

A 'New Deal' for the Kurds: Britain's Kurdish Policy in Iraq, 1941–45

Stefanie K. Wichhart

The Mulla Mustafa revolt of 1943–45 threatened to undermine the authority of the already vulnerable Iraqi government. In formulating a response, both the Iraqi prime minister and the British embassy wanted to prevent Kurdish nationalists from appropriating the revolt for their own ends. Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, the British Ambassador to Iraq, called for a 'New Deal' for the Kurds, encouraging development and investment in Kurdish areas as a means of drawing them under the control of central government authority. Iraqi Minister Majid Mustafa offered similar suggestions for infrastructure projects. In this instance, British and Iraqi priorities aligned and both hoped that reform would appease the Kurds and strengthen the Iraqi state. Britain's Kurdish policy during the Second World War demonstrates the continuing tension, dating back to the Mandate period, between its commitment to a united Iraq and the paternalistic sense of responsibility for the Kurds felt by many of its officials, in particular, the political advisers posted in the northern provinces. Despite British and Iraqi attempts to dismiss the Mulla Mustafa revolt as an 'isolated tribal uprising', it has entered the Kurdish narrative as a transformative moment in the Iraqi Kurdish national movement.

From the time of its formation in the aftermath of the First World War, Iraq has been torn between the centripetal force of Iraqi nationalism and the vision of a unified Iraq and the centrifugal pull of the numerous ethnic and sectarian communities that comprise this state. With the end of the Mandate in 1932, these tensions remained unresolved. Iraq paid lip service to the League of Nations' safeguards for Kurdish rights while at the same time quelling uprisings and interning many of the most prominent Kurdish tribal leaders.¹ This tension between sectarian and ethnic identities and the modern state erupted again in the aftermath of the 1941 Rashid Ali coup, which saw the overthrow of a pro-Axis government through British military intervention.² Neither the Shi'is nor the Kurds had supported the coup; in fact, Rashid Ali's inability to incite the Iraqi 'tribes' to fight against British forces was often cited as a contributing

Correspondence to: Stefanie K. Wichhart, Department of History, Niagara University, Timon Hall, PO Box 1941, Niagara University, NY 14109-1941, USA. Email: skw@niagara.edu

factor to the coup's failure.³ Taking advantage of the political instability that followed the coup and the subsequent British military intervention, Iraq's Shi'i majority and Kurdish minority called for increased participation in the political process as a reward for their loyalty to the Iraqi regent. To both the Kurds and sympathetic British officials, the moment seemed opportune to press the government to address long-standing Kurdish grievances.

The post-coup government of Jamil al-Midfai did make some progress in addressing Shi'i and Kurdish demands, including representatives of both communities in the cabinet, for example. Yet these concessions were limited, and C. J. Edmonds, the British adviser to the Ministry of the Interior and himself an expert on Kurdish affairs, doubted the government's sincerity, as the prime minister was generally known to hold anti-Kurdish views.⁴ Ambassador Cornwallis reported that Edmonds sensed when talking to Iraqi politicians, 'a vindictive feeling that they would prefer to lose Kurdistan rather than secure them as loyal Iraqis by acknowledging their existence qua Kurds; they are ready to contemplate evacuation of the Kurdistan areas but never a really liberal policy'.⁵

The Kurdish situation continued in this stalemate, with the British urging the Kurds to be patient and the Iraqis to be more responsive. Baghdad made some token concessions, but a combination of discriminatory government policies, wartime pressures, and a series of natural disasters exacerbated the economic difficulties of the Kurdish areas, creating widespread shortages and famine conditions in 1943.⁶ The impasse was broken in July when Mulla Mustafa, a leader of the Barzani Kurds, escaped from detention in Sulaymaniya.⁷ In September, he and his followers raided police posts, gathering arms when the posts surrendered. The Iraqi army intervened, but it suffered humiliating defeats, revealing its weakness and lack of organisation, a legacy of the 1941 conflict.⁸ Over the next 2 years, the Iraqi government pursued a waiting policy, promising reforms and concessions to appease Mulla Mustafa and other Kurdish leaders while keeping the region quiet until the Iraqi army was strong enough to take action.

The inability of the army to put down the uprising and restore order in northern Iraq had the potential to undermine Baghdad's authority. Mulla Mustafa's brother, Shaikh Ahmad, had led the Barzanis in a similar uprising in 1931–32. The Iraqi army had suffered multiple defeats in trying to quell this earlier revolt and only succeeded in 1932 with the support of British air power. Mulla Mustafa's 1943 revolt threatened to follow a similar pattern.⁹ The Iraqi state's response to the revolt was further complicated by its simultaneous commitment to the cause of Arab unity. Growing sectarian and ethnic demands in Iraq threatened to undermine the vision of an Arab Iraq that leaders in Baghdad were trying so hard to project to the region. The challenge was to address Kurdish grievances in such a way as to strengthen central government authority while defusing calls for greater Kurdish autonomy or recognition of Kurdish nationalist demands.

From the British perspective, this revolt had the potential to disrupt Iraq's contribution to the Allied war effort, particularly its grain shipments, its role in imperial communications, and its oil supply. Cornwallis observed that the inability of the

central government to address the famine conditions in the north and restore order had led tribal leaders such as Mulla Mustafa 'to take the law into their own hands, to pursue private feuds and to flout orders of local officials'. He warned that Kurdish nationalists might take advantage of the situation and 'seek to enveigle tribesmen into political co-operation with them'.¹⁰ Britain had a vested interest in the establishment of a strong, centralised government and saw any movement that threatened this as a challenge to British imperial priorities. Unrest in the Kurdish areas on Iraq's northern and eastern borders had larger implications, as it might spill over into neighbouring countries. Kurdish leaders in Iran and Iraq frequently took refuge on the opposite side of the border, resulting in complicated negotiations between tribal leaders, embassy officials, and local governments for their return, either to amnesty or to internment.¹¹ The situation in Persian Kurdistan was particularly tumultuous after the 1941 Anglo-Soviet occupation of Iran, and British officials in Baghdad were perpetually worried that this instability, and with it Soviet influence, would spread into Iraq.¹²

Despite these very real concerns, the British wanted to avoid direct intervention in the Kurdish crisis and adopted a two-pronged, gradualist response. On the one hand, the embassy urged Kurdish leaders to avoid violence, submit to Iraqi government authority, and assimilate into the Iraqi state. At the same time, Britain encouraged the government to address Kurdish grievances by appointing more Kurdish officials, providing supplies to Kurdish areas, and developing infrastructure in the north. In 1944, the assistant oriental secretary, Malcolm Walker, in a chance meeting with Mulla Mustafa, candidly laid out Britain's attitude. Iraq was an independent country, and the Government of Iraq's relationship with the Kurds was an internal affair in which the embassy did not want to intervene. They wanted a fair settlement for the Kurds and had been working for 20 years to get one and would continue to do so, but 'it was however essential that the British not appear to be interfering directly in Kurdish Arab affairs. We were not prepared to sacrifice our good position in the Middle East just for the Kurds'.¹³ Britain was torn between its vision of itself as a protector of the Kurds and its commitment to maintaining the unity of the Iraqi state as the best possibility for stability in the region. In the end, British pragmatism would win out over idealism, a fact recognised by all parties involved.

