“So Let Today Be All the Arabs Muḥammad”

The Prophet in the Discourse of the Iraqi Baʿth Party

David Jordan

The Prophet Muḥammad and his religious, political, and socio-cultural heritage have formed central reference points in the construction of legitimacy, authority, and power among Islamic or Islamist movements over centuries. With the emergence of nationalist ideologies in the Islamic world during the early twentieth century, also secular-nationalist, and even socialist political currents adopted and transmuted this Prophetic heritage for new political ends. One of the most successful secular-nationalist currents which heavily relied on the Prophetic role model is the Arab Socialist Baʿth Party founded by the Syrian Greek Orthodox Christian Michel ʿAflaq (1910–89) and others in the 1940s. Originally established in Damascus, the movement successfully seized political power in Syria and Iraq in 1963. In Iraq, the party was soon ousted from the government within a few months but successfully returned to political power in 1968 to rule the country until the US-led occupation in 2003.

Researchers of the Iraqi Baʿth regime's religious politics have traditionally divided its rule into three periods: the secular 1970s with very few political displays of religiosity, the Baʿth's “toeing the Islamic line” during the 1980s, and its “deliberate Islamic flag-waving” during the 1990s.¹ Recent scholarship offers contrasting interpretations of this development and debates as to whether the regime fulfilled an ideological U-turn from a staunch secularism to an Arab Islamism,² or whether it did not so much Islamise but expand its ongoing policy to Baʿthise religion and to accelerate the spread of its original Baʿthist interpretation of an Arab Islam.³ Focusing on the role of the Prophetic figure in Baʿthist ideology and politics throughout these periods, this chapter argues that the state gradually increased the incorporation of the religious Prophetic heritage into the official political discourse. This increasing political use of

¹ Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 176.

² Baram, “From Militant Secularism to Islamism”; Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*; Baram, “Saddam's ISIS”; Baram, “Saddam and the Rise of ISIS”.

³ Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Baʿth Party*; Faust, *The Baʿthification of Iraq*; Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion*.

Islamic traditions and motifs can be explained as a tactical reaction to take advantage of and control the general Islamic or religious resurgence that can be observed throughout the Islamic world and beyond since the late 1960s;⁴ a political move that fuelled and promoted this resurgence even further. At the same time, however, this move aimed, in accordance with secular Ba'thist principles, at the prevention of an Islamisation of politics.

From 'Aflaq's original secular ideology in the 1940s to the fall of the Ba'th regime in 2003, the secular Ba'thist image of the Prophet in the political discourse received an increasingly religious colouring. Initially evoked as a mere historical role model of a revolutionary, the Prophet gradually regained his heavenly message and became, finally, invoked in rather religious terms as intercessor before God, as last source of relief, and as a moral guide for the Ba'th leadership during the 1990s. This development exemplifies the Ba'thist politicisation of the Prophet and religion, an oft-observed process among national movements which find the need to accommodate their message to the horizons, sentiments, language, and imagery of the populace they wish to mobilise and liberate.⁵ According to Anthony Smith, this process grows out of a national movement's aspiration to form a "sacred communion", which is an imagined but also felt and willed communion of those who assert a moral faith and feel an ancestral affinity, a communion of believers and ideological union of those who share the same values and purposes.

[O]nly when a group of people begin to trace their genealogy back to a specific place, time, and ancestor, and at the same time derive their moral and ideological lineage and destiny from the sacred properties of a community of the faithful, can they begin to imagine themselves as a finite, sovereign, and horizontal political community.⁶

As will be seen throughout this chapter, the Ba'th Party heavily and successfully relied on all those "sacred properties" alluded to by Smith (i.e. ethnic election, sacred territory, ethno-history, and national sacrifice) in order to create a Ba'thist communion of the faithful based on the Prophet as ultimate source of inspiration.⁷

4 Sedgwick, "Salafism".

5 At the same time, these movements often tend towards a revolutionary atheism and attack the guardians of those ethnic and religious traditions as happened in Ba'thist Iraq. Eventually, according to Smith, "they rarely seek to destroy entirely an older, religious identity in order to build a messianic new one" (Smith, "The 'Sacred' Dimension", 802).

6 Smith, "The 'Sacred' Dimension", 803.

7 Smith, "The 'Sacred' Dimension", 803–10.

Beginning with Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's presidency in 1979 and his unprecedented personality cult, we also witness the reverse process of a "messianisation of politics, whereby the nation and its leaders are exalted and endowed with religious charisma", as "derived from older ethno-religious motifs and beliefs ... combined, redirected, and in varying degrees, transformed for new political ends".⁸ As part of the Ba'th's religious propaganda during the Iran–Iraq War (1980–88), Ṣaddām became stylised as Prophetic descendant (among other historical role models) and Iraq's larger than life figure who succeeded and overshadowed the Prophet as ideal, modern leader of the Arab nation. Even though the president's claim to descent from the Prophet drew on a classical form of religious legitimacy, Lisa Wedeen convincingly reminds us in her study on Ḥafīẓ al-Asad's cult in Syria, that a cult such as Ṣaddām's is more successful in creating obedience and compliance than legitimacy. In her study of Asad's cult, which was strikingly similar to Ṣaddām's with all kinds of preposterous and fictitious claims,⁹ she argues that the cult is itself a mechanism or strategy of domination and disciplinary-symbolic power based on public dissimulation.¹⁰ According to this view, Asad's or Ṣaddām's cult fails to produce legitimacy among the population in the sense of voluntary normative compliance. The cult's political merit is rather that it appropriates meaningful narratives in order to inscribe Ṣaddām as an omnipresent, even God-like leader into existing systems of signification.¹¹ With his genealogical link to the Prophet, Ṣaddām clearly relied on the old Islamic tradition of Sharīfism to legitimise himself, but he did more than that as he inscribed his person into this tradition and associated himself essentially with it as the Prophetic descendant par excellence. The Prophet became on this level overshadowed by Ṣaddām rather than the other way around.

8 Smith, "The 'Sacred' Dimension", 799, 810.

9 In Asad's and Ṣaddām's cults, both presidents became regularly depicted; for instance, as the all-powerful father, combatant, leader forever, gallant knight, premier pharmacist, or modern-day Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 1). Ṣaddām became additionally identified with all kinds of pre-Islamic and Islamic role models (gods and rulers alike). I do not argue that claims of Sharīfism are preposterous and have no religious and cultural foundation in Iraq. On the contrary, Prophetic descendants abound among all ethnic and sectarian communities in the country and number hundreds of thousands, with whole tribes claiming to be *ashrāf*. Ṣaddām's claim, too, was not invented out of thin air and certainly not unreasonable in Iraq, but it would still be too much to assume that a majority of Iraqis or even most Ba'thists in fact believed in it and therefore regarded him as legitimate leader.

