

- Syria, Jordan and Iraq, while at the same time there was "great unrest in Turkey" and "precautions" were taken in Persia (Iran) "by the French, English and North American armies (which led to the attack on the North American embassy in Baghdad, designed by Jose Luis Sert, despite being protected by tanks). In addition, the king of Jordan (an state allied with Iraq) was assassinated, an act "incited by Baghdad". The Foreign Secretaries from the West evaluated the possibility of an "eventual Russian intervention", while "Peking (recognized) the revolutionary regimen of Baghdad". Petroleum "continued to flow normally" from the wells of the Iraq Petroleum Company. The reader should consult, for example, the articles from the newspaper "*La Vanguardia Española*" from the 15, 16 and 17 of July, 1958, on pages 12, 14, 15, 21 (from Tuesday, July 15th); pages 15, 18, 19, 21 (Wednesday, July 16th); and page 18 (Thursday, July 17th). The cruelty with which the victims were treated led to the new regimen claiming that the king actually died from a heart attack after receiving a blow from the Hereditary Prince (*Times*)
- 5 The international architecture competitions continues even after the revolt, such as the ones organized by the Electric Service of Baghdad for their headquarters in the capital, in which all "qualified architects, not including those from Israel" could participate, and whose jury was presided over by Gio Ponti and included the architects Jaafar Allawi from Iraq, and the Belgian I.G. Platounoff (Netherlands Institute of Architecture, DUDO 0130, 212 M. 124). The government also planned, but did not follow through on, an opera house in Baghdad in November of 1962 (after assigning the project to F. L. Wright)(LEVINE, Neil: "Plan for a Greater Baghdad", *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 495, n. 75).
 - 6 CHADIRJI, Rifat, MUTSCHLER, Carlfried: "The Bab al-Sheikh Project", BENTLEY SEVCENKO, Margaret (ed), *Continuity and Change: Design Strategies for Large-Scale Urban Development*, The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1984, p. 64.
 - 7 Baghdad was not the only Iraqi capital in which Western architects intervened in the eighties. For example, José Antonio Corrales presented a design for a hotel in Mosul, facing the Tigris, in 1979-1980. I am grateful to Monica Gili for this information.
 - 8 As Ricardo Bofill recalls, it was not infrequent in the eighties to find Spanish industrialists carrying briefcases, which they were not shy to show, housing containers with chemical weapons, in the Spanish airplanes that flew to Baghdad. The production of components and chemical weapons has given way to hypocritical discussions about ethics in the Basque Country (in which are located the majority of the companies well known for having weapons experts, such as old members of ETA), bringing to the table question of the destination of such arms and the jobs that would be lost if the fabrication of such products were prohibited (see http://www.sindominio.net/singuerra/armas_ee.html).
 - 9 Abdel-al-Hasan al-Nara de Bagdad: *Moradas de los corazones*, ed. de Luce López-Baralt, Trotta, Madrid, 1999, p. 84
 - 10 On the Dunkel Project, see: "Neubau Nationalbank für Irak in Bagdad", *Schweizerische Bauzeitung*, 43, October 1955, ps. 680, 682. Dunkel made also a wonderful project for the offices of the Central Electric Company in Baghdad (two very slim glass towers): "Internat. Wettbewerb um das Bürogebäude für das Elektrizitätswerk von Bagdad", *Schweizerische Bauzeitung*, 13, March, 1961, ps. 200-203
 - 11
 - 12 An exposition about the work of Marcello d'Olivo in Baghdad, "Marcello d'Olivo: architettura per Bagdad" took place from the

20th to the 26th of September of 2004 in the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Parma (Italy). By order of the Minister of Public Works of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed Bin Laden, d'Olivo made a project for the university city in Riad in 1958, a "photocopy" of Wright's project for Baghdad (ZUCCONI, Guido (ed.): *Marcello D'Olivo. Architetture e progetti 1947-1991*, Electa, Milan, 1998, pgs. 10, 77. Also refer to LUPPI, Ferruccio, NICOLOSO, Paolo: *Marcello D'Olivo architetto*, Mazzotta, Udine, 2002).