The Rhetoric of Development in the Kurdish 'New Deal'

The Iraqi government was divided as to the best response to the revolt. Edmonds described the two sides as 'hawks', who wanted to use military force, and 'doves', who called for reform.¹⁴ At first, Nuri al-Sa'id, the Iraqi prime minister, listened to the doves and appointed a minister without portfolio to deal with Kurdish issues. Majid Mustafa was himself a Kurd who had served in the Ottoman Army and supported Shaikh Mahmud during the 1920s, later joining the Iraqi government. His actions during the 1941 coup were suspect to both the British and the post-coup administration, and as a result, he was suspended from government service for five years. He was brought in before that period had expired to deal with Kurdish issues

because, as a British military official observed, 'there seemed no other Kurdish nationalist of the calibre needed to meet the situation created by the Barzani revolt'.¹⁵ Majid Mustafa faced opposition from both the Iraqi Senate and the regent, which would ultimately undermine his mission.¹⁶ The British, however, viewed his appointment favourably, and by the end of 1943, Cornwallis was optimistic about the situation in Kurdistan.¹⁷

Majid Mustafa's first task was to negotiate a ceasefire agreement with Mulla Mustafa.¹⁸ He then turned his attention to the underlying causes of the uprising. After a January 1944 fact-finding mission to Barzan, he suggested that the government should rectify the administrative problems in the region and alleviate the economic difficulties of the Kurds. He concluded that the unrest was partly due to the manner in which Mulla Mustafa and other Kurdish leaders had been treated while held in captivity in Sulaymaniya, in particular, their financial hardship. Local authorities deserved blame for not suppressing the movement at the beginning and for neglecting Kurdish areas, making them fertile grounds for revolt. He described the difficult conditions in the Barzani territories: famine, destitution, deserted villages, little cultivation, and a restless population. The Kurdish leaders told Majid Mustafa that 'they had embarked on their rough course only because they had felt compelled to do so', while reassuring him of their loyalty to both the regent and the government.¹⁹

Majid Mustafa proposed that Baghdad should address these issues by providing immediate relief in the form of grain and supplies 'in order that the inhabitants should feel the benefits of the presence of government organisations in their midst'. He also called for long-term infrastructure development in northern Iraq through repairs to phone lines and roads. The use of local labour would provide much needed employment and income, yet these projects were not only for the benefit of the Kurds. Better roads would tie outlying villages more closely to the towns and 'ensure government control' by making it easier for government officials and, if necessary, troops, to travel to places of unrest. Even if these proposals did not lead to an immediate resolution of the problem, they would lay the groundwork for later attempts to establish 'orderly and just administration' and isolate the rebellion while winning the co-operation of surrounding areas.²⁰ The cabinet accepted these proposals and began taking tentative steps towards their realisation.

In May 1944, Majid Mustafa and Nuri al-Sa'id toured Kurdish areas to win local support and publicise the new government policy. The prime minister met with Kurdish leaders, heard their complaints, and gave speeches on the theme of Arab and Kurdish unity within the state of Iraq. Nuri proclaimed that the Kurds were an integral part of Iraq and that they should be treated as Iraqis, a policy he laid out in his report on this trip:

... the Kurds of Iraq have no objectives at variance with those of the rest of the people of Iraq. The Kurds of Iraq, like other Iraqis, seek reform of the administration and that attention should be lent to matters of education, health, economic development and other vital matters, which sooner or later must necessarily be carried out in all parts of Iraq in order to raise the standard of living of the people, increase their efficiency and develop their national resources ... we must look upon Iraq as

one comprehensive entity and must undertake comprehensive reforms for the benefit and welfare of all.²¹

Kurdistan might be suffering from neglect, but the solution was not to treat it as an exceptional case, but to bring it up to the level of the rest of the country.²²

The embassy supported this approach, putting pressure on the central government to provide what it described as a 'New Deal' for the Kurds.²³ Cornwallis' successor as ambassador, Sir Francis Hugh Stonehewer Bird, observed that 'It is here in the capital, not among the villages and tribes of the North, that Kurdish interests can best be promoted, and safeguarded.'²⁴ Majid Mustafa's proposals complemented the embassy's own view that the Mulla Mustafa revolt was yet another instalment in the ongoing struggle between a modern centralising state and traditional tribal authority. Embassy officials viewed Kurdish tribal leaders as reactionary and obsolete, and Britain's role was to gently coax them into shedding their old ways, like a patient parent. The ambassador advised London that 'This process of rapid, almost violent, change from ancient to modern is, for good or evil, going on throughout Kurdistan. Naturally it is resented by those who, like Mulla Mustafa, can have no part in it. It is our duty I feel, while showing sympathy with the old, to attempt to guide and conciliate the new.'²⁵

The Kurdish 'New Deal' reflected the long-standing assumptions about the Kurds held by British embassy officials and Kurdish experts, dating back to the Mandate period. The Kurds were seen as wild, unruly, disorderly, and lawless, and Kurdish tribal leaders were referred to as 'brigands' and 'bandits'.²⁶ This rhetoric was not limited to the official sphere. An April 1946 London *Times* article which provided an overview of the relations between the Barzani Kurds and the Iraqi government going back to the 1920s closely echoed the official line. The Barzanis were described as the 'most intractable of the Iraqi Kurds', while Mulla Mustafa was an 'obdurate' and 'insolent' leader, whose 'arrogance knew no bounds' and who 'would only bow to force'. Mulla Mustafa and his brother, Sheikh Ahmed, 'were as wild as the eagles of their own hills and too old to learn the restraints of any system but their own'.²⁷