10 "The people are not required to believe the cult's fictions, and they do not, but they are required to act as if they did" (Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 30).

11 Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, 6, 7, 144–45.

In the following, we will revisit the Ba‘th’s political use of the Prophet beginning with Michel ‘Aflaq’s thinking, the Ba‘thist secularism in the 1970s, Ṣaddām’s personality cult during the Iran–Iraq War, and the Ba‘th’s full-scale politicisation of Islam during its Faith Campaign in the 1990s.

11.1 The Prophet as Historical Role Model in Michel ‘Aflaq’s Thinking

When Michel ‘Aflaq formulated his secular nationalist ideology for the later Arab Socialist Ba‘th Party in the 1940s, he heavily drew upon the Prophet Muḥammad and Islam as fundamental and ideal models of inspiration. He did this particularly in his speech *The Memory of the Arab Messenger (Dhikrā al-rasūl al-‘arabī)* delivered in the auditorium of the Syrian University in the spring of 1943.¹² According to the interpretation of Amatzia Baram, ‘Aflaq deliberately created with this and other lectures an ambivalence between, on the one hand, a staunch secularism, occasionally even atheism, and, on the other, the illusion of a deep Islamic religiosity.¹³ Baram views ‘Aflaq’s lectures as “masterpieces of equivocation and deception, masquerading blatant atheism” and including “a call to replace Islam and the Prophet with the modern message and leadership of the Ba‘th Party”.¹⁴ With recourse to Benedict Anderson’s theory of a national movement’s emergence, he finally explains that “‘Aflaq aligned his nationalism with the Islamic religion that he came to marginalize if not destroy”.¹⁵ In this view, ‘Aflaq’s message was essentially blasphemous and therefore “disguised so brilliantly, [and] to be fully understood only by the initiated”.¹⁶ Far from subscribing to the argument that the essence of ‘Aflaq’s message was hidden and aimed at destroying Islam, this section will revisit his ambivalence between secularism and Islam in order to show how he integrated Islam into his vision to mould a new messianic Ba‘thist identity. His use of the Prophetic model indeed created an emotional bond between him and his followers, providing his national movement with a historical basis and continuity.

For ‘Aflaq, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad represented Islam, first and foremost understood as an ideal revolutionary movement that had, for the first time, accomplished to unite the Arab people. He generally distinguished

12 ‘Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba‘th*, 50–61.

13 Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 27.

14 Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 34.

15 Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 40.

16 Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 34.

between a material and a spiritual dimension of the Arab nation and created a monism which had Arab unity as its origin and its ultimate goal.¹⁷ Reflecting both dimensions, he spoke of Arabism (*'urūba*) elsewhere also as a body (*jism*) and of Islam as its spirit (*rūḥ*).¹⁸ His ultimate goal of unity (*waḥda*) was in this light not merely related to the material unity of the Arabs but included a higher unity of both the material and the spiritual dimension, of body and spirit. In 'Aflaq's interpretation, the Arabs had historically only reached this higher unity (*waḥda 'uliyā*) in the movement of Islam. This revolutionary movement was not a mere historical episode interpreted in its temporal and spatial context and according to its causes and goals but had a higher spiritual meaning as "a perfect and eternal symbol of the nature of the Arab soul, its rich possibilities, and its genuine orientation. It is therefore right to consider it as a possibility of renewal, [but] always in its spirit, not in its form and its letters."¹⁹ According to 'Aflaq, the experience of the Islamic movement also bore "a constant readiness in the Arab nation (*umma*) – if Islam is correctly understood – to rise whenever matter (*mādda*) dominates the spirit (*rūḥ*), and appearance (*mazhar*) the essence (*jawhar*)."²⁰

By incorporating the Prophet and Islam in his revolutionary vision, 'Aflaq read Arab nationalism and the Ba'thist movement as what Anderson called "the expression of a historical tradition of serial continuity".²¹ "Every great nation, [wrote 'Aflaq,] in profound connectedness to the eternal concepts of being, desires in the origin of its foundation universal and eternal values. Islam is the best expression to the desire of the Arab nation (*al-umma al-'arabiyya*) for eternity and universality."²² In order to realise this historical continuity, 'Aflaq demanded to revive and relive the historical experience (*tajriba*) of this revolutionary movement, repeating "the fierce and heroic battle (*malḥama*) of Islam with all its chapters of missionary activity, persecution, emigration (*hijra*), war, and victory, to end with a final triumph of truth (*ḥaqq*) and faith (*īmān*)". 'Aflaq saw the foundations of all later achievements of Islam in terms of conquests and civilisations already established in the twenty years of Muḥammad's heavenly mission.²³ "The life of the Messenger" appeared in this nationalist narrative as "the quintessence of the life of the Arabs" per se and could not be understood merely by reason but through real-life experience.

17 Stegagno, "Mišil 'Aflaq's Thought", 159.

18 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 55.

19 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 53.

20 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 52–53.

21 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 195; see also Gellner, *Nations*, 46–48.

22 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 55.

23 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 53.

The Arabs, since the emaciation of the vigour within themselves, that is since hundreds of years, read the Prophetic biography (*sīra*) and recite it, but they do not understand it, for its understanding requires an ultimate degree of boiling excitement in the soul, the utmost of deep feelings and truth they have not yet fulfilled, and an existential attitude which places man face to face with his destiny. They are as far as they could be from that.... Until the present time, the life of the Messenger was looked upon from outside, like a glorious image that exists for us in order to admire and venerate it. We must now begin to see it from inside, so as to live it. Every Arab at the present time is capable of living the life of the Arab Messenger, even if only in the ratio of a pebble to a mountain and a drop to a sea. Naturally, no man, whatever his grandeur amounts to, is capable of achieving what Muḥammad achieved. But it is also natural, that any man, however narrow his capacities are, is capable of being a tiny miniature of Muḥammad, as long as he belongs to that nation (*umma*) which assembled all its forces and bore Muḥammad or, in other words, as long as this man is an individual from among the members of the nation which Muḥammad produced when he concentrated all his forces. In the past, in a single man was summarized the life of his whole nation, and today the whole life of this nation shall in its new awakening become an explication of the life of its great man. Muḥammad was all the Arabs, so let today be all the Arabs Muḥammad.²⁴

At a first glance, this demand to live and emulate the life of Muḥammad as far as possible and to be tiny miniatures of him seems quite similar to the idealisation of the Prophet's and his early community's life among modern Islamic reformists of the Salafiyya movement.²⁵ Yet, 'Aflaq's secular intentions are quite the opposite as his emulation was only concerned with the revolutionary spirit of the Prophet and Islam, not with "its form" or "its letter", that is, not with the content of the Islamic message and religion. 'Aflaq constantly used terms with a clear religious connotation thereby sacralising his ideological programme and creating an ambiguity between secularism and Islam in his texts.²⁶ We find him talking about God, the revelation of the Qur'ān, and the believer in God (*al-mu'min bi-llāh*), about the Arab nation with the Qur'ānic term for the Muslim community, *umma*, and about the Ba'th's eternal mission with the Arabic term for God's heavenly message, *risāla*. Yet, he gave

24 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 53–54.

