-Arif writes:

He [Qāsim] lived very simply. Many poor people used to visit him frequently because he served the poor by sharing his salary with the needy. In return, they would come to clean and cook and serve him, although this was strictly a voluntary action on the part of the people who loved and respected him.³²

The accuracy of this benevolent description is somewhat validated by the fact that, after he had been executed, it was found that Qāsim was “virtually penniless” and that he had

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Map of the United Arab States (red) and Arab Federation (green) in 1958

Source: Roxanna (Commons Wikimedia)

been donating his government paychecks and military pension to the poor.³³

Like the memory of his character, Qāsim’s role in the build-up to the Revolution – and the amount of credit he should be awarded for its success – is debated. Conflicting reports place him at the pulse of the clandestine movement, while other accounts diminish his role as its leader. What is clear, however, is that Qāsim joined the movement a number of years after it was formed. Indeed, General Al-Arif claims that he himself recruited Qāsim to the movement in the summer of 1954.³⁴ While both Marr and Dann believe that preparation for the Revolution quickly became a “one-man job,” both neglect to mention the contribution of the Iraqi Communist Party.³⁵ Government records indicate that this political party was one of the main proponents of the Revolution, heavily involving itself in recruiting allies from within the Iraqi government and even negotiating the supply of arms from abroad.³⁶ Similarly, efforts were made to destabilize the monarchy; specifically, photographs of King Faisal, reputedly a delicate monarch by nature, in “compromising homosexual positions” were used to convince Islamic clerics of the apparent degradation of the monarchy and thus the necessity for its removal.³⁷ However, despite these preparations, the road to revolution did not go as smoothly as anticipated; several coups were planned but subsequently postponed before the Free Officers eventually made their move.³⁸

ONE SURPRISING HOUR: THE 14 JULY REVOLUTION

Ironically, the opportunity to oust the Hāshimite Dynasty came about as a result of its obligations as a member of the Arab Federation. An unexpected revolt in Lebanon prompted King Hussein to call for military aid, lest the conflict

spread to Jordan. In response, King Faisal commanded Iraqi troops to march to his cousin’s assistance. However, both Qāsim, who was in charge of the Nineteenth Brigade, and ‘Abd al-Salām ‘Arif defied these orders by marching instead to Baghdad and initiating the first phase of the Revolution.³⁹ A reputation he would later exploit to justify his overthrow of Qāsim, ‘Arif is widely acknowledged as the dominant leader at the outset of events on the 14 July 1958.⁴⁰ His battalion quickly overpowered government forces at the Mobile Police Force Headquarters, the Washshāsh camp, the Broadcasting House, and Baghdad airport.⁴¹ ‘Arif himself proclaimed the establishment of the first Iraqi Republic over the radio in the early hours of 14 July.⁴²

Regardless of the competing historiography surrounding this revolution, the execution of the Iraqi royal family was nothing if not brutal. Having awoken to find the al-Rihāb Palace surrounded by ‘Arif’s troops, the Crown Prince, King Faisal’s uncle, immediately surrendered.⁴³ Crucially, General Al-Arif contradicts this claim, asserting that the royal family in fact tried to resist arrest.⁴⁴ Either way, the outcome was the same: the majority of the royal family and their staff were gunned down in the palace grounds.⁴⁵ The Crown Prince’s body was mutilated, his hands and feet removed, and what remained of his torso was dragged through the streets.⁴⁶ Nuri too was hunted down; while he initially escaped arrest, he was found days later, reputedly disguised in a woman’s veil, and killed.⁴⁷ While at first quietly buried, his corpse was later exhumed and suffered the same fate as that of the former Crown Prince. It was reported that the mob, “unsure of his [Nuri’s] grave... hastily dug up all new graves, unearthing the bodies of old people and children.”⁴⁸ “In one surprising hour,” the Free Officers had deposed the Hāshimite Dynasty, the entire revolution, so Qāsim claimed, costing the lives of just nineteen people.⁴⁹ Such a swift victory – indicative of how little support the monarchy had by the end – called for immediate celebration, though not likely to the extent that General Al-Arif remembers:⁵⁰