In keeping with these assumptions, the embassy believed that the Iraqi government needed to institute policies that would civilise and settle the Kurdish people, 'among the most backward in Iraq', bringing order to a chaotic region. As one embassy report suggested, 'The Kurds will continue to be an element of disorder and a danger to the security of the greater part of the North of the country . . . The way to tame the Kurd is not to fight him but to civilise him.'²⁸ This could be achieved through development projects in the Kurdish areas, including immediate famine relief, irrigation schemes, road building to provide infrastructure and employment, and reform of the tobacco monopoly.²⁹ Such a 'friendly and constructive policy' would 'tranquillise turbulent people and make them useful citizens of the country', bring credit to Iraq on the international stage for treating its people well, lessen the chance of frontier disturbances, and save money on military operations.³⁰ As Stewart Perowne, the oriental counsellor, reasoned in 1945, 'Gradually economics prevail over politics, and civilisation seeps in. But it takes time.'³¹

The British hoped that modernisation and investment would not only reconcile the majority of Kurds to the Iraqi state, but also weaken the authority of traditional

leaders. The British were highly sceptical of Mulla Mustafa's claims to leadership of a larger Kurdish nationalist movement, viewing him as a poseur and imposter, a relic of the Kurdish tribal past trying to clothe himself in the garb of a modern nationalist leader. An embassy official advised London that Mulla Mustafa, 'whose outlook at the moment may be compared with that of Hitler after Munich, is not interested in the politico-economic welfare of the Kurds, nor does he care about hospitals or schools. The man is a bandit chieftain, and all he wants is freedom to live feudally in leadership over his armed followers while levying tribute on the cowed and the defenceless.'³² The best way to undermine the nationalist dimension of the Mulla Mustafa revolt was to separate it from what the British considered legitimate Kurdish grievances, such as poor administration and limited investment in infrastructure, which hindered economic development. In Edmonds' view, the 'Kurdish problem' should be treated primarily as 'an administrative problem'. He told the regent that 'no sensible Kurd' believed that the rebellions would bring real change, but they would not act to support the government if they believed that it was unresponsive to their protests. In a prescient comment, he observed that 'a minority always tended to attribute omissions to deliberate design' and the Kurds would see the inequality between provisions for their region and other parts of Iraq in this light.³³ Iraq should provide sympathetic and responsive officials in Kurdish regions and offer social services available in other parts of the country. Edmonds reasoned that if the Government of Iraq would follow through on the proposed reforms, then they would be able to treat the situation in Barzan 'like any ordinary tribal trouble of limited scope'.³⁴ Mulla Mustafa would lose the basis for his support and this would, as Cornwallis observed, 'spoil his largely bogus pose of champion of Kurdish rights'.³⁵ This policy would also create an opportunity for the expansion of the power of the central government into Kurdish areas, a goal shared by both the Iraqi government and the British.

British debates extolling the benefits of development projects in Kurdish areas reflected the long-held assumptions about the need to civilise and modernise the Kurds, as well as serving Britain's wartime strategic priorities. The emphasis on social and economic reform also complemented the new imperial policy of the post-war Labour government. In a meeting with the heads of mission in the Middle East in September 1945, Ernest Bevin, the Labour foreign secretary, announced a new policy towards the region: 'we should broaden the base on which British influence rests and to this end should develop an economic and social policy that would make for the prosperity and contentment of the area as a whole . . . we should do all that we could to promote the social betterment of the people of the region'.³⁶ While the complex motivations behind Bevin's policy lie outside the scope of this article and differ from many of the assumptions that underlay the Kurdish 'New Deal', there are striking similarities in the British rhetoric used to describe these modernisation projects and a shared belief that economic reform and development would deflate claims by both Arab and Kurdish nationalists.³⁷ The Kurdish 'New Deal' would reconcile the Kurds to the Iraqi state; Bevin's 'peasants not pashas' policy would reconcile disgruntled Arab nationalists to continued British influence in the Middle East and

stave off growing Russian and American influence in the region. Thompson, the *chargé d'affaires* at the embassy in Baghdad, supported the recommendations that arose from Bevin's conference because: 'Too long, it seems to me, have we refrained in our official pronouncements from registering any interest whatever in the well-being of the ordinary inhabitants, the countless little people, in countries such as this ... By emphasising the modernity of our thought and action, we can influence in our favour the many, still largely unorganised and inarticulate, who to-day in Iraq seek a better life for their fellows.'³⁸ By 1945, Britain's support for development projects in Kurdish areas, rooted in the paternalistic assumptions of the Mandate period, dovetailed with the Labour government's vision for the region as a whole.

Dangerous Liaisons: British and Iraqi Personnel in the Provinces

At the same time that it was pressuring the Iraqi government to make concessions to the Kurds, the embassy was mobilising British personnel in the provinces. Britain had posted political advisers in the north following the 1941 Rashid Ali coup. Originally charged with gathering intelligence, countering pro-Axis sentiment, and winning the support of tribal leaders, with the outbreak of the Mulla Mustafa revolt, they also became lynchpins in the embassy's efforts to encourage the Kurds to submit to the Iraqi state. Stonehewer Bird urged the political advisers '... to do everything to oppose the continued development of a minority complex. Kurds, together with the Arabs, Assyrians and Jews, are all to be regarded as Iraqi citizens ... I feel that in the long run it is kinder and better to pursue this even-handed policy and to do all in our power to foster assimilation.'³⁹

The political advisers were all seasoned British experts in Kurdish and tribal affairs, with careers in Iraq dating back to the First World War. Years of experience and extensive local contacts made them the perfect choice for winning over the Kurds, yet in the end they also proved to be a liability. Political advisers such as Wallace Lyon and Edward Kinch soon became some of the most vocal critics of Britain's wartime Kurdish policy.⁴⁰ In their view, Britain's increased role in Iraq after 1941 offered an opportunity to right old wrongs, in particular, what they saw as Britain's betrayal of the Kurdish cause during the Mandate period. They became increasingly disillusioned by the embassy's unwillingness to take full advantage of this window of opportunity.