25 Merad, "Islāh", 145–50, 152.

26 See Reichmuth, "Religion and Language".

those terms his own, new, and secular meanings. Moreover, he was not willing to limit the historical achievement of Arab unity to the Muslim community alone. In his view, perhaps as a non-Muslim, even the polytheists (*mushrikūn*) from the Quraysh were as necessary for the realisation of Islam as its believers, those who fought the Messenger took equal part in the victory of Islam as those who supported him. He buttressed this view with the premises that God Himself had the power to send the Qur'ān down to His Prophet, to let His religion triumph, and to guide all people to it in one single day, but all that took no less than twenty years and could not even be fully accomplished to this day.²⁷ The whole history of the Islamic movement during the twenty years of Muḥammad's lifetime, with all its protagonists, believers and polytheists alike, had its necessary function for Arabism and Arab unity, not for the spread of Islam as a religion itself.

Analogously, 'Aflaq demanded from his contemporary Arab Christians to embrace Islam for the sake of Arabism, again not as a religion but as a "national culture".

[t]he Arab Christians will know, when their nationalism (*qawmīyya*) fully awakens within them and when they recover their genuine (*aṣīl*) nature, that Islam is a national culture (*thaqāfa qawmīyya*). They must be saturated by it until they understand and love it, so that they strive for Islam like their desire for the most precious thing in their Arabism.²⁸

Despite the reduction of Islam to a mere national culture, a notion of God and a certain spirituality still played central roles in this Ba'thist vision, but mainly to justify the ethnic election and the privileged status of the Arab nation. According to 'Aflaq, God had the power to reveal Islam at any time throughout tens of centuries and to any nation (*umma*) from among His creatures, yet He revealed it at a specific time and moment, and He particularly chose for it the Arab nation (*al-umma al-'arabiyya*) and its hero, the Arab Messenger. God chose them in particular for their outstanding virtues and their excellence in order to fulfil the mission of Islam (in Arabic: *tablīgh risālat al-Islām*).²⁹ Here again, 'Aflaq played with obvious ambiguities since the Arabic phrase can at the same time have the religious meaning: for the conveyance of the message of Islam. However, he finally turned Muḥammad's heavenly message into an eternal and progressive Ba'thist mission to establish a united Arab nation:

27 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 54.

28 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 58.

29 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 54.

Islam was ... an Arab movement, and its meaning was: the renewal of Arabism and its perfection. The language with which it descended was the Arabic language, its perception of things was with the outlook of the Arab mind, the virtues which it fortified were Arab virtues, apparent or latent, and the vices it fought were Arab vices in the course of vanishing. The Muslim at that time was not merely an Arab, but the new, evolved, and completed Arab.... The Muslim was the Arab who put faith in the new religion since he combined the necessary conditions and virtues to understand that this religion represents the awakening (*wathba*) of Arabism (*urūba*) to unity, strength, and progress.³⁰

The image of Muḥammad in 'Aflaq's thinking was almost entirely focused on his role as successful revolutionary and statesman. The remaining degree of spirituality or even religiosity in his writings was, as argued by Baram, rather theoretical and ethereal but devoid of any substance.³¹ Islamic rituals and practices were not part of it as can be seen in 'Aflaq's following statement:

No one understands us but the believer, the believer in God. Perhaps we are not seen praying with the ones who pray, or fasting with the ones who fast, but we believe in God because we are in urgent need and painful want of Him, our burden is heavy, our path is arduous, and our goal is far.³²

'Aflaq's vision of Islam as national culture does obviously not include two of the Islamic religion's five most important pillars and duties for every Muslim, namely, praying, and fasting during the month of Ramadan.³³ As shown by Baram, we find this attitude also among 'Aflaq's disciples such as the Syrian Ba'thist and born Sunnī Muslim Sāmī al-Jundī, who wrote about his early years in the Ba'th movement that he and his associates were "strangers to our society ... as rebels we revolted against all old values ... we despised all rituals, devotion, and religions.... We were accused of apostasy (*ilhād*), and this was equally true, despite all that the Ba'thists later claimed apologetically. We believed in the religious feeling, in the Sufism of the religions (*ṣūfiyyat al-adyān*), in their total human striving; as to the religion of others, we were against it."³⁴

30 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 54–55.

31 Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 29.

32 'Aflaq, *Fī sabīl al-Ba'th*, 60.

33 See Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 29.

34 Jundī, *al-Ba'th*, 27. My translation of this passage slightly differs from Baram's since *alḥadnā bi-* is not necessarily "we were atheists with regard to" nor is *ilhād* necessarily "atheism" (Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 34).

Finally, the case of another Iraqi Baʿthist and born Shīʿī Muslim, Hānī al-Fukaykī, shows how ʿAflaq’s instrumentalisation of the Prophetic image indeed generated an emotional excitement among his followers and helped to legitimise his position as their charismatic leader. According to Fukaykī, the early party members viewed ʿAflaq like a “God with a holy shape” (*ka-ilāh dhī ṣūra qudsiyya*), they felt in front of him as if they experienced the presence of Jesus (*al-masīh*), and ascribed to him a certain Sufi style (*uslūb ṣūfī*). Fukaykī described that, when he read *Dhikrā al-rasūl al-ʿarabī*, particularly the slogan “Muḥammad was all the Arabs, so let today be all the Arabs Muḥammad”, how shivering befell him, and coldness spread in his limbs. It was “as if I heard the [Islamic] revelation anew, as if that small cave, *ghār ḥirāʾ* [where the Prophet had received the revelation], expanded to become the whole of this Arab fatherland, from the [Atlantic] ocean to the Gulf. In my mind appeared the qualities of perfection (*kamāl*), infallibility (*ʿiṣma*), loftiness (*shumūkh*), and prophecy (*nubuwwa*) in every Baʿthist.” In the end, he admitted that, despite his belief in secularism, he found no difference between Arab nationalism and Islam because their eternal mission (*risāla khālida*), “like that of little prophets”, was the resurrection of the Arab nation.³⁵