IRAQ AS IT WAS AND STARTING OVER

Ignacio Rupérez

It looks as if with Iraq's invasion, war, and occupation, since March 19th, 2003, the country has gone back to the days when it was not even a country: to 1917, for instance, when Baghdad was conquered by General Maude's British forces. Then (as now with General Franks' USA soldiers), it was announced to the local population that the foreigners had come to free them and not to conquer them. Honestly, it would be better for the Iraqis to not be "freed" by those battalions which always find, after the supposed victory, the beginning of another real war. They find a disobedient and brutalized country, full of guerrilla fighters, criminals, and terrorists, not really patriots, where rebellion coincides with domestic violence among the different groups: Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, and Assyrians. A paroxysm of multiple aggressiveness when a national idea which never was too strong takes too long to configure itself, or simply breaks into thousands of fragments corresponding to different local, tribal, religious and ethnic interests, and feelings. Generally speaking, this was the panorama when the British occupied that country which still was not called Iraq, but it is also the situation now, decades later, when a country called Iraq is occupied again.

When World War I finished, Iraq did not yet exist: it was created when the Ottoman Empire was defeated, with the Versailles Peace Conference, the Treaty of Versailles and all the family of treaties: Trianon, Saint Germain, Neuilly and Sévres. By means of this last treaty, France and Great Britain split the Turkish Middle East territories: France took control over modern-day Syria and Lebanon, and Palestine-Israel, Jordan and Iraq went for Great Britain. All this was legally established under warrants by the League of Nations, but it was actually very much politically determined by a previous agreement between both countries from 1916: a secret treaty called the Sykes-Picot, as well as the so-called Balfour Statement (1917) which years later led to the division of Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel. The Sevres Treaty was not accepted by the Turkish

Republic, so in 1923 it was redone through the Lausanne Treaty to establish the borders of Turkey. Concerning Iraq, this treaty eliminated any reference to an independent Kurdistan (which did figure in Sévres Treaty) and confirmed the addition of the Ottoman province of Mosul to this new country, as well as with the Ottoman provinces of Baghdad and Basra.

So the new country was constituted by the association of three provinces and the addition of Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds (with other minorities such as the Assyrians and Turkomans as well) into a common nation, at the time when the countries and the borders of Asia were made in Europe. Objections and opposition to this artificial construction of a country made by geographers and Arabists were useless. According to an Iraq-passionate like Gertrud Bell, "It has never been a country since the times of Mesopotamia". Since then, Iraq never had a solid national project, nor capable leaders to carry it out and, worst of all, when the country seemed to take off and acquire some national cohesion, very powerful forces came into the scene to destroy the process. Actually, the three Ottoman provinces we now call Iraq were a marginal territory under the Ottoman Empire, even before, under the Romans and Byzantium, once Babylon and Ninive disappeared, far away from centers of decision and influence, and culturally disappeared except for Baghdad. It had no important economic resources and, except for Basra it was out of the main trade lines. The paradox about Mesopotamia is that (contrary to Egypt) its past splendor had no continuity and was not translated into modern times inside the same country; it did not carry on configuring the national integrity of its territory nor did it have any strategic attraction.

All was humiliation until important oil fields were discovered in the area of Kirkuk (also discovered in the south of the country later), turning Iraq into the nation with the second largest (estimated) oil reserves in the world, after Saudi Arabia. From then on, for good or bad, Iraq has lost its past marginalization, it is superposed on a sea of antiquity, but also a sea of water and oil. It is, in theory, the richest country of the Middle East for having these three elements, being water as appreciated as oil in other countries from this region which desperately need it. The oil explains, as it does in Iran's case, the deep interest that the British and the Americans already had before the First World War was over, the conflicts in the political and social evolution of the country and also the hard national and international tensions it had to suffer from the day of its independence until today. In 1921, the British installed (as they did in Transjordan, the current Jordan) a member of the Hashemite family, King Faisal I, brother of Abdullah, king of

Transjordan, under the form of a constitutional monarchy. In 1932 the country gained independence and was admitted in the League of Nations as a sovereign nation. Political influence and military presence of the British were kept until the mid fifties.

INTERNATIONAL TERM OF OFFICE, BILATERAL TREATY

Although the League of Nations gave Great Britain a term of office on Iraq, the United Nations did the same with the USA and their allies in 2003, making the country's occupation legal by the 1943 Resolution of May, 2003. In both cases these two powers have tried to get complementary bilateral treaties after their international terms of office expire, in order to fit their stay in this territory both legally and politically. The treaty, signed by the British and Iraqis in 1930 for a twenty five year term, established a strict alliance between both countries in diplomatic and military fields, with the right for the British to use several minor military bases like Habaniyah and Shaiba, near to Baghdad and Basra respectively, and to move troops inside the national territory. In 1931, the exploitation of Iraqi oil went to a consortium of western companies by the signing of an agreement with Iraq Petroleum. Exclusive exploitation of the oil wells in the fields of the Mosul province was guaranteed, in exchanging for four hundred thousand GBP per year under the administration of the Royal Family. In 1934, the British company inaugurated a pipeline between Mosul and Tripoli, in Lebanon, and two years later another pipeline to Haifa, today Israel.