The influence wielded by these advisers was widely recognised, and all parties made use of them as intermediaries. As part of the understanding reached with Majid Mustafa, Mulla Mustafa agreed to visit Baghdad and meet with the regent in January 1944, but he stipulated that he would only make the journey if a British officer accompanied him to ensure that he would not be taken captive by the Iraqi government. Baghdad ignored this request, and Mulla Mustafa refused to go. Edward Kinch, a member of the political advisory staff, suggested that he might visit Mulla Mustafa and offer whatever assurances were needed. Cornwallis did not like the idea but finally agreed, and Kinch accompanied Majid Mustafa to Mosul and brought the Barzani leader to meet with him.⁴¹ Mulla Mustafa then proceeded to Baghdad, where he attended a party given by the embassy's public relations section,

a visible sign of the embassy's conciliatory attitude.⁴² The Iraqi government made use of Kinch's influence as well. In the summer of 1944, they recruited him for another visit to Mulla Mustafa since they believed that he would be able convince the Kurdish leader to turn weapons over to the Iraqi authorities.⁴³

At Majid Mustafa's suggestion, the Iraqi government also appointed its own representatives to serve as a direct line of communication between Baghdad and Kurdish tribal leaders, adopting the model of the British allied liaison officers (ALOs) who had long served as the eyes and ears of the RAF in the northern provinces.⁴⁴ Kurdish army officers were selected to fill these new posts with the title of liaison officers. Baghdad hoped that Kurdish leaders would view this as a positive step, signalling the government's willingness to negotiate. Mulla Mustafa's son, Massoud Barzani, confirmed the initial success of this initiative in his account of the revolt. The liaison officers were responsible for distributing food aid in Kurdish areas and 'It was generally considered a step in the right direction, a step toward a peaceful resolution.'⁴⁵ However, the appointments also had the unintended effect of facilitating a new phase of co-operation between the traditional Kurdish tribal leadership and urban intellectuals.⁴⁶ Some of the officers belonged to the small Kurdish nationalist society Hiwa, and two of them had attended the founding meeting of Komala, a Kurdish nationalist organisation, in Mahabad, Iran, in 1942.⁴⁷ The pervious Iran–Iraq border now allowed a small but significant exchange of Kurdish nationalists between the two countries.⁴⁸

The British grew increasingly suspicious of the conflicting loyalties of both Majid Mustafa and the Kurdish liaison officers. Col. Wood, the head of a British military intelligence organisation in Iraq, described the latter as 'a collection of extreme nationalists'. The liaison officers could only have been persuaded to take these new posts if they were convinced that by doing so they would further Kurdish national interests. Wood wrote of Majid Mustafa's negotiations with Mulla Mustafa that 'although his semi-public pronouncements were moderate as well as loyal in tone, he must at the least privately have persuaded all these men that with the support of Nuri Pasha and the British Embassy the pacification of Barzan would be but the preliminary of the long awaited realisation of justice and equality of treatment for Kurdistan'. Majid Mustafa and his liaison officers were the very men who might turn Mulla Mustafa's tribal revolt into a much larger push for Kurdish autonomy.⁴⁹

The link between the Mulla Mustafa revolt and the larger Kurdish nationalist movement is complex. Massoud Barzani, in his account of his father's career, emphasises the nationalist dimension of Mulla Mustafa's actions from the beginning and places the revolt in the larger context of independence movements around the world emerging at the end of the Second World War. According to Barzani, Mulla Mustafa met with other Kurdish nationalist leaders while in exile, including members of the Hiwa Party, and before returning to Barzan to initiate the revolt 'a coordinated agreement was reached regarding a plan for a revolution. Barzani secured an unequivocal pledge of support from them'.⁵⁰ This Kurdish narrative, then, directly challenges the British and Iraqi portrayal of the revolt as an 'isolated tribal uprising' and suggests that the intersection of the revolt and the nationalist movement was intentional, rather than merely an accident of timing.

The British, however, viewed the liaison officers as the catalyst that gave Mulla Mustafa's revolt nationalist credentials. One official noted that Mulla Mustafa had 'established under their noses the nucleus of an auto-Kurdistan'. He faulted the Iraqi government's policies for facilitating this transformation:

There is no reason why the outlook of M.M., who has always been more imaginative than the ordinary tribal leader, should not have been broadened first by the appointment of Majid Mustafa and the liaison officers, which linked his own local rebellion with the main trend of Kurdish nationalism, second by the tour of Nuri Pasha and the demands it provoked from thinking Kurds of the towns, and, most important of all, by his direct contact with the liaison officers themselves, the most practical and intransigent of Kurdish nationalists.⁵¹

Whether it was Mulla Mustafa's original intention or not, his revolt provided an opportunity for the traditional Kurdish tribal leadership to join forces with the urban nationalist movement.⁵²

Despite the grand promises of reform and investment, many of these projects had stalled by the end of 1944, leading to a sense of fatigue, disillusionment, and powerlessness among the British political advisers, their military counterparts, the ALOs, and the Kurdish liaison officers. The political advisers were an invaluable source of local intelligence, but as the Kurdish situation grew increasingly tense, their sympathies with the Kurds conflicted with their official mandate. Both embassy and military officials felt it necessary to rein in their representatives in the field who had 'gone native' and lapsed into criticism of Iraqi and British policy. In a comment that echoes frequent Foreign Office complaints about its own 'men on the spot', Cornwallis warned his staff: 'This leaning towards assuming the 'White Man's burden' is, I often think, a relic of the liberal imperialism of the Nineteenth Century. Be that as it may, officers stationed in remote outposts are naturally prone only to see, as it were, their particular section of the front, to identify themselves with the cause of the local inhabitants and, finally, to act as the advocates of the latter.' Too close an association with the local viewpoint caused a 'loss of objectivity . . . decreased efficiency and to other evils.'⁵³ Col. Wood, the head of British military intelligence in Iraq, adopted a similarly stern tone in a June 1944 letter to all of his officers in the provinces: 'If you agree openly and sympathise with adverse comments on the Embassy policy, i.e. the policy of His Majesty's Government . . . you are in fact committing what is tantamount to treason.'⁵⁴

Wallace Lyon was one of the strongest proponents of Kurdish rights and a frequent subject of such complaints. Edmonds received reports from his Iraqi contacts that Lyon was being 'most indiscreet and thereby doing great harm' by attacking Iraqi and British policies.⁵⁵ His critiques were so severe and widely known that the Iraqi minister for foreign affairs sent word to the embassy that he felt that Lyon exaggerated the situation and he did not want him returning to Iraq at all after his leave.⁵⁶ From Lyon's perspective, the Iraqi government was using the embassy as a tool against the Kurds and ignoring legitimate Kurdish grievances. The rhetoric emanating from both the Iraqi government and the embassy in Baghdad, calling on the Kurds to submit to central government authority and embrace the Iraqi state, rang hollow to