The streets of Baghdad were filled with people from the first moment of the announcement of the Revolution. All religious and ethnic groups rejoiced in unison because for the first time in 600 years they felt free. Christians, Jews, Kurds, Arabs, and the small minorities felt that this was the people’s revolution, for all people, without discrimination.⁵¹

AFTERMATH

While many Iraqis rejoiced in the victory of the Revolution, others decried the violence and bloodshed, and lamented how it would affect their country’s international reputation.⁵² Britain was shocked by the speed and brutality with which the monarchy had been overthrown. British Pathé News videos shared its government’s concerns with the public, lamenting the loss of “royal fledgling” Faisal, whose education at Harrow endeared him to the British, while also warning of further Soviet involvement in the debacle.⁵³ Propaganda

such as “The King is reported a prisoner; the Crown Prince is dead; only one thing is certain – the Kremlin is jubilant” and “Britain has given Faisal and his government wholehearted support, but the warmth of a London welcome melts no ice in Cairo or Moscow” reveals which leaders, namely Nasser and Khrushchev, Britain found most threatening.⁵⁴ The United States too felt threatened by Qāsim’s rise to power, both in an ideological and a practical sense. American nationals living and working in Iraq were targeted, resulting in the forced evacuation of the American Embassy in Baghdad. Morris Draper, an officer on the Baghdad Pact Secretariat, was one of those evacuated. In an interview conducted in 1991, he shared his opinion on the Iraqi regime:

The new rulers were a combination of pure thugs and some ideologues. One of the first things the revolutionary group did was to give all the students passing grades from high school on up, regardless whether they took a test or had done acceptable work. The students were demanding it. They were demonstrating in the streets all the time. That is sort of self-defeating, but it is what happens. The regime was appeasing one group after another.⁵⁵

“[T]he ‘winning over’ of Iraq was especially important, given her proximity to the strategic pass through the Zagros Mountains and access to the Tigris-Euphrates valley.”

Draper’s observation that the new regime was trying to “appease” the different factions in Iraqi society is supported by Qāsim’s extensive efforts to unite all Iraqis under the guise of Iraqi nationalism. While some Western states clearly vehemently opposed the 14 July Revolution and its resulting republic, Qāsim’s greatest challenge would be to convince his own people to follow his example, a campaign that he would ultimately lose.

Qāsim went to great lengths to legitimize his rule and, like many autocrats, he attempted to restructure the historical memory of Iraq, foremost in the eyes of Iraqi citizens themselves.⁵⁶ In a dramatic departure from the Free Officers’ initial commitment to pan-Arabism, he adopted a vaguely-defined but firm commitment to Iraqi nationalism, which is summarized by the mantra “Iraq is part of an Arab Nation and it is not a part of a part.”⁵⁷ Qāsim relied on contemporary scholars to both refine his new-found nationalistic philosophy and to popularize it.⁵⁸ One such intellectual was Sāti’ Al-Husri, who wrote:

For every nation is conscious of and knows itself by means of its particular history. We can say that historical memories bring people nearer to each other and create a kind of moral kinship. A nation that has been subjugated and forgets its special history has lost its self-conscious-

ness; that self-consciousness will not be recovered until it recalls and goes back to that history.⁵⁹

Following Al-Husri’s teaching, Qāsim tapped into Iraq’s rich history and associated Mesopotamian folklore to inspire a shared sense of nationalism amongst Iraqis. Through the use of such symbols as the Akkadian Sun (the symbol of the Mesopotamian Sun God Shamash) on the Revolution’s flag and in the revised state emblem, Qāsim sought to invoke Iraq as “the cradle of civilization and place of strength” it had once been, in an attempt to unite Iraq’s mixed and fractious make-up of sunnī, shī’ah, and Kurds.⁶⁰ He formed the Ministry of Guidance and the Directorate of Folklore to promote the shared history of these three warring groups, hoping to foster between them “cultural commonalities” that would pave the way for a new national self-consciousness.⁶¹ Furthermore, through his efforts, Qāsim was claiming a certain degree of historical superiority over other Middle Eastern nations, thus distancing Iraq from the wider pan-Arab movement and avoiding competition with Nasser.⁶²