It seems unnecessary to detail all the rebellions, coup d'états and revolts by the Kurds, Assyrian and Shiites in the two decades after the independence, in a process of construction and reconstruction of the country, somehow permanent and reloaded. The English influence was very powerful in every step of the Government and the Administration, and it is even visible in today's Iraq in the urban design of the cities, the widespread use of English language, the uniforms and the training of the Iraqi army until 2003. And, overall, we can see it in the creation of an academic and professional elite, with tight links to the British way of life and educational model. Iraq owes political and cultural contributions of great value, although they certainly were not balanced due to the colonial pressure of its term of office, its economical hegemony in a country which was not yet built. They were "collaborationist" elites, in the social top, but also surrounded by other elites with an increasing influence at the university, the unions and the nationalistic groups, who were more and more resentful

about the limits of the national independence. This resentment took a bitter character under the form of movements against Baghdad and the British, carried out by Kurds and Assyrians, and especially in the great revolt of the Shiite tribes in 1920 in the south of the country. The British aircraft smashed it with chemical bombs.

Given the country's fragmentation and the weakness of the national feeling, Iraq has been ruled always by some and against others, voluntarily or not. The Ottomans and the British were supported by a military Sunni elite, and occasionally by the Assyrians, in order to keep the Shiites and the Kurds under control. Saddam Hussein relied essentially on the Sunnis to rule, but also to attack the Shiites and the Kurds. In the same way, the USA (with a certain good-intentioned ingenuity) have favored the Shiites for being the majority, but, by doing that, they created a strong resentment on the Sunnis because they were the traditional elite in power. The enmity between Kurds and Shiites on one hand, and Sunnis on the other, had as a result that the current Iraqi Constitution is essentially a consequence of a deal among those first. Their coordination in the sharing of the petrol incomes and the shaping of the territory have become so determinant that the USA is now trying to achieve some new balance, giving back to the Sunnis some of the power and the influence to make them come back to politics and stop financing some sectors of the insurgents. Anyway, the weakness or the collapse of the central power in Iraq is always accompanied by the reinforcement of the tribes' power and influence. Compared to other Arab societies, the tribes have strong permanence and power here, and Baghdad has usually been forced to come into pacts with them. They have even been idealized as the country's salvation when really bad times come.

Even Saddam Hussein had to deal with them and, in the last decade of his government, at the end of the century, Iraqi life was influenced by the tribes. The tribes (and the oppressed Kurdish and Shiite communities as well) are always the main focus of rebellion. There were other focuses in the cities, which were activated by the pan-Arabist air of freedom and decolonization: that Arab awakening which is manifest with increasing intensity and strength since the end of the World War I. Its presence becomes visible during the Second World War in the political and university circles, and also during the episodes of tension and destabilization in practically all the Arab countries from 1948 on, due to the wars and defeats related to the division of Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel. If Iraq was in the middle of an influence's crossfire between the

British and the Germans during the Second World War, it suffered also from the tension of the Cold War. The government of Faisal II and his Prime Minister Nuri Said promoted the joining of Iraq to the CENTO (Central Treaty Organization), through the Pact of Baghdad, together with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, with Great Britain and the USA. This was a similar arrangement to NATO, in order to counteract Nasser's politic and the Soviet Union's policy in the Middle East and Minor Asia.

KINGS, REGENTS AND GENERALS

King Faisal I died in 1933, and was followed by his son Ghazi, who died in 1939. After him, his son Faisal II, only three years old, was assisted by the Marshal Abdul Al Illah who acted as his regent, and this was substituted by General Fawwaz Al Hashimy in 1941. The Marshal was appointed regent again by the British pressure in order to avoid political movements favorable to the Germans during the Second World War, or any coup d'état to install a government contrary to the allies. During the war, in fact, the British made the country a sort of strategic backstage, avoiding by all means that it would fall under the Axis' influence. This is why in 1941, when the pro-German General Fawwaz Al Hashimy took the power, the British troops invaded Iraq again. They brought down the General and put the regent Marshal Abdul Al Illah again, until the king was of age. The king was finally killed together with several members of the Royal Family and its retinue in the coup by the General Abdel Karim Kassem and his Free Officers, who proclaimed the Republic of Iraq in 1958 with a new Constitution. The very influential Prime Minister Nuri Said was also assassinated.