Lyon. He pointed out the hypocrisy of the government of Iraq's stance on Kurdish nationalism given its advocacy of Arab unity:

either it accepts them as 'Iraqis or it allows them their existence as Kurds; but it may not insist that they are not Kurds but 'Iraqis, and then jeer at them and refuse them 'Iraqi rights because they are not Arabs . . . it may not, in justice, arrest Kurds for advocating Kurdish unity and nationalism and then send emissaries to Cairo to wallow in professions of Panarabism. And since this is the very policy which the 'Iraqi government is pursuing with all its energy and ingenuity, it would not be surprising if the Kurds should seek their equal status within the framework by force, or else burst out of the framework altogether.⁵⁷

He complained that Iraqi officials were giving the embassy false information about Mulla Mustafa and grew increasingly frustrated with Cornwallis' inaction on Kurdish issues: 'As a Political Officer in Kurdistan I had naturally a great interest and sympathy for the Kurds and their aspirations, but I had never been able to get my Chief to view the situation through Kurdish spectacles. He was a dyed-in-the-wool Arabist'. Tribal leaders such as Mulla Mustafa were demanding concessions and he realised that he could do nothing to address their concerns. He, therefore, concluded that 'If I couldn't help them I should clear out'.⁵⁸ Lyon left Iraq by the end of 1944, convinced that the embassy's policy towards the revolt was yet another example of Britain's willingness to sacrifice the Kurds on the altar of a unified and centralised Iraqi state.

The lack of progress in Kurdistan also frustrated Majid Mustafa and the liaison officers. In March 1944, the officers were returned to their army posts, having been unsuccessful in meeting both the government's objective of a settlement with Mulla Mustafa and their personal goals of furthering the cause of Kurdish nationalism. Kinch observed that, in retrospect, the policy of appointing liaison officers was doomed from its inception: 'one of the great mistakes made was to send up a body of enthusiastic Kurdish officers imbued with the idea of carrying out a number of reforms about which nobody had any very clear ideas, certainly which political opinion in Baghdad was not ready for, or prepared to agree to and which in any case should never have been allowed to have become part of the Barzani question'.⁵⁹ The British and Iraqi liaison networks raised expectations of real reform that the government and embassy proved unable and unwilling to fulfil.

The Failure of the Kurdish 'New Deal'

The Iraqi government did make some concessions to the Kurds in 1945, including the Barzan Amnesty Law and the proposal, first put forth by Edmonds, to redraw the administrative boundaries of northern Iraq to better address Kurdish grievances.⁶⁰ However, by the summer of 1945, it became clear to all parties that the Kurdish 'New Deal' had failed, due to lack of government will, a shift in British priorities with the end of the war, and the renewed provocations of Mulla Mustafa. The changing climate of Iraqi politics in 1944 hindered the reform agenda. Although the cabinet had accepted Majid Mustafa's proposals, the Iraqi Senate, Chamber of Deputies, and regent were all hostile to the plan for reform.⁶¹ The unpopularity of Nuri's Kurdish policy

ultimately proved to be an important factor in the fall of his cabinet in July 1944, providing a rallying point for Iraqi politicians who opposed him for other reasons.⁶² The new prime minister, Hamdi al-Pachachi, publicly stated that he planned to continue his predecessor's Kurdish policies, but his cabinet included members opposed to the reforms.⁶³ Col. Wood attributed the failure to implement reform to a lack of will on the part of the government: 'The Arab Ministers although theoretically convinced of the desirability of the Government's Kurdish policy were not in fact prepared to face the obloquy which must have accompanied its sincere execution; which therefore became dependent on such pressure as Majid and H.M. Embassy could persuade the Prime Minister to exercise upon these half-hearted colleagues.' The politicians in Baghdad were not willing to pay the political price of implementing vital, yet unpopular, reforms in northern Iraq and were merely buying time until the army was strong enough to intervene and restore order through force.⁶⁴

Growing increasingly frustrated by government inaction, Mulla Mustafa abandoned his conciliatory attitude, and by December 1944, the embassy received reports that he was once again gathering troops. In August 1945, he resumed his attacks on Iraqi interests and the government responded with the imposition of martial law in Kurdish areas. The hawks won out and the Iraqi military was called upon to quell the revived Mulla Mustafa revolt. The embassy, in consultation with British military authorities in Iraq, had decided that it could no longer urge restraint on the part of the Iraqi government given Mulla Mustafa's 'repeated provocation'.⁶⁵ When the Barzanis occupied a government building in Bille, the Royal Iraqi Air Force bombed the town. Stonehewer-Bird had a certain amount of sympathy for the government in making this decision, noting that 'Ministers were in fact caught between the devil of military caution and the deep sea of internal political danger'.⁶⁶ The embassy wanted to ensure that its staff did not get drawn in, so the political advisors were instructed to stay at their headquarters.⁶⁷

Once the decision to respond with force had been made, the Iraqi government published a series of press announcements explaining its policy. Baghdad painted the conflict between the central government and Mulla Mustafa as a struggle between the forces of civilisation and order and those of savagery and violence. The Mutasarrif of Arbil, in one such announcement, listed the various projects initiated by the government both to improve the quality of life in the region and to restore order and security: the distribution of necessary supplies such as grain, sugar, tea, and textiles, the construction of hospitals and schools, and the issuance of agricultural loans. These plans for improvement were then undermined by Mulla Mustafa and his band who resumed their 'criminal acts against the people and the government'. The Barzanis were an obstructive force that hindered the constructive policies of the state. The Mutasarrif called on the inhabitants of Arbil to distance themselves from the actions of Mulla Mustafa and his men and warned them not to believe the lies spread by the Barzani leader.⁶⁸

The Iraqi army had difficulty in defeating Mulla Mustafa and enlisted the support of other Kurds in return for money and arms, revealing the divisions within the Kurdish leadership and the limitations of the Barzani movement.⁶⁹ Mulla Mustafa, Shaikh

Ahmed, and some of their followers escaped over the border to Iran, but it was generally believed that they would renew their efforts in the spring. Majid Mustafa was condemned as a traitor to the nationalist cause, and the Hiwa party collapsed.⁷⁰