Like much of the competing historical narrative about this event, the reasons for Qāsim’s seemingly abrupt rejection of pan-Arabism and his subsequent embrace of Iraqi nationalism post-Revolution are not entirely clear. Scholar Orit Bashkin discusses the conflict between pan-Arabism and what he terms “territorial-patriotic nationalism” in his article *Hybrid Nationalisms: Watanī and Qawmī Visions in Iraq Under ‘Abd al-Karim Qasim, 1958-61*.⁶³ Bashkin identifies each of the two ideologies as having different goals yet similar values; while pan-Arabism (*qawmī*) considers “Arab culture, history, and language the markers of national identity and often strives for political unity with other Arab states,” nationalism (in this case, Iraqi nationalism, or *watanī*) considers “Iraqi (rather than Arab) geography, archaeology, and history the key features of national identity.”⁶⁴ The latter, he suggests, had three goals: first, to recognize and celebrate Iraq’s Mesopotamian heritage; second, to emphasize the importance of “the people,” aligning with Qāsim’s communist tendencies; and third, to glorify the “blessed, peaceful and miraculous Revolution of July 14, 1958.”⁶⁵ To foster this new Iraqi identity, the aforementioned Ministry of Guidance began several culturally significant projects. These included the establishment of several commemorative public holidays, like Child Day, Tree Day, and May Day, to celebrate the Revolution’s anniversary and other distinctly Iraqi traditions, and the funding of



The Iraqi state emblem adopted under Qasim (1959-1965)
Source: AnonMoos (Commons Wikimedia)

archeological excavations in various historically significant sites, including Babylon, Samarra, and Mosul. A marked increase in the popularity of Iraqi theatre and art was also recorded around this time.⁶⁶ As Bashkin states, “in the monarchic era, *watanī* projects were subsumed under Pan-Arab projects; now they were given center stage.”⁶⁷ What had been started by the oppressed and discontented *effendiyya* soon became, under the careful and directed care of Qāsim, a full-blown patriotic nationalistic revolution. However, the influence of pan-Arabism was not entirely gone. As is likely the case, Bashkin reasons that both *qawmī* and *watanī* are fluid, constantly changing and building on each other. Perhaps the real reason that Qāsim vacillated between pan-Arabism and Iraqi nationalism was an effort to not “burn any bridges” and isolate certain sections of Iraqi society before his regime had matured, possibly the most logical means of staying in power.⁶⁸ This certainly seems to be reflected in the interim 1958 Iraqi Constitution.⁶⁹

The interim Constitution was the first of several significantly progressive reforms instituted during Qāsim’s regime. Announced thirteen days following the success of the Revolution, the Constitution confirmed Iraq’s status as a republic and Islam as the official state religion. However, at the same time it proclaimed Iraq part of the Arab Nation, while also promising Iraq’s Kurdish population “national rights” as equal citizens.⁷⁰ The arrangement of the new republican cabinet also appeared, at first glance, to be unexpectedly diverse. Described by Marr as being “remarkable for its coverage of the opposition,” it included representatives from the National Democratic Party, Ba’athists, Marxists, Kurds, and

Arab nationalists, amongst others, thus continuing Qāsim’s tactic of not prematurely stepping on anyone’s toes before he had the opportunity to consolidate his power.⁷¹ While Qāsim himself held the positions of Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and commander in chief of the armed forces – a powerful trio – the otherwise diverse cabinet established the new regime as more than just another of the ineffective governments that so often follow coup d’états.⁷² Even the hated British were remembered in the new Iraqi Republic, as the regime pledged to honor all pre-existing oil contracts with the West.⁷³

