



7 King Ghazi (king of Iraq 1933-9), c. 1933

region during the next couple of years, this was a role which he helped to define when faced by successive tribal revolts in the mid-Euphrates.¹

In the wake of these events, King Faisal's health deteriorated and he left Iraq in September 1933 for medical treatment in Switzerland, dying within a week of his arrival. He was succeeded by his son, Ghazi, a young man of twenty-one who had little interest in the political world, but whose general sympathies were broadly pan-Arab. Like many in Iraq, he also resented British domination. These sentiments drew him closer to the members of the Ikha Party initially, although he eventually formed his own circles of favourites, based on personal likes and dislikes and not much influenced by his late father's choices. However, he showed neither his father's sensitivity to the forces at work in Iraqi society nor his acumen in drawing them into the circles of royal patronage.



9 Prince 'Abd al-Ilah (regent of Iraq 1939-53; crown prince 1953-8) and King Faisal II (king of Iraq 1939-58), 1953

either on his determination to play a key role in politics or on his ability to do so through the networks of protégés and associates which he had established over the years. The king himself was young and had been brought up under the aegis of 'Abd al-Ilah. He therefore had little political vision and had not had the time or opportunity to develop a political personality of his own. His circle of acquaintances was the same as that of the crown prince and consequently, when Jamil al-Midfai offered his resignation in August (partly through disillusionment but also for health reasons), the king consulted the crown prince and Nuri before asking Fadhil al-Jamali to form a government.

Al-Jamali had been associated with a number of the reformist ideas circulating in Iraq during the previous decade. However, he had kept aloof from the political parties, choosing instead to chart an individual course in which he was the centre of a grouping of younger officials and academics thinking about the future of the Iraqi state outside the radical or revolutionary opposition. The bruising experience of having been minister of foreign affairs under Salih Jabr in the government which negotiated the Portsmouth Treaty in 1947 turned his attention back to his earlier interests in domestic reform, with a view to strengthening the



11 President 'Abd al-Salam 'Arif (president 1963–6), with President Ayub Khan of Pakistan, c. 1964

five years. 'Abd al-Salam made it clear that he intended to monopolise power, sharing it only with those associates whom he trusted or thought worth placating. Consequently, he remained president and commander in chief of the armed forces, ruling by decree and appointing only military colleagues to the NCRC, of which he now became chairman. He formed the Republican Guard as an elite unit in the armed forces, under the command of one of his kinsmen from the tribe of the al-Jumaila, Colonel Sa'id Slaibi, who also ensured that the territory of the al-Jumaila around al-Ramadi was the principal recruiting ground for the Guard. Well armed and stationed strategically near Baghdad, this unit was intended to guard the regime against future coup attempts.

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13 President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr (president 1968–79), c. 1970

advantage, especially in the armed forces where he had followers not simply amongst Ba'athists, but also in the officer corps more generally. Hasan al-Bakr was in many ways a typical regimental officer, solicitous of the welfare of his subordinates and able to use the language of military collegiality to create a certain bond with fellow officers. Despite the radical Ba'athist rhetoric that he used when occasion demanded, his views were conservative and rather typical of his provincial background: pan-Arab to some degree, but also imbued with a keen awareness of status distinctions between different lineages and clans among the Sunni Arabs which he, along with the greater part of the officer corps, saw as distinct from and superior to the Shi'i Arabs and Kurds of Iraq.

Assisted by his kinsman Saddam Husain, Hasan al-Bakr also



14 Mustafa Barzani (leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party until his death in 1979), c. 1973

Talabani faction with aspects of Ba'thism, Barzani represented the real power in the Kurdish region. The secret talks, conducted principally by Saddam Husain, led to the manifesto of March 1970 in which the government seemed to commit itself to a recognition of Kurdish rights that far exceeded anything that had been conceded before: the distinct national identity of the Kurds was recognised, as was their language, and they were promised participation in government and predominance in the local administration. A special, unified administrative region would be created in which distinctive measures would apply and it would incorporate all those areas in which a Kurdish majority lived, according to a census yet to be carried out. A joint committee of government and Kurdish representatives was set up to discuss the detailed application of the manifesto's principles, working towards a 1974 deadline.

Barzani, for his part, broke his links with Iran, implemented a ceasefire and began to co-operate with the newly established committee. He did not, however, trust the government, keeping the *peshmerga* intact and

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