Was Mulla Mustafa's revolt nationalist in nature or, as the British and Iraqis described it, an 'isolated tribal uprising'? This question had serious implications for the Iraqis, Kurds, and British that extended beyond the historical record. Massoud Barzani argued that Mulla Mustafa's intentions in rising against the Iraqi government were nationalistic all along, and Britain and Iraq realised that this was '... not a tribal rebellion, limited to a few mountains, that they could suppress easily. This was an armed national revolution supported by the Kurdish people in Iraqi Kurdistan—especially the educated—and it was a symbol of Kurdish aspirations'.⁷¹ While historians are divided on this point, many would support David McDowall's assertion that 'rather than Mulla Mustafa choosing nationalism, the nationalists chose him'.⁷² The Mulla Mustafa revolt was significant as the point when tribal grievances and the legitimacy of traditional Kurdish leaders were first harnessed by Kurdish urban intellectuals in the interest of a larger national goal, although the effort was unsuccessful in the end.⁷³

Mulla Mustafa's flight to Iran seemed to be the end of this episode in Iraqi history, but it was in fact only an interlude. The Soviets, who were then occupying northern Iran, allowed the Barzani leader to settle in a village in western Azerbaijan, where he established contacts with Iranian Kurdish nationalists. An independent Kurdish state, called the Mahabad Republic, was declared on 22 January 1946, and Mulla Mustafa and his men formed the most effective wing of the new republic's military. He conducted numerous raids on its behalf and, after the fall of Mahabad at the end of the year, sought refuge in the Soviet Union.⁷⁴ The Barzani uprising of 1943–45 was an important step along Mulla Mustafa's path to Kurdish leadership, and his role in the Mahabad Republic, his successful military campaigns, and his flight to the Soviet Union turned him into a Kurdish hero. When he returned to Iraq after the 1958 revolution, his rhetoric reflected larger nationalist aims and he had refashioned himself as a national, rather than merely tribal, leader.⁷⁵

The Mulla Mustafa revolt troubled both the Iraqi government and the British for many reasons. For the Iraqis, it was a direct challenge to the central government at a time when its legitimacy was already weakened due to the Rashid Ali coup. Iraq's response was complicated by its role in the movement for Arab unity that would, by definition, subsume Iraq's minority communities into a larger Arab entity. The British were committed to building a strong Iraqi state, yet many officials felt a lingering sense of guilt for abandoning the Kurds during the Mandate period. In the end, the Government of Iraq and Britain both had interests in limiting the impact of the Barzani uprising and portraying Mulla Mustafa as a traditional tribal leader who opportunistically seized the banner of Kurdish nationalism to further his personal agenda. Nascent Kurdish nationalism posed a direct threat to the state-building project that tied Iraqi and British interests together.

Despite the lofty rhetoric of investment, development, and good governance for Kurdish areas, in the end, the British lacked the will and the means to force the Iraqi

government to follow through with promised reforms. As Kinch observed, Britain's Kurdish policy failed because it was trying to 'run with the hare and hunt with the hounds'.⁷⁶ Cornwallis recognised the frustrations of his political advisers but, from the perspective of the embassy and the Foreign Office, there was not much that Britain could do about the situation: 'To put things right we would need to take over the whole country'.⁷⁷ Past experience told the embassy that imposing these reforms would require a major concentration of men, money, and military power that neither the larger war effort nor the British public would support. The approaching end of the war led Britain to reassess its priorities, and the Kurdish issue lost much of its urgency. In this instance, British and Iraqi priorities aligned and Britain's policy of privileging the Iraqi centre over the Kurdish periphery, combined with Baghdad's unwillingness to institute real change in its Kurdish administration, ultimately signalled the death of the short-lived Kurdish 'New Deal'. Yet the revolt that inspired these policies would take its place in the Kurdish historical narrative as a defining moment in the formation of a modern Kurdish nationalist movement in Iraq.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks the Department of History at the University of Texas at Austin for funding the early stages of this research. A version of this paper was delivered at the conference 'Rethinking the Middle East? Values, Interests, and Security Concerns in Western Policies toward Iraq and the Wider Region, 1918–2010', sponsored by the British Institute for the Study of Iraq and the European Studies Research Institute/University of Salford (Greater Manchester), March 2010.

Notes

- [1] For the British and the Kurds of Iraq during the Mandate period, see Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq* and McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, Chapter 8.
- [2] On 1 April 1941, a coup returned Rashid Ali, who was known to have pro-Axis ties, to the post of prime minister. The RAF took military action against the Iraqi army on 2 May after Iraqi troops surrounded the Habbaniyah air base. The Anglo-Iraqi military conflict continued until Rashid Ali and the army officers behind the coup fled the country at the end of the month. The regent was restored to power, and Britain assumed a more influential role in Iraq for the duration of the war. For a detailed account, see Warner, *Iraq and Syria 1941*; Simon, *Iraq Between Two World Wars*, 135–54. For the British perspective on the 1941 coup and the Mulla Mustafa revolt, see Longrigg, *Iraq, 1900 to 1950*.
- [3] The British used the term 'tribe' indiscriminately in reference to the Shi'i communities on the Middle Euphrates, the Iraqi Bedouin, and the Kurds of northern Iraq. The terminology of the 'tribe' is still used to describe Kurdish social and political organisation in contemporary studies. See Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, Chapter 2. Politicians in Baghdad from the mid-1930s attempted, not always successfully, to win the support of 'the tribes' as a means of undermining the government in power. See Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, Chapters 3–4.
- [4] Edmonds to Cornwallis, 7 Sept. 1941, FO 624/24, The National Archives, London (TNA).
- [5] Cornwallis to Eden, 11 July 1941, FO 371/27078, TNA.
- [6] For a detailed discussion of the economic conditions in Kurdish areas during the war, see al-Barzani, *al-Haraka al-Qawmiyya al-Kurdiyya*, 64–67. Jwaideh confirms the rumors of

famine in Kurdish areas based on his travels to the region in 1943–44. Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement*, 231, 364 n. 10.