11.2 The Baʿthist Politicisation of Muḥammad as Liberator and Revolutionary during the 1970s

From the Baʿth Party’s political takeover in 1968 to the beginning of Ṣaddām’s presidency in 1979, the new regime in Iraq largely retained ʿAflaq’s secular image of Muḥammad but merely evoked it during annual official occasions in memory of the Prophet’s birthday (*mawlid al-nabī*) or of his night journey and ascension to heaven (*isrāʿ wa-l-miʿrāj*). The Baʿth regime politicised and nationalised these traditional religious events, which were officially organised by the Ministry (*Dīwān*) of *Awqāf*, endowed them with new political significance,³⁶ and turned them into political platforms to promote the fight against imperialism and Zionism in general, and the liberation of Palestine in particular. During official addresses, Baʿthist politicians oftentimes touched upon the figure and role of the Prophet rather marginally if compared to their elaborations on the Baʿthist political agenda. The Prophetic image occupied nevertheless a central position in the rhetoric of these nationalised occasions: the birth of the Prophet – in contrast to *laylat al-qadar*, the night of the first Qurʾānic

35 Fukaykī, *Awkār al-hazīma*, 78–79. For a slightly different translation of the same passage, see Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 40.

36 Smith, “The ‘Sacred’ Dimension”, 799.

revelation – was reinterpreted and redefined as the (re)birth of a united Arab nation, and he was mainly evoked as a national hero, liberator, revolutionary, and fierce fighter. This kind of a politicised and nationalised image of the Prophet became part of a general national narrative that aimed at creating a cohesive Arab national identity and engendering a sense of Arab “national self-confidence and exclusivity”.³⁷ It continued its role as source of inspiration for the Ba‘th’s revolutionary cause and offered once more the opportunity to present it as an expression of historical continuity.

Representing the president during these occasions, Ba‘thist politicians referred to the birth of Muḥammad as a “present” and to his delegation (*ba‘th*) as a “revolution”, comparing the ordeal (*miḥna*) of disunity from which the Arab nation had suffered in the pre-Islamic period before and after his birth to its current ordeal imposed by imperialism and Zionism.³⁸ The Prophet’s birthday became in this way “the most honourable day in our national (*qawmī*) history”.³⁹ The daily newspapers covering these events mainly praised the Prophet throughout this decade as a “liberator from tyranny and imperialism”,⁴⁰ “revolutionary” (*thā‘ir*), and as “the eternal human model” (*mathal al-insāniyya al-khālīd*). Elsewhere, he was “the Prophet of fierce struggle” (*nabī al-malḥama*), or “the first model of freedom in the history of humanity”.⁴¹ Dr Ḥusayn Amīn, professor of Islamic history at Baghdad University, wrote in an article:

From the memory of [Muḥammad’s] great birth, we derive determination, strength, and endurance, and from the *jihād* of the great Messenger, we derive the spirit of fight and battle for the realization of the great victory through the liberation of the land of our fathers and ancestors, [i.e. Palestine] the land of the *isrā’* and the *mi‘rāj*.⁴²

During the *mawlid* festivities in Baghdad’s Abū Ḥanīfa Mosque in 1970, the president of the mosque’s association, Nājī Ma‘rūf, praised the Prophet in terms of a modern understanding of freedom and equality:

37 Smith, “The ‘Sacred’ Dimension”, 792.

38 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 8 June 1969, 4, 11. The speaker was minister of state for religious affairs Ḥamad Dallī al-Karbūlī.

39 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 16 May 1970, 3.

40 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 19 May 1970, 3.

41 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 16 May 1970, 3.

42 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 16 May 1970, 3.

The Islam which the Messenger of God (ṣ) preached liberated the slave and made him a respected member of society, he did not despise the black just as the Americans despise the negroes (*zunūj*) today. He did not acknowledge the racist distinction just as Britain does it in South Africa. He did neither deem colour, nor descent, nor wealth or kinship as criteria of distinction of one human against another. He called for consultation (*shūrā*) in government and administration and applied knowledge and reason in all commands without exception. He worked for saving the human from everything which deprives him of his freedom, his respect, and his nobility.⁴³

These words clearly reverberate in the Ba'ṯh's own ideological fight against old forms of feudalism, tribalism, racism, regionalism, and backwardness.⁴⁴ These statements provide further instances of how the regime endowed the figure of the Prophet and the religious occasions in his memory with a new political Ba'ṯhist significance: Muḥammad became a national hero and a model for the Ba'ṯhist secular, revolutionary, and progressive battle against imperialism and backwardness. The celebration of his birthday and his night journey and ascension to heaven became national ceremonies. The Ba'ṯhist discourse that served the politicisation of the Prophet during the 1970s can be interpreted as reflecting the attempt to create the Arab nation as a sacred communion in the sense of Smith. This is an imagined but also felt and willed ideological communion of those who feel an ancestral affinity and share the same values and purposes.⁴⁵

11.3 The Messianisation of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn as Prophetic Descendant during the Iran–Iraq War (1980–88)

With the outbreak of the Iran–Iraq War in 1980, the Ba'ṯh regime's evocation of the Prophetic figure reached a new level with the start of Ṣaddām's personality cult. The Prophet retained his ideological role as model and source of inspiration for the liberation against imperialism, now particularly Persian imperialism, but in his role as historical revolutionary who had united the Arabs, he became gradually overshadowed by the new "historical leader" (*al-qā'id*

43 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 19 May 1970, 3.

44 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 20 June 1969, 4.

45 Smith, "The 'Sacred' Dimension", 802–3.

al-tā'rikhī), the new president, Ṣaddām. The president's personality cult had an impact on mainly two policies: first, on nation-building with a project to rewrite Iraqi history (*mashrū' i'ādat kitābat al-tā'rikh*) and second, on the religious war propaganda. The first policy aimed at the remodelling of political identity and the public understanding of the national heritage by integrating histories and myths of Islamic and pre-Islamic civilisations and cultures into a new model for the nation. Famous figures and deities of ancient civilisations such as Sumer, Akkad, and Babylon as well as Islamic caliphs served as role models for Ṣaddām in the public media. He became simultaneously associated with the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, the Sumerian-Akkadian god Tammūz, the second caliph 'Umar, and the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Manṣūr.⁴⁶