General Kassem's regime was nationalist, socialist and pan-Arabist, and it had an apparently good relation with Nasser's regime. He opened a period of political cruelty that himself and his friends would suffer as victims. The elimination of the opponents was essential and revenge was the law. This has not disappeared from Iraqi life. The Royal Family was eliminated in Rihab's Royal Palace and Nuri Said was lynched. As if this was not enough, the corpse of the ex-Prime Minister was taken out from the grave and it was dragged along the streets of Baghdad, tied to a vehicle. Saddam Hussein's methods were not so extreme, but he also encouraged sadism and brutality against his opponents, we could see also, when his execution took place, the joy of his executioners, the families of his victims and their friends. Under General Kassem's government, the agrarian reform was done and a modern system for schools and health started to develop. Baghdad's Pact was denounced and

also was the treaty with Great Britain. The country turned to the Soviet Union's side. But, during the five years of the regime, it was almost impossible to stabilize the country, there were many sectarian revolts and military claims, and no good relationships with Nasser were achieved, because he rivaled Kassem for leadership in the Arab world. The Baath Party starts to take importance in this context of disorder and anxiety. The first public notice of Saddam Hussein refers to his participation in an attempt on Kassem's life in 1959. In 1963, the Baath Party took power after a new military coup. General Kassem and several of his collaborators were assassinated.

This means that the Baath Party was already a very active element in the fights for the power that broke loose after the monarchy was overthrown (fights between nationalists, communists, pan-Arabists and Nasserists with signals and support from El Cairo), participating in the successive coups d'état until the last one, when it finally eliminated its political opponents. In February 1963, the Baath Party took power with General Ahmed Hassan Al Bakr as President. He was Saddam Hussein's uncle and, like him, he was native from Tikrit. His Prime Minister was Colonel Abdel Salam Aref, a friend who betrayed General Kassem. Nine months later, Colonel Aref made another coup to overthrow the Baath Party and to install a Nasserist regime. When he died in 1966 he was replaced by his brother, General Abdel Rahman Mohammed Aref. On 17th July 1968 the baathists and the army gave the final coup. Ahmed Hassan Al Bakr reappeared as the President of the Republic and the Revolution's Command Council, opening the doors to his nephew, who worked from the very beginning to gain power of the government, the Party and the security and intelligence services, showing an absolute will of achieving all the power for himself.

He was appointed Vice-president of the Republic and the Revolution's Command Council. Ten years later, in July 1979, apparently due to health problems, but perhaps forced by his powerful nephew, President Al Bakr resigned from his post, and Saddam Hussein substituted him. Actually it was only a formality, because Hussein had become the regime's strong man since long before. He had a very low cultural and social standing, but he was very intelligent and tough, he had no mercy with his opponents and, during the forty years he was the most important person of the country, he created the country we knew, and then he destroyed it. Under his rule, the Baath Party became an association of criminals who gave mutual benefits among relatives and friends of the same country, forming an impenetrable, despotic and sectarian circle

of power along the years. There are many stories about his cruelty and brutality against everyone who was suspicious of being able to put him in the shade, and the actions committed against the Shiite and Kurdish communities are terrible. His sons Qusay and Uday (especially the latter) continued these tendencies. With his praetorian guards and his security and intelligence services, Saddam Hussein developed an overwhelming cult persona, sharing the power with those who helped him to get it, bullies and gunmen like him: people mostly dedicated to street violence and little jobs, with a bad style promoted, encouraged, and developed by Saddam Hussein until his death, with stubbornness and arrogance. Always inspired by Stalin, Saddam Hussein was considered to be the Stalin of the Middle East.

A WASTED LEGACY

Nevertheless, during Saddam Hussein's years (especially from 1969 until 1979), some reform and renewal tendencies which came from the times of King Faisal II and General Kassem, and also from the British contributions, led towards the modernization and development of the country. Along these years and thanks to the high petroleum revenues, Iraq continued the agrarian reform and finally achieved the best health and education systems of all Middle East countries. The living conditions in the cities got better, literacy and an important emancipation of the women were promoted: although the political atmosphere was oppressive, secularization and a certain creative freedom were encouraged. As a result, we can see the development of the middle classes and a certain peak of activity in the media, the unions and the political parties and the circles of writers and artists as well, although all of it was gradually (but relentlessly) eliminated, while Saddam Hussein's regime came to a standstill with repression and military adventures. However, all those debates and creativity never disappeared completely and we could see them (anyway) in 2003. To sum up, Iraq had the greatest social and economic development of the region in those years, not corresponding to the political situation that a satrap, the "Arab Stalin", promotes, sinking the exercise of power into corruption, and taking the country to ruin by involving it in two fatidic wars.