- [7] For the revolt itself from the Kurdish perspective, see Massoud Barzani's account of his father's early career, *Mustafa Barzani*. Given the author's current position as leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, his work is useful for revealing how Mulla Mustafa's revolt has been interpreted by one key strand of the Kurdish nationalist movement and its important position in the nationalist narrative. A different view is offered in the work of the Kurdish nationalist writer Ma'ruf Jiyawuk in his work, *Ma'sat Barzan al-Mazluma*. Jiyawuk had personal contact with Mulla Mustafa and served as Mutassarif in Sulaymaniya during this period.
- The Government of Iraq position is reflected in the documents included in al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-Wizarat al-'Iraqiyya*, vol. 6, 272–82. For the Mulla Mustafa revolt within its wartime context, see McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 290–93; Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East*, Chapter 4; Eppel, *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny*, 53–55; and Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement*, Chapter 14. Jwaideh's account is of particular interest as he travelled through the Kurdish regions of Iraq during the war through his position as an inspector of supply for the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior.
- [8] General Renton observed that the British supported Nuri's policy of keeping the Iraqi army weak following the 1941 coup: 'Rations were cut down by 1,000 calories a day below what was considered necessary by the medical authorities for Eastern troops, no clothing or equipment were purchased and by the Spring of 1944 the Army was in rags, with no equipment and no morale.' Quoted in Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, 324.
- [9] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 178–80. For the first Barzani revolt against the Government of Iraq, see also Wallace Lyon's firsthand account in Fieldhouse, ed., *Kurds, Arabs and Britons*, 189–92; Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement*, 219–29; and Barzani, *Mustafa Barzani*, Chapters 3–4.
- [10] Cornwallis to FO, 13 Dec. 1943, FO 371/35013, TNA.
- [11] Edmonds diaries, 4 and 14 Oct. 1941. Middle East Centre Archive at St. Antony's College, Oxford (MECA) and Edmonds to Embassy, 8 June 1942, FO 624/25, TNA.
- [12] Kinch to Thompson, 28 July 1944 and Edmonds to Cornwallis, 23 Dec. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA. For Soviet interests in the Kurdish movement, see Chapter 6 of Yassin, *Vision or Reality?*
- [13] Malcolm Walker to Perowne, 16 Nov. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [14] Edmonds, 'Kurdish Nationalism', 95.
- [15] Col. Wood (CICI) 'Kurdish Nationalism and the Iraqi Government January-October 1944', 23 Oct. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA. For Majid Mustafa's actions in 1941, see Perowne to Wing Commander H. K. Dawson Shepherd, 18 June 1945, FO 624/71, TNA.
- [16] Cornwallis to Eden, 15 April 1944, FO 371/40038, and Col. Wood, 'Kurdish Nationalism', 23 Oct. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [17] Cornwallis to Eden, Annual Review for 1943, 8 Feb. 1944, FO 371/40041, TNA.
- [18] For a list of Mulla Mustafa's demands, and the agreement negotiated with Majid Mustafa, see Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement*, 232–33.
- [19] Translation of letter from Majid Mustafa, Minister without Portfolio, to the Council of Ministers, 18 Jan. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [20] Ibid.
- [21] Report by Nuri, 'The Kurdish Question', 30 May 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [22] Ibid.
- [23] This term is used in Thompson to Consul Mosul, 22 July 1944; Edmonds to Cornwallis, 6 Oct. 1944; Cornwallis to Eden, 10 Dec. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA. The term also gained wider usage through the media: 'Unrest in Kurdistan, Iraqi Fears of a Separatist Movement, Government's Efforts at Conciliation', London *Times*, 11 April 1946.
- [24] Stonehewer Bird to Eden, 3 May 1945, FO 371/45346, TNA.
- [25] Stonehewer Bird to Eden, 5 July 1945, FO 371/45303, TNA.

- [26] This was a long-standing stereotype, predating Britain's presence in the region. McDowall notes that 'From the eleventh century onwards many travelers and historians treated the term "Kurd" as synonymous with brigandage, a view echoed by nineteenth-century European travelers.' McDowall, *Modern History of the Kurds*, 13.
- [27] 'Unrest in Kurdistan', London *Times*, 11 April 1946.
- [28] Unsigned, undated Embassy report presented to the Regent by Cornwallis on 30 May 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [29] Edmonds diaries, 10 June 1944, MECA.
- [30] Unsigned, undated Embassy report presented to the Regent by Cornwallis on 30 May 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [31] Minute by Perowne, 19 March 1945, FO 624/71, TNA.
- [32] Thompson to Eden, 14 Aug. 1944, FO 371/40042, TNA.
- [33] Edmonds diaries, 8 May 1944, MECA.
- [34] Edmonds to Cornwallis, 27 June 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [35] Cornwallis to FO, 23 April 1944, FO 371/40038, TNA.
- [36] Baxter (for Bevin) to Bowker, 18 Oct. 1945, FO141/1059, TNA.
- [37] For the Labour government's development debates, see Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, 15–21; Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization*; Franzén, 'Development vs. Reform'.
- [38] Thompson to Bevin, 26 Sept. 1945, FO371/45295, TNA.
- [39] Stonehewer Bird to Eden, 3 May 1945, FO 371/45346, TNA.
- [40] Both Lyon and Kinch wrote memoirs of their experiences in Iraq. Wallace Lyon's account has been edited by David Fieldhouse and published as *Kurds, Arabs and Britons*. Kinch's unpublished manuscript is available in the Kinch Papers, MECA. Lyon's memoir is particularly valuable for demonstrating how the attitudes of the political advisers during the Second World War were shaped by their experiences in Iraq during the 1920s and 1930s.
- [41] Kinch, unpublished manuscript memoirs, Kinch papers, MECA.
- [42] Wood, CICI, 'Kurdish Nationalism', 23 Oct. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [43] Minute by Thompson, 12 July 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [44] Translation of letter from Majid Mustafa, Minister without Portfolio, to the Council of Ministers, 18 Jan. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA; Jiyawuk, *Ma'sat Barzan al-Mazluma*, 120.
- [45] Barzani, *Mustafa Barzani*, 67–68.
- [46] Edmonds, 'Kurdish Nationalism', 95. See also Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement*, 231 and 239–40.
- [47] McDowall, *Modern History of the Kurds*, 289–90.
- [48] This cross-border exchange was limited until the end of the war but symbolically important for the developing Kurdish nationalist movements. For example, in August 1944, Kurdish representatives from Turkey, Iran, and Iraq met at the meeting point of their respective borders and signed a mutual support pact. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic of 1946*, 36.
- [49] Wood, CICI, 'Kurdish Nationalism', 23 Oct. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [50] Barzani, *Mustafa Barzani*, 49.
- [51] Capt. F. Stoakes, Deputy Assistant Political Adviser, Erbil to Political Adviser, Northern Area, Kirkuk on 'The Confederacy of Barzan', 17 March 1945, FO 624/71, TNA.
- [52] As Col. Wood noted, '... it is of course the perpetual aim of urban nationalists to secure for their views the backing of tribal opinion, as also of the military and of foreign powers, for without some such support their voices carry little weight.' Wood, CICI, 'Kurdish Nationalism', 23 Oct. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [53] Letter enclosed in Cornwallis to Eden, 2 July 1944, FO 371/40038, TNA.
- [54] Col. Wood to all CICI officers, 'Policy-Iraq', undated (received in Embassy 15 June 1944), FO 624/66, TNA.
- [55] Edmonds diary, 4 Dec. 1943, MECA.