The second policy of the religious war propaganda was initiated in reaction to Ayatollah Khomeynī's call to overthrow the Ba'th regime as enemies of Islam, an accusation which indeed hurt the party as Ṣaddām himself later admitted during an internal meeting.⁴⁷ In 1980, Ṣaddām officially introduced his Prophetic descendancy as an essential part of his biography⁴⁸ in order to counteract Khomeynī's allegations by presenting himself in a noble Prophetic aura, but even more so to inscribe himself into its traditional religious context. It should be noted that the significance of the Prophet was overshadowed by his son-in-law 'Alī b. Abī Tālib and his grandson Ḥusayn in the Ba'thist religious propaganda, since the Iraqi media mainly referred to Ṣaddām on a weekly basis as descendant of the latter two Imams throughout the 1980s. Direct references to the president as descendant of Muḥammad only gained salience in the late 1980s and during the 1990s. The reasons for the preference of the Imams lie in the Ba'th's national narrative and the circumstances of the war. Apparently, the party promoted Arab and local Iraqi heroes for its national identity formation, including 'Alī and Ḥusayn, both of whom are buried in Iraqi soil. The Prophet did not meet this requirement. At the same time, both figures are the most important Imams for the Twelver Shī'a of Iraq's majority community and of Iran's Islamist regime and wider population. Ṣaddām's descendancy served in this way to establish a personal link to his country's saintly ancestors, to address

46 Baram, "Re-inventing Nationalism"; Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, 79–85.

47 Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 80.

48 Iskandar, *Ṣaddām Ḥusayn*, 18. Ṣaddām did not invent this claim out of thin air. Already his uncle, the governor of Baghdad, Khayr Allāh Ṭīlfāḥ had reinvented their family's and tribe's noble descent for political ends in the late 1960s. Their tribe, the al-Bū Nāṣir from Tikrīt, had claimed to be *ashrāf* since the late Ottoman Empire. The emergence of Ṣaddām's Sharīfian descendancy is analysed in Jordan, *State and Sufism in Iraq*.

Iraq's Shī'a population and their spiritual needs, and to draw a national and ethnic demarcation line between the latter and their Persian co-religionists and war enemies. He promoted his Arab, genealogical, and Iraqi claim to the Imams in an attempt to deprive the Iranians of theirs.

In addition to his noble descent, the regime and the media stylised Ṣaddām as a messianic figure and successor of the Prophet in his leading and foundational role for the Arab nation. For this bold move the Ba'th used the coincidence that the beginning of the war in 1980 fell on the beginning of the fifteenth Islamic century, alluding to the widely accepted Prophetic tradition according to which God will send a descendant of his family to explain and renew the matters of religion at the beginning of each century.⁴⁹ Ṣaddām was similarly imagined as a secular Ba'thist renewer of Arab liberation and unity. In 1981, a newspaper article with the 'Aflaq-inspired title *In Memory of the Great Arab Messenger* compared the birth of the Prophet with the birth of the Arab revolution (*mawlid al-thawra al-'arabiyya*).⁵⁰ An extract of this article reads as follows:

This dear memory today is connected to the beginning of the fifteenth Islamic century, on the one hand, and to the unique victories which the armies of Ṣaddām's Qādisiyya have realised, on the other. For it gives this historical day additional meanings which grant us the right of the sons who are entitled to trace their ancestry to those glorious forefathers. The victories which the soldiers of Ṣaddām's Qādisiyya realised against the people of ignorance and the haters among the followers of the deceiver (*dajjāl*) Khomeynī are in fact a historical and inevitable extension of the first Qādisiyya led by Sa'd [b. Abī Waqqāṣ] against the Persian haughtiness ... Ṣaddām's Qādisiyya is the revivification of our glorious history and another beginning for the movement of our resurrection and revival in the face of bitter setbacks. It renews in us the firm will and the capability to continue the path of the forefather's mission (*risāla*) through high ambition and great strength, salvation of the nation (*umma*) from her enemies and those who wish her path every misfortune, and the liberation of her conquered land in Palestine and of every inch which the devils oppress. God willing.⁵¹

49 van Donzel, "Mudjaddid".

50 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 18 January 1981, 1.

51 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 18 January 1981, 7.

The Ba'ṯh labelled the Iran–Iraq War as Ṣaddām's Qādisiyya in analogy to the battle of al-Qādisiyya during the rule of the second caliph, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, between the Muslim conquerors and the Sassanid Persian army in 636.⁵² The regime invented with this label a historical continuity between both conflicts in order to signalise that the Arabs had already once defeated the Persians with the help of God. What is more, the entire history of the Arab nation was depicted as a decline with defeats and fractures including the fall of the 'Abbāsīd state and the Arabic state in Andalusia until the coming of a new leader at the beginning of this fifteenth Islamic century. As Iraq's Kurdish Vice President Ṭaha Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ma'rūf proclaimed during the official *mawlid* celebrations in the same year: "God entrusted a man who dedicated his whole life to this people and the reinstatement of the *umma*'s history in the most magnificent way. The new Qādisiyya is the Qādisiyya of Ṣaddām Ḥusayn, the hero of national liberation."⁵³ The central report of the Ninth Regional Party Congress in 1982 even bestowed Ṣaddām with the title "The Leader, the Necessity" (*al-qā'id al-darūra*),⁵⁴ implying nothing less than that his leadership was a predetermined historical necessity for the course of history, as interpreted by the Ba'ṯh.

By October 1988, two months after the end of this devastating war which Iraq celebrated as a victory, *al-Jumhūriyya*'s front-page headline announced: "Under the Auspices of the Descendant of the Great Messenger, the President and Leader Ṣaddām Ḥusayn: Iraq Celebrates the Memory of the Birth of the Lord of Created Beings and Seal of the Prophets".⁵⁵ Over the course of the war, the use of religious metaphors in the Ba'ṯhist propaganda had considerably increased, and direct references to Muḥammad appeared more frequent in the late 1980s, foreshadowing his central place in the political propaganda of the following decade. A front-page article in *al-Jumhūriyya* interpreted the perceived victory of the historical leader and Prophetic descendant in this light as a new victory for Muḥammad's mission to unite the Arabs and his religion:

The brave Iraqis still carry the burden of resistance of their Arab brothers [against the Persian imperialism], as they fought the best *jihād* under the descendant of the Messenger (*rasūl*), the leader and fighter Ṣaddām Ḥusayn.... This victory of the Iraqis was a new victory for the mission (*risāla*) of Muḥammad and his great religion. At the same time, it was

52 See Lewental, "Saddam's Qadisiyyah".

53 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 18 January 1981, 7.