Another significant reform instituted by Qāsim was the Agrarian Law. Announced in September 1958, this law enabled the property previously owned by the ruling elite to be expropriated to the masses, who were in turn given loans and equipment to utilize it.⁷⁴ As General Al-Arif observes, “only a few days previously, these same peasants had been serfs of the feudal sheikhs, who had appropriated these immense plantations.”⁷⁵ This was the jewel of what has come to be known as the “golden age of the Qassem era,” referring to the first few months immediately after the Revolution, during which numerous issues of social welfare were addressed.⁷⁶ However, Qāsim’s debut as Iraq’s leader was not without its problems, the first of which arose within Qāsim’s own inner circle, when ‘Abd al-Salām ‘Arif, desiring the union of Iraq and Egypt, challenged Qāsim’s authority. While ‘Arif was ultimately sentenced to life imprisonment, the rift destabilized the illusion of Iraqi unity that Qāsim had worked so hard to create.⁷⁷

There are several narratives that seek to explain why the first Republic of Iraq failed. The “ethnic” narrative suggests that Qāsim’s regime did not appreciate, cater to, or promote tolerance for the needs of the different minorities in Iraq, and that it was in fact doomed to failure from the outset, given the assumed incompatibility of the various denominations within Islam and tensions between Arabs and Kurds.⁷⁸ This argument is supported by the existence of discord within the regime and, moreover, that it was in fact able to topple the regime. Potentially, Qāsim’s desire to unite his people under the banner of Iraqi nationalism proved too radical a shift in the immediate wake of the thirty-seven year reign of the monarchy.⁷⁹ In contrast, the “pan-Arab” narrative accuses Qāsim of “promoting social fragmentation rather than unity,” arguing that had Qāsim embraced pan-Arabism wholeheartedly, as was the “original goal” of the coup, he would not have been deposed.⁸⁰ While the “communist” narrative removes any blame from Qāsim (stating that the Western powers were instrumental in his downfall), the Ba’athist’s claim the Republic failed because “the reactionary character of the regime was becoming apparent once all the false progressive pretenses borrowed from certain past movements had been unmasked.”⁸¹ Following an assassination attempt, Qāsim became increasingly isolated from others, barricading himself in his office at the Ministry of Defense for up to fourteen

hours at a time.⁸² In his suspicion, he failed to recognize that just as education had stimulated the *effendiyya* to organize themselves, so too was opposition to Qāsim's regime cultivated through schools. Whether or not the Ba'athist regime, which deposed the first Republic in the Ramadan Revolution of February 1963, lived up to Iraqi expectation, however, is a question that is worthy of further investigation.⁸³

Perhaps, having discussed the event, it is no longer pertinent to refer to the 14 July Revolution as "the Revolution"; rather, it should be remembered as one uprising in an extensive history of unrest that has hindered Iraq throughout the twentieth century. As the evidence suggests, this revolution was not a true testament to the desires of the Iraqi populace, the makeup of which is far too complex to be governed by one man or ruled by one philosophy. Yet neither was the Revolution an average coup d'état. Qāsim's considerable investment in appeasing Iraqi society and his attempts to foster Iraqi nationalism mark his regime as more than "just a dictatorship"; instead, as Qāsim claimed, it was a genuine attempt to throw off imperialism and forge a new future for Iraq. While following in the footsteps, as it were, of the French Revolution, Nasser, and even the Soviet Union, the 14 July Revolution stands apart and remains an important turning point in Iraq's history. The conflicting accounts of Qāsim and of the



The July Revolution (1958)

Source: *Unknown* (Commons Wikimedia)

14 July Revolution testify to the immense social and political upheaval that continues to plague Iraq today, and, to an extent, the entire Middle East – a region so at odds with its history that it cannot hope to move forward until some effort is made to rectify its past. 🏛️

