

graduate level, and to general, non-Middle Eastern Studies readers. It is my hope that as it spreads in classrooms and in public discourse, *The Age of Coexistence* will serve the final blow to Western-based stereotypes of a Middle East rife with senseless violence, authoritarianism, and strict religious rule.

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Familiar Futures: Time, Selfhood, and Sovereignty in Iraq. Sara Pursley (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019). Pp. 320. \$90.00 cloth, \$30.00 paper. ISBN: 9780804793179

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Sara Pursley's *Familiar Futures: Time, Selfhood, and Sovereignty in Iraq* represents a highly original contribution to the study of modern Iraq. It combines Walter Benjamin's critique of a naïve faith in progress with Benedict Anderson's postcolonial critique of nationalism to analytically deconstruct the nationalist pre-suppositions of gender and family history in Iraq between the establishment of the British mandate in 1920 and the Ba'th Party's coup d'état in 1963. Through an expert weaving of social theory and social history, including close readings of works by Iraqi intellectuals written in Arabic, Pursley demonstrates how family and gender reform initiatives served to institutionalize the "disciplinary and biopolitical power" of the state over its national subjects (13–14).

Pursley's study is wide-ranging and deeply insightful on many topics. As a historian who specializes in the history of US-Iraqi relations, I was particularly interested in what she had to say about the question of US empire. To be sure, this is not Pursley's main focus, but her intervention is very astute and represents an important challenge to conventional ways of thinking about the role of western powers in the region.

North Americans begin to play an important role in Pursley's narrative with their attempts to reform the Iraqi public education system in the 1930s. In this, Pursley contributes to a recent and ongoing rethinking of the role of Sati' al-Husri, a former Ottoman official and theorist of education who became Iraq's first director-general of education in 1922. Whereas an older generation of scholars tended to portray al-Husri and his philosophy of education as elitist and authoritarian, one that shares a certain affinity with "German ideas of nationalism," recent scholarship, notably by Orit Bashkin and Ussama Makdisi, challenges the traditional Anglo-American image of al-Husri as a proto- or crypto-fascist. According to this more recent work, al-Husri was rather engaged in an effort to construct an anti-sectarian nationalist state from the bottom up through the universal provision of a uniform curriculum of public education. Pursley remains more critical of the "nationalist and masculinist biases" of al-Husri's worldview than is Bashkin or Makdisi (77), but her analysis of the forces arrayed against al-Husri's preferred reforms suggests that al-Husri was a rather progressive figure for his time and place.

Pursley shows how al-Husri's reform efforts were cut short by US intervention in the form of a delegation of educators from the Teachers College of Columbia University led by Paul Monroe in 1932. In place of al-Husri's emphasis on a uniform curriculum, the US advisers advocated a system of "differentiated" education in which different groups would be instructed to serve their differing roles in society. While an older generation of scholars tended to see the overthrow of al-Husri as advancing secularism and democracy in Iraq, Pursley shows how the Monroe Commission's recommendations were based on the US experience of establishing racially segregated institutions of higher education. As she demonstrates, this whole concept was bitterly contested within the United States itself. In commenting on the so-called "Tuskegee Model" of segregated education, W.E.B. Du Bois observed: "The white world wants the black to study 'agriculture.' It is not only easier to lynch Negroes and keep them in ignorance and peonage in country districts, but it is also easier to cheat them out of a decent income" (86). By drawing on Du Bois, Pursley demonstrates the ways in which American education advisers were intent on

exporting a Jim Crow model of social relations to the Middle East—and the important role that education reform played in that effort.

By highlighting gender and education as key levers of US intervention, Pursley puts her finger on an aspect of US foreign relations that is too easily overlooked. Historians of international relations can sometimes display a fetish for the political and economic. But the American commitment to gendered ethnocracy, as demonstrated by Pursley's discussion of the "Monroe Doctrine," was no isolated incident. This same gender anxiety as a basic motive for US intervention was on full display a generation later in response to the July 1958 revolution that overthrew the Hashemite Monarchy and brought 'Abd al-