54 Faust, *The Ba'ṯhification of Iraq*, 42.

55 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 23 October 1988, 1.

a victory for all Arabs and made them even more resistant than they already had been, and even a victory for all true Muslims irrespective of their communities (*milal*) or sects (*niḥal*).⁵⁶

In the same issue the newspaper printed an interview with the secretary of the Ministry of *Awqāf* and Religious Affairs, Muḥammad Sharīf Aḥmad, who further emphasised Iraq's sacred territory with a lofty analogy to the Prophet's city, Medina:

No doubt that Islam became strong, grew, and established his state in Medina but it became prevailing and spread as it moved to Iraq, for Iraq is considered the second capital after Medina for this message [of Islam] (*risāla*) and Iraq became the starting point for the spread of the Islamic message to the world. No doubt that the first state which strongly opposed this message was Khosrow's (*Kisrā*) empire of the Persians and Magians (*majūs*) who had occupied Iraq. Islam came as a liberator of Iraq and conqueror of the land of the Persians.⁵⁷

This Iraqi national narrative obviously used the image of the whole country of Iraq as the second capital city of Islam with reference to Medina in order to underline Iraq's and implicitly Ṣaddām's supreme position as leader of a united Arab nation.

11.4 The Ba'th's Faith Campaign (1993–2003): Muḥammad as Intercessor before God

Throughout the 1990s to 2003, the Ba'thist politicisation of the Prophet and particularly of his lived tradition (*sunna*) reached its climax, which can be explained with the extreme hardships Iraq's society went through during this period. After Iraq's disastrous invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the uprising of fourteen out of eighteen Iraqi provinces against the central government during the following *intifāda* in 1991, the regime was at its weakest point in history. The Iran–Iraq War had left the state overburdened with huge foreign debts, the Second Gulf War had entirely destroyed Iraq's modern infrastructure, and the implemented UN embargo resulted in a humanitarian crisis with widespread famine, high mortality rates, deterioration of health services, and

⁵⁶ *al-Jumhūriyya*, 23 October 1988, 1.

⁵⁷ *al-Jumhūriyya*, 23 October 1988, 4.

a rise of criminality. These crises went along with a general religious revival and the threat of growing radical Sunnī-Wahhābī and Shīʿī Islamist groups in Iraqi society during the 1990s.⁵⁸ Under these circumstances, the regime fully resorted to religion, that is, Islam in particular, in order to reinstall order and morality in society, to offer a spiritual way of relief, and to counteract the growing Islamism. This, in turn, should not be interpreted as an Islamisation of the Baʿth regime itself. As shown by recent studies, the regime had, despite its international isolation, successfully established a sufficient degree of control over Iraq's religious landscape, which more than before enabled it to fully employ Islam in politics and to directly spread its own original Baʿthist interpretation of an Arab Islam throughout Iraq.⁵⁹ The spread of this Baʿth-aligned Islam was intended to control and channel the religious resurgence in Iraq.

As argued by Baram, Ṣaddām adopted the claim to the religious status of a *mujaddid* in the early 1990s, that is, a renewer who strove to reverse the prevalent deterioration and corruption of Islam.⁶⁰ He added “*Allāhu akbar*” (God is great) in his own handwriting to the national flag,⁶¹ ‘Aflaq was posthumously converted to Islam,⁶² and by 2002, a party document recorded Ṣaddām's ninety-nine beautiful names alluding to nothing less than the Islamic tradition of God's ninety-nine beautiful names (*asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā*).⁶³ The press presented him still as offspring of ‘Alī and Ḥusayn but references to him as descendant or spring of the Muḥammadan family tree (*ḥafid/nabʿ al-dawḥa al-muḥammadiyya*) became even more frequent.⁶⁴ Most importantly, however, the regime inaugurated its own National Faith Campaign (*al-ḥamla al-īmāniyya al-waṭaniyya*) in 1993, a primarily educational campaign that promoted the study of the Qurʾān and the Prophetic *sunna* to an unprecedented degree on all levels of society. The leading Baʿthist who presided over this campaign and who became the regime's most prominent spokesman in religious terms was Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council ‘Izzat Ibrāhīm al-Dūrī, a well-known Qādirī Sufi.⁶⁵ Throughout this campaign

58 See Rohde, *State-Society Relations*, chapter 3; Faust, *The Baʿthification of Iraq*, 138; Bengio, “Iraq”, 1992; Bengio, “Iraq”, 1995.

59 Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion*, 136–37; see also Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Baʿth Party*, 260; Faust, *The Baʿthification of Iraq*, 131.

60 Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 218–21.

61 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 24 January 1991, 1.

62 The conversion of “Aḥmad Michel ‘Aflaq”, as he came to be known, was a recurring theme during the 1990s (*al-Jumhūriyya*, 24 June 1995, 1; *al-Thawra*, 24 June 2001, 6).

63 Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 220.

64 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 8 August 1995, 4; *al-Thawra*, 4 June 2000, 1.

65 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 17 September 1995, 1, 25 January 1995, 2. See also Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 253–58.

(1993–2003), Dūrī invoked the Prophet during official *mawlid* celebrations less as historical role model and inspiring revolutionary than, in a clearly religious tone, as intercessor before God (*shaft*) and "address of our good fortune" (*ʿunwān saʿādatinā*):

O God, we ask You, while we are in the realm of generosity to remember the birth of the glory of created beings, for Your Prophet and Your beloved, our lord Muḥammad (ṣ), that You bless him and make him attain a praised rank so that he be sitting closest to You among the prophets, as the one with the largest following, as the most influential among them through You in the intercession.... O God, bless him and accept his intercession on behalf of his *umma*, give us new life in accordance with his *sunna*, and enable us to perceive him and to speak with him in this world and the next one.⁶⁶

The party's newspaper *al-Thawra* identified the Iraqi people under the embargo (in Arabic: *al-ḥiṣār*, the blockade), furthermore, with the Prophet himself, this time, as the first of the besieged (*awwal al-muḥāṣarīn*). The Prophet, according to the article, was almost starving among the people of Abū Ṭālib in his tribe but he remained steadfast and fought hunger and alienation among relatives. Under the aforementioned hardships, the love for the Messenger was now to enjoin similar steadfastness (*ṣabr*) and patience (*muṭāwala*) upon Iraqis.⁶⁷ Once more it is evident how the regime appropriated the Prophetic image in its public political discourse as circumstances seemed to require. 'Aflaq had called on the Arabs to "be" Muḥammad in their revolutionary fight for a united Arab nation, the Iraqi soldiers had accomplished under the Prophetic descendant Ṣaddām a new victory for Muḥammad's cause, and now they had to draw spiritual inspiration from the Prophet to endure their suffering.