Endnotes

- [1] The 14 July Revolution may also be referred to as simply “the Revolution” or, conversely for the purpose of comparison, as a coup d’état in this paper.
- [2] With regard to the spelling of names and place names, I have borrowed heavily from the various sources consulted. In cases of multiple spellings, I have picked one version and used it throughout consistently. For example, there are many different spellings of Qāsim, including Qassem and Kasim. I have used the spelling offered in Phebe Marr’s *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985). In other cases, where there was only one spelling used, I used what was available; for example, in the case of General Ismail Al-Arif, author of *Iraq Reborn: A First-hand Account of the July 1958 Revolution and After* (New York: Vantage Press, 1982) the author refers to himself in this spelling, so I have followed suit. In all cases, the person or place in question should be clear.
- [3] Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 93.
- [4] Uriel Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem: A Political History, 1958-1963* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 19; Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 91-92.
- [5] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 154.
- [6] “Iraq Bombshell,” *British Pathé News* video, 1:46, 17 July 1958, <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/iraq-bombshell>; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 155.
- [7] Gerald De Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad: The Tragedy of Iraq’s Monarchy* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 1. Gerald De Gaury spoke fluent Arabic and has published numerous works on the history of the Middle East. His book is written as an eyewitness account and is evidence of his bias towards the Hāshimite Dynasty; in the book’s foreword, De Gaury writes that “History will amply prove, if it has not done so already, that the country [Iraq] was happier and better ruled in their day than it has been since the revolution.” See also Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 16.
- [8] Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 10.
- [9] See Richard L. Jasse, “The Baghdad Pact: Cold War or Colonialism?” *Middle Eastern Studies* 27 (1991): 140-141, accessed January 12, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4283420>.
- [10] Jasse, “The Baghdad Pact: Cold War or Colonialism?” 140-141, 143, 149; Ara Sanjian, “The formulation of the Baghdad Pact,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 33 (1997), accessed July 19, 2016, doi: 10.1080/00263209708701153.
- [11] Sanjian, “The formulation of the Baghdad Pact,” 226-227.
- [12] *Ibid.*, 234.
- [13] Scholar Ara Sanjian states that “Iraq’s membership eventually came to be seen as a burden by other members in the pact and her withdrawal after the 1958 revolution was not much regretted.” See Sanjian, “The formulation of the Baghdad Pact,” 260.
- [14] See Jasse, “The Baghdad Pact: Cold War or Colonialism?” for more on the specific conditions of the Baghdad Pact.
- [15] It would seem for every gain Iraq made from the pact, it was actually Britain that truly profited. For example, “His Majesty’s Government would make payment of £2,755M to Iraq for this property in return for Baghdad’s promise to spend £2M in purchasing arms from Britain.” See Jasse, “The Baghdad Pact: Cold War or Colonialism?” 141, 151, 153; Sanjian, “The formulation of the Baghdad Pact,” 260.
- [16] “A survey of the Baath Party’s struggle 1947-1974,” 1974, *Internet Archive*, archived March 27 2008, accessed December 1 2015, <https://archive.org/details/ASurveyOfTheBaathPartys-Struggle1947-1974>, 24.
- [17] Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 11.
- [18] *Ibid.*, 12.
- [19] *Ibid.*
- [20] As Eppel notes, the title *effendi* can be used to describe many different people. “Was a merchant from the market, who had studied for a year in the first grade of a modern elementary school and had replaced his galabiyya with afaranji suit, also entitled to that title [*effendi*]? According to the concepts and customs of society in Baghdad and Mosul, and even in Nablus and Jerusalem, such a person could at times consider himself to be an *effendi*, and good manners dictated that, in such a case, he be addressed by that title.” See Michael Eppel, “The Elite, the *Effendiyya*, and the Growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30 (1998): 228-230, accessed January 12, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/164701>.
- [21] *Effendiyya* is the plural; *effendi* is the singular. See Eppel, “The Elite, the *Effendiyya*, and the Growth of Nationalism,” 228-237.
- [22] Eppel, “The Elite, the *Effendiyya*, and the Growth of Nationalism, 1921-1958,” 234.
- [23] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 154. The apparent lack of diversity within the Free Officers’ Movement suggests that it cannot be considered representative of the Iraqi populace as a whole, something that diminishes its rumoured reputation as a “true” revolution.
- [24] *Ibid.*, 154.
- [25] *Ibid.*, 153.
- [26] *Ibid.*, 153-155.
- [27] Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 21. Qāsim made numerous attempts to “legitimize” both his rule and his regime. His efforts are discussed in detail later in this paper.
- [28] Dann notes that the parallels between Qāsim’s and Nasser’s education and military career are uncanny. See Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 21-22.
- [29] Not to be confused with ‘Abd al-Salām ‘Ārif or ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Ārif. To avoid confusion, General Ismail Al-Arif will henceforth be referred to as “General Al-Arif.” General Al-Arif was born in Baghdad in 1919. “He graduated from the Iraqi Military Academy in 1939 and later from the Corps of Engineers College and the General Staff College,” having attained a B.A. in Law and a Ph.D. in International Relations. He was the Minister of Education in the first Iraqi Republic. See Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 34; Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 22.
- [30] Marr warns researchers of the flaws of *Iraq Reborn* in her review of the book. See Phebe Marr, Review of “Iraq: The Contemporary State; *Iraq Reborn*,” *Middle East Journal* 38 (1984), accessed January 12, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/helicon.vuw.ac.nz/>