The ruin of the country, the regime's disintegration and the madness of Saddam Hussein were growing in the long war against Iran (1980-1988), the invasion and occupation of Kuwait in the summer of 1990 and the war against the International Coalition the following year. All these unnecessary

conflicts can be certainly explained because of the leader's personality and his strong control of all the power, but also testify to his fundamental ignorance of politics and international relationships. Qualified as a "strategic idiot", he calculated that he would fight a *blitzkrieg* against Iran. Finally it was an everlasting war of wear and extermination, causing around a million deaths. And the aggression against Kuwait generated the largest and most powerful international coalition of history against him, with Arab and Western participation. First supported by the Arabs and the Westerns, who were all afraid of the threat of the Revolution in Iran, these occasional allies made their contribution in forming a perfect monster during the eight years of the war, and later his own friends were forced to destroy him. Defender of the world against Khomeiny and big bully of every foreign interest, he became a furious consumer of weapons and bombs, no matter where they came from. In his fight against Iran he was doing the dirty work without noticing. He armed himself to the teeth and he tried to be authorized by the international community which had spoiled him, so he committed all the atrocities he wanted, remaining unpunished.

This was the man who was fond of weapons of massive destruction, using them to prosecute the Kurds and the Shiites and to threaten the world, the man who thought that nobody would stop his invasion of Kuwait. He was the instrument of the enemies of the Iranian Revolution and a compulsive client in a great universal business of all sorts of legal and illegal weapons, which were handed over to him with a very rare unanimity: someday these weapons would be used against the suppliers. The universal consent he thought he had ended suddenly with 1991's defeat, followed by a hard decade of international sanctions, which the country started to overcome in the beginnings of the XXI century. The attacks of 9/11 and the war in Afghanistan interrupted any perspective of normalization and international acceptance of a broken country, ruled by a regime with a chimerical evolution which credited only the distrust and the antipathy of the region and the world. Nevertheless, it seems that the cure was worse than the disease, and the invasion and the war which started in March 2003 have not opened the doors to peace and prosperity yet, in 2008, not to say anything about the fantasies of the creation of a new Middle East or the shame about the impossible elimination of non-existing weapons of mass destruction in an impoverished country with an exhausted regime.

The Iraqi people do not deserve so many years of suffering, and the invasion has not repaired this situation. Things are even

worse now. The war did not end with the conquering of Baghdad in April 2003, nor with Saddam Hussein's execution in December 2006. It goes on and on in many forms and it has different phases, responding to the old conflicts in Iraq from time out of mind: revolts, ethnic and religious sectarianism, territorial tensions, terrorism and crime. The alternation of all of them, as if they acted in communicating vessels with reciprocal variables of intensity, can explain the characteristics of a war with a high cost for Iraqis, but also for the occupying troops. These old conflicts, now unusually intense, correspond to the pieces of the national puzzle. These pieces tried to join together in the first decades of the XX century, and they could have continued together in a quite acceptable way, but almost a century later some insensible agent has kicked the table and put the game out order: the arrogance and ignorance of the author of this mess make any kind of correction very difficult, and we even have not seen any self-criticism. Regardless, almost a century later as well, the Iraqis must start again and refound the nation.

Spanish Ambassador to Iraq (2005-2008)
Baghdad, February 2008

BAGHDAD, A TRAGIC STORY

Gema Martín Muñoz

Baghdad represents a grand paradox. The mythical images which its name invokes do not translate into a physical identity of the city which allows one to follow the footsteps of its millennial character and profound status in history. Different from El Cairo or Damascus, it has been the victim of repeated experiences of destruction and violence which have been erasing the major part of its historical and cultural legacy. This city does not translate or narrate its secular and intense political, social and artistic peripeteia. On the contrary, nowadays what this city tells you when you see it and tour it is a definitive "memoricide" to which it has been fatally condemned.

Another of the paradoxes of its violent and tragic destiny is that its original founding name was "City of Peace" (*Madinat al-Salam*), a name chose by the caliph Al-Mansur in 762 when he created the city *ex novo* from a small village called Baghdad on the western bank of the Tigris to represent the new capital of the Abbasi dynasty, upon the fall of the Omeyyad caliphate with its capital in Damascus. Sources say that upon looking for an ideal location to construct a new capital of the Empire, al-