Aside from all those invocations of different Prophetic images during the Faith Campaign, the Prophet's heavenly message and his *sunna* were supposed to become, for the first time, central elements of the party members' moral and religious "immunity" (*ḥiṣāna*). This can be illustrated with the opening of the Higher Ṣaddām Institutes for the Study of the Blessed Qur'ān and the Esteemed Sunna in 1994. These institutes were notably not under the supervision of the Ministry of *Awqāf* and Religious Affairs but became an integral part of the Ba'th Party's secretariat. Senior party members of all ranks were obliged to study the Qur'ān and the *sunna* of the Prophet in these institutions

66 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 26 May 2002, 6.

67 *al-Thawra*, 9 August 1995, 6.

full-time for a period of six months to two years.⁶⁸ Each course was designed for twenty to thirty participants who graduated with a final exam in form of a written thesis. If party members failed the exam, they were degraded in their rank and even had to fear the loss of their post.⁶⁹ From 1995 onwards, the regime even created national and international platforms in the form of conferences (*nadawāt*) where graduates could present their studies together with religious scholars and shaykhs from Iraq and abroad. One of these was an annual series of conferences on the personality of the Messenger of God held on the occasion of the *mawlid* and attended by high-ranking party officials and by Iraq's leading religious scholars. These events were broadly advertised in the media, and the studies were published afterwards in collective volumes by the Ministry of *Awqāf* and Religious Affairs.⁷⁰ Still in 1982, the regime had purged four leading party officials from the highest political organs explicitly because of their questionable religious attitudes.⁷¹ Now facing the religious resurgence, the leadership had recognised that party principles were not sufficient anymore and deemed it necessary to take the formation of the members' religious immunity into their own hands.

According to Dūrī, the educational course of the Faith Campaign corresponded to the method (*nahj*) and manners (*sulūk*) of Islam since the age of the Messenger of God and was intended to be an antidote against the moral decay of society (usury, exploitation, consummation of alcohol), sectarianism, and radical Islam.⁷² He reminded the party comrades that their education in the mentioned courses was modelled according to the Prophet's teaching of his companions (*ṣaḥāba*) in order to increase their faith and love for the Ba'th's "eternal mission" (*risāla khālida*) and to prepare them for *jihād* against Iraq's enemies.⁷³ During his opening of a Higher Ṣaddām Institute in Mosul in 2001, Dūrī summarised the subjects of the courses as consisting of Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, the foundations of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*), the method of admonition and edification (*tarḥīb wa-targhīb*), ethics (*akhlāq*), moral excellence (*faḍā'il*), Prophetic biography (*sīra nabawiyya*), literature (*adab*), and poetry (*shi'r*).⁷⁴ Yet, this

68 Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam*, 258–60; Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party*, 36, 285.

69 Interview with former minister of *awqāf* 'Abd al-Mun'im Aḥmad Ṣāliḥ al-Tikrītī, 12 May 2016.

70 *al-Thawra*, 4 June 2000, 1, 4 June 2002, 6.

71 'Ānī, *Inhiyār al-Trāq*, 99–100.

72 *al-Jumhūriyya*, 25 January 1995, 2; *al-Thawra*, 9 July 2000, 4.

73 *al-Thawra*, 8 March 2000, 4.

74 *al-Thawra*, 12 April 2001, 4.

religious education of Ba'th cadres should not belie the fact that the regime still stuck to its original secular principles and its Ba'thist understanding of Islam. As Samuel Helfont's study of internal Ba'th Party files revealed, the top works of the courses encompassed in fact four early essays by 'Aflaq including *The Memory of the Arab Messenger*, Ṣaddām's 1977 speech *A View on Religion and Heritage*, and the Central Report of the Ba'th Party's Ninth Regional Congress against the Islamisation of politics held in 1982.⁷⁵ Thus, Ba'th cadres underwent religious Islamic education but still according to Ba'thist principles. The Iraqi regime's outlook on Islam did indeed change from the 1970s to 2003 and Islam as a religion did gain an increasing salience in the official rhetoric and propaganda but the Ba'th regime did not become an Islamist regime. On the contrary, the gradual and moderate embrace of Islamic values was designed to avoid an Islamisation of politics.

The recently published book *Ṣaddām Ḥusayn: umma fī rajul* (Ṣaddām Ḥusayn: A nation in a man, 2013) by a high-ranking Ba'thist graduate of the Higher Ṣaddām Institute in Baghdad provides us with a glimpse of the kind of Prophetic piety that one could develop in these courses. The author is the former head of Baghdad's Ba'th Party branch (*far'*), 'Iṣām al-Rāwī. He graduated from the institute's fourth Qur'ān course (*dawra*) in 1999 with a thesis about the mercy (*rahma*) of the Prophet in *ḥadīth* and *sīra*, titled "Mercy: Its True Nature and the Manner in Which One Is Moulded by It".⁷⁶ His instance shows how Prophetic piety among party members became paradoxically blended with the veneration of Ṣaddām. In the book, 'Iṣām dedicates a long chapter to the mercy (*rahma*) of Ṣaddām, titled "Mercy and the Manner in Which the Martyr Ṣaddām Ḥusayn Was Moulded by It".⁷⁷ 'Iṣām introduces this chapter with a part of his aforementioned thesis and lists page-by-page episodes about the Prophet's *rahma* from *ḥadīth* and *sīra*, before he presents analogously episodes about Ṣaddām's *rahma* which he had collected from the latter's former comrades. Some of those indeed went as far as to describe Ṣaddām as one of the saints or friends of God (*awliyā' Allāh*). Eventually, 'Iṣām produced with his book a *sīrat Ṣaddām* which he puts in a lofty analogy to the *sīra* of Muḥammad.

75 Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion*, 190.

76 *al-Rahma ḥaqīqatuhā wa-kayfiyyat al-takhalluq bihā* (Rāwī, *Ṣaddām Ḥusayn*, 199–218).

77 *al-Rahma wa-kayf takhallaqa bihā al-shahīd Ṣaddām Ḥusayn* (Rāwī, *Ṣaddām Ḥusayn*, 199–241).

11.5 Conclusion

The analysis above demonstrates the development of quite different images of the Prophet Muḥammad in Baʿthist ideology and its political discourse, from a secular role model in a quasi-religious guise between the 1940s and the 1970s to an increasingly religious succour in the 1980s and 1990s. Initially, Baʿthist ideology absorbed and politicised the historical figure of the Prophet, transforming him into a national hero and founding figure of the Arab nation, turning God's revelation to him into an ethnic election, and his religious message into an eternal mission to unite the Arabs. His birthday, understood as the birth of the Arab nation, was turned into a national feast, and his lifetime came to be revered as an ideal and golden age. Eventually, the sacrifice of Iraqi soldiers during the Iran–Iraq War was interpreted as a sacrifice for Muḥammad's cause. Thus, the Prophet and his heritage served as an indispensable foundation in Baʿthist ideology for the creation of a Baʿthist “sacred community” (in the terms of Smith). The Baʿthists Sāmī al-Jundī and Hānī al-Fukaykī proved that ʿAflaq's use of the Prophetic image could indeed mobilise and arouse an emotional state among his fellows which made them see themselves as little prophets; even if this vision was antagonistic to the prevalent religious tradition. The Baʿthists were against traditional religion and often clashed with its representatives but not to destroy Islam. On the contrary, Baʿthist ideology needed Islam's symbols, rituals, and figures, primarily the Prophet, as a sacred resource for the nation.