stable/4326803.

[31] Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 45-46.

[32] *Ibid.*, 46.

[33] Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 117, accessed January 15, 2016, https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=4qRW5KpgDM4C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

[34] Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 45-46.

[35] Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 19; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 155-156.

[36] "Report of the Hungarian Ambassador in Baghdad on the preparations for the Iraqi revolution in 1958," December 18, 1958, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, translated by András Bocz, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/122512>, 2-3.

[37] While such tactics can be considered "natural" in such situations as these, and should therefore not be unexpected, the very fact that such an important group within Iraqi society needed to be "convinced" to revolt suggests that the "need" for revolution was not so obvious to all. See Chris Sibilla, "The Iraqi Revolution – of 1958," part of: "Moments in U.S. Diplomatic History," *Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST)*, July, 2014, <http://adst.org/2014/07/the-iraqi-revolution-of-1958/>.

[38] This supports Marr's description of the Revolution as "unorganized." However, the aforementioned efforts of the Iraqi Communist Party suggest otherwise. See Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 155; "Report of the Hungarian Ambassador in Baghdad," 3.

[39] Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 28-29; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 156.

[40] Qāsim's relatively late arrival "gave color to suspicions that he was waiting to see if the coup would succeed before advancing." See Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 157.

[41] Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 29-30.

[42] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 156; "Report of the Hungarian Ambassador in Baghdad," 4; Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 30-31. Interestingly, this announcement was broadcast prematurely, before the royal family had been executed, indicating that Ārif at least was confident of success.

[43] The situation was not as dire as the Crown Prince presumed. As Marr notes, "Had the crack royal brigade resisted, the revolt might have been put down then and there. As it was, reinforcements among the Free Officers were needed to take the palace." See Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 156; Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 30-31; Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 58-60; Davis, *Memories of State*, 109.

[44] Given that General Al-Arif stands alone in his assertion, it can be assumed that he has attempted to justify the murder of the royal family by fabricating their supposed "resistance." This throws his "firsthand account" into disrepute. See Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 60.

[45] De Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad*, 194; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 156-157; Davis, *Memories of State*, 109.

[46] The Crown Prince's body was reportedly hung outside the Ministry of Defense, the location of Qāsim's new headquarters. See De Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad*, 195; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 157.

[47] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 157; Davis, *Memories of State*, 109; De Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad*, 196-197.

[48] De Gaury, *Three Kings in Baghdad*, 196-197; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 157.

[49] "The Historical-Extempore Speech by Our Sole Leader Major-General Abdul Karim Qassim at The Reserve-Officers' College," 1959, *Internet Archive*, archived September 20 2011, accessed December 1 2015, <https://archive.org/details/TheHistoricalExtemporeSpeechAtTheReserveOfficersCollege>, 4; Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 34.

[50] Davis, *Memories of State*, 109.

[51] Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 65. This contradicts modern accounts of the immediate aftermath of the Revolution; according to Dann, out-of-control mobs looted the royal palaces, attempted to raze the British Embassy, and toppled statues of King Faisal I. Crucially, Jews and Christians were threatened with death. See Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 33-34.

[52] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 157.