- [56] Minute by Thompson, 4 Sept. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA. The London *Times* hinted at similar charges against some British officials in Iraq, noting that one contributing factor to the uprising was the fact that ‘they believed . . . that they could count on British support, a delusion fostered by certain sympathizers’. ‘Unrest in Kurdistan’, 11 April 1946.
- [57] Lyon to Oriental Secretary, 29 Aug. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [58] Lyon, *Kurds, Arabs and Britons*, 227.
- [59] Kinch to Cornwallis, 12 May 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [60] Wilson, APA Northern Area to PA Northern Area, 28 April 1945, FO 624/71; Cornwallis to Eden, 10 Dec. 1944 and Edmonds to Cornwallis, 20 Dec. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA. Barzan and another Kurdish territory were transferred from under the administrative authority of Mosul to Erbil, which had a Kurdish Mutassarif, and the Iraqi government hoped that this change would help to calm the situation. Cornwallis to Eden, 15 Jan. 1945, FO 371/45302, TNA.
- [61] Wood, CICI, ‘Kurdish Nationalism’, 23 Oct. 1944, FO 624/66; Cornwallis to Eden, 8 June 1944, FO 371/40042, TNA.
- [62] Eppel, *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny*, 54.
- [63] Lyon to Oriental Secretary, 29 Aug. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [64] Wood, CICI, ‘Kurdish Nationalism’, 23 Oct. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.
- [65] Thompson to Foreign Office, 1 Aug. 1945, FO 624/71, TNA.
- [66] Stonehewer Bird to Bevin, 10 Oct. 1945, FO 624/71, TNA.
- [67] Thompson to Mead, 20 Aug. 1945, FO 624/71, TNA.
- [68] Announcement by the Mutasarrif of Arbil, published in *al Zaman*, 20 Aug. 1945, reprinted in al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-Wizarat al-‘Iraqiyya*, vol. 6, 278–79.
- [69] Thompson to FO, 22 Sept. 1945 and Stonehewer-Bird to FO, 6 Oct. 1945, FO 624/71, TNA; see also Eppel, *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny*, 54. For British accounts of the military action taken against the Barzanis, see FO 624/71, TNA. In contrast to these official reports, Massoud Barzani saw the active hand of the British behind Iraqi operations, noting that the aerial campaigns of the Iraqi Air Force were ‘supported to the end by the RAF’. Barzani, *Mustafa Barzani*, 88.
- [70] Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement*, 240.
- [71] Barzani, *Mustafa Barzani*, 64.
- [72] McDowall, *Modern History of the Kurds*, 293. Jwaideh makes a similar observation, *The Kurdish National Movement*, 231.
- [73] Yassin notes, ‘A symbiosis thus developed between the urban and politically conscious nationalist elements on the one hand and the traditional elements on the other. Mulla Mustafa did not only make the emergence of this symbiosis possible, but indeed personified and later became a symbol for it.’ Yassin, *Vision or Reality?*, 222.
- [74] See McDowall, *Modern History of the Kurds*, Chapter 11. The classic account of Mahabad is Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic of 1946*. Massoud Barzani discusses Mulla Mustafa’s role in the Mahabad Republic in Part III of *Mustafa Barzani*.
- [75] As Edmonds observed, ‘Mulla Mustafa was brought back from exile in the Soviet Union and built up into an all-Iraqi figure, a champion of the struggle against the “imperialists” and their “stooges.”’ Edmonds, ‘Kurdish Nationalism’, 100.
- [76] Kinch, unpublished memoir, MECA.
- [77] Minute by Cornwallis, 11 Oct. 1944, FO 624/66, TNA.

References

- Barzani, ‘Aziz Hasan al-. *al-Haraka al-Qawmiyya al-Kurdiyya al-Taharruriyya fi Kurdistan al-‘Iraq, 1939–1945. (The Kurdish Nationalist Liberation Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan, 1939–1945)*. Beirut: al-Dar al-‘Arabiyya li-l-Musuw‘at, 2006.
- Barzani, Massoud. *Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Liberation Movement (1931–1961)*, edited by Ahmed Ferhadi. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

- Eagleton, William, Jr. *The Kurdish Republic of 1946*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Edmonds, C. J. 'Kurdish Nationalism'. *Journal of Contemporary History* 6, no. 1 (1971): 87–97, and 99–107.
- Eppel, Michael. *Iraq from Monarchy to Tyranny: From the Hashemites to the Rise of Saddam*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2004.
- Franzén, Johan. 'Development vs. Reform: Attempts at Modernisation During the Twilight of British Influence in Iraq, 1946–58'. *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37, no. 1 (2009): 77–98.
- Hasani, 'Abd al-Razzaq al-. *Tarikh al-Wizarat al-'Iraqiyya (The History of the Governments of Iraq)*. 6 vols. Sayda: Matba'at al-'Irfan, 1965.
- Jiyawuk, Ma'ruf. *Ma'sat Barzan al-Mazluma. (The Tragedy of the Ill-treated Barzanis)*. Irbil: Dar Aras li-l-Tiba'a wa-l Nashr, 2006 [reprint].
- Jwaideh, Wadie. *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development*, foreword by Martin van Bruinessen. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006.
- Khadduri, Majid. *Independent Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics since 1932*. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.
- Kingston, Paul W. T. *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945–1958*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Longrigg, Stephen. *Iraq, 1900–1950*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953.
- Louis, Wm. Roger *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945–1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, and Postwar Imperialism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Lyon, Wallace A., and D. K. Fieldhouse. *Kurds, Arabs and Britons: The Memoir of Wallace Lyon in Iraq, 1918–44*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2002.
- McDowall, David. *A Modern History of the Kurds*. 2nd ed. London: I.B. Tauris, 2000.
- Silverfarb, Daniel. *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941–1950*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.
- Simon, Reeva. *Iraq Between Two World Wars: The Militarist Origins of Tyranny*. Updated ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Sluglett, Peter. *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Van Bruinessen, Martin. *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Political Structures of Kurdistan*. London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books Ltd, 1992.
- Warner, Geoffrey. *Iraq and Syria 1941*. London: Davis-Poynter, 1974.
- Yassin, Borhanedin A. *Vision or Reality? The Kurds in the Policy of the Great Powers, 1941–1947*. *Lund Studies in International History* 32. Lund: Lund University Press, 1995.