Ṣaddām's personality cult, on the other hand, is a case in point for the messianisation of a political leader as the Prophet's alleged descendant and renewer of his historical mission. The president's claim of a Prophetic lineage certainly aimed at endowing him with religious charisma. His claim was not even unreasonable among Iraq's Sunnī and Shīʿī tribal communities where Sharīfism is extremely widespread. Whether most Iraqis in fact believed Ṣaddām to be a descendant of Muḥammad and therefore a legitimate president, however, is secondary in this context. More than legitimising himself with the Prophet, Ṣaddām's cult served to inscribe his person as an omnipresent and historical leader into the tradition of Prophetic descendancy. It was Ṣaddām who coloured the image of the Prophet and thus overshadowed him and equally left his own mark on Sharīfism.

The increasing political use of Islam during the 1980s and especially the 1990s shows how the Baʿth regime adapted the image of the Prophet as circumstances seemed to require. The turn from Muḥammad's historical mission to his heavenly message came as a tactical move in reaction to the severe

hardships endured by Iraqi society under the embargo and the general religious resurgence during the 1990s. The use of religious rhetoric and motifs had already commenced during the Iran–Iraq War and contributed in its turn to the growing religious awareness in society. By the 1990s, the Ba‘th regime realised that this development could not be halted and decided to channel it; for instance, by making the study of Islam even obligatory for its own party cadres. For the first time, Ba‘thists were ordered to study Islam and the *sīra* of the Prophet in order to form a religious immunity (particularly against radical and political Islam) in addition to ‘Aflaq’s ambiguous principles and blended with Ṣaddām’s cult.

The case of the Ba‘th Party, finally, constitutes one example of many similar political movements and indicates how the emergence of the modern nation-state transformed the Prophet and his religious heritage into a cultural repertoire that can serve for various ideological and political ends to date.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Iraqi Daily Newspapers

al-Jumhūriyya

al-Thawra

Books

‘Aflaq, M. *Fī sabīl al-Ba‘th*, Beirut, Manshūrāt Dār al-Ṭalī‘a, 1963.

‘Ānī, Ṭ. T. *Inhiyār al-‘Irāq al-mufājī’ wa-tadā‘īyyātuhu*, London, Dār al-Ḥikma, 2015.

Fukaykī, H. *Awkār al-hazīma: tajribatī fī ḥizb al-ba‘th al-‘irāqī*, Beirut, Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1993.

Iskandar, A. *Ṣaddām Ḥusayn: munāḍīlan wa-mufakkiran wa-insānan*, Paris, Hāshīt, 1980.

Jundī, S. *al-Ba‘th*, 1st ed., Beirut, Dār al-Nahār li-l-Nashr, 1969.

Rāwī, I. ‘A. *Ṣaddām Ḥusayn: umma fī rajul*, Amman, al-Ahliyya li-l-Ṭibā‘a wa-l-Nashr, 2013.

Secondary Literature

Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities*, London and New York, Verso, 2006.

Baram, A. “Re-inventing Nationalism in Ba‘thi Iraq 1968–1994: Supraterritorial and Territorial Identities and What Lies Below”, in W. Harris, ed., *Challenges to Democracy in the Middle East*, Princeton, Markus Wiener Publishing, 1997, 29–56.

- Baram, A. "From Militant Secularism to Islamism: The Iraqi Ba'th Regime 1968–2003", Occasional Paper, History and Public Policy Program, Washington, DC, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, October 2011.
- Baram, A. *Saddam Husayn and Islam, 1968–2003: Ba'thi Iraq from Secularism to Faith*, Washington, DC, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014.
- Baram, A. "Saddam's ISIS: Tracing the Roots of the Caliphate", *Foreign Affairs*, 13 April 2016. www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iraq/2016-04-08/saddams-isis.
- Baram, A. "Saddam and the Rise of ISIS", *Foreign Affairs*, 5 June 2016. www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iraq/2016-06-05/saddam-and-rise-isis.
- Bengio, O. "Iraq", in A. Ayalon, ed., *Middle East Contemporary Survey: 1990*, XIV, Tel Aviv, The Moshe Dayan Center, 1992, 379–423.
- Bengio, O. "Iraq", in A. Ayalon, ed., *Middle East Contemporary Survey: 1992*, XVI, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995, 447–98.
- Bengio, O. *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Faust, A. M. *The Ba'thification of Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Totalitarianism*, 1st ed., Austin, University of Texas Press, 2015.
- Gellner, E. *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007.
- Helfont, S. *Compulsion in Religion: Saddam Hussein, Islam, and the Roots of Insurgencies in Iraq*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Jordan, D. *State and Sufism in Iraq: The Building of a "Moderate Islam" under Saddam Husayn*, Routledge Sufi Series, ed. I. R. Netton, London, Routledge 2022 (forthcoming).
- Lewental, D. G. "Saddam's Qadisiyyah: Religion and History in the Service of State Ideology in Ba'thi Iraq", *Middle Eastern Studies* 50/6 (November 2014), 891–910.
- Merad, A. "Iṣlāḥ", in E. van Donzel, B. Lewis, and Ch. Pellat, eds, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, Brill, 1997, IV, 141–71.
- Reichmuth, S. "Religion and Language", in L. Edzard and R. de Jong, eds, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, Brill Online, 2012. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-arabic-language-and-linguistics/religion-and-language-COM_0287.
- Rohde, A. *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq: Facing Dictatorship*, London, Routledge, 2010.
- Sassoon, J. *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Sedgwick, M. "Salafism, the Social, and the Global Resurgence of Religion", *Comparative Islamic Studies* (2012), 57–69.
- Smith, A. D. "The 'Sacred' Dimension of Nationalism", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29/3 (2000), 791–814.

Stegagno, C. "Mišīl 'Aflaq's Thought between Nationalism and Socialism", *Oriente Moderno* 97 (2017), 154–76.

van Donzel, E. "Mudjaddid", in C. E. Bosworth et al., eds, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, Brill, 1993, VII, 290.

Wedeen, L. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*, 2nd ed., Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2015.