[53] "Iraq Bombshell," *British Pathé News* video, 1:46, July 17, 1958, <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/iraq-bombshell>.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] Sibilla, "The Iraqi Revolution – of 1958"

[56] Several of Qāsim's methods would later be adopted by Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party. See Davis, *Memories of State*, 110.

[57] "The Historical-Extempore Speech by Our Sole Leader Major-General Abdul Karim Qassim at The Reserve-Officers' College," 1959, *Internet Archive*, archived September 20 2011, accessed December 1 2015, <https://archive.org/details/TheHistoricalExtemporeSpeechAtTheReserveOfficersCollege>, 14.

[58] Davis, *Memories of State*, 110-111.

[59] Sāti' Al-Husri, *Muhādarāt fi nushū al-fikrah al-qawmīyah*, 3rd edition, (Beirut: Dār al-Īlm li-al-Malāyīn, 1956), 26-27, in L. M. Kenny, "Sāti' Al-Husri's Views on Arab Nationalism," *Middle East Journal* 17 (1963): 239, accessed January 28, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4323606>.

[60] The state emblem also incorporated obvious Soviet iconography, including mechanised gears and a sheaf of wheat. See Davis, *Memories of State*, 111; "The Historical-Extempore Speech by Our Sole Leader Major-General Abdul Karim Qassim at The Reserve-Officers' College," 1959, *Internet Archive*, archived September 20 2011, accessed December 1 2015, <https://archive.org/details/TheHistoricalExtemporeSpeechAtTheReserveOfficersCollege>, 7.

[61] Davis, *Memories of State*, 111.

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] Orit Bashkin, "Hybrid Nationalisms: Watanī and Qawmī Visions in Iraq Under 'Abd al-Karim Qasim, 1958-61," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43 (2011), accessed January 12, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/helicon.vuw.ac.nz/10.1017/>

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[64] Bashkin, “Hybrid Nationalisms,” 294.

[65] Qāsim once declared, “Brother workers! If you wish to stamp out imperialism, you have to exert yourselves to work an extra hour,” a distinctly Soviet slogan. See “Principles of 14th July Revolution,” 1959, *Internet Archive*, archived May 26 2011, accessed December 1 2015, <https://archive.org/details/PrinciplesOf14thJulyRevolutionAFewCollectionsOfTheEpoch-making>, 11-14. See also Bashkin, “Hybrid Nationalisms,” 296.

[66] Bashkin, “Hybrid Nationalisms,” 297-298.

[67] *Ibid.*, 297.

[68] *Ibid.*, 294.

[69] See Kenny, “Sāti’ Al-Husri’s Views on Arab Nationalism” for further reading on the subjects of watanī and qawmī, as detailed in the various works of Al-Husri.

[70] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 158 and “Provisional Constitution of the First Republic of Iraq – 1958,” in Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 102.

[71] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 158.

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] “Action in Middle East: British & U.S. landings nip revolts in bud,” *British Pathé News* video, 3:34, July 21, 1958, <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/action-in-middle-east>.

[britishpathe.com/video/action-in-middle-east](http://www.britishpathe.com/video/action-in-middle-east).

[74] However, while approximately 4.5 million dunams of land had been reassigned by 1963, only about 1.5 million dunams had actually been handed over to the poor. See Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 170-171 and Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 65.

[75] Al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, 65.

[76] Housing in the slums of Baghdad, the female condition, education, and the improvement of working conditions were amongst the first issues tackled by Qāsim’s regime. See Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, 54-56. See also Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 169-170.

[77] Perhaps, more accurately, Qāsim “fabricated” the illusion of Iraqi identity, given its apparent fragility. See Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 159-160.

[78] Davis, *Memories of State*, 112.

[79] Sibilla, “The Iraqi Revolution – of 1958.”

[80] Davis, *Memories of State*, 113-114.

[81] “A survey of the Baath Party’s struggle 1947-1974,” 30. See also Davis, *Memories of State*, 114.

[82] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 176.

[83] “A survey of the Baath Party’s struggle 1947-1974,” (1974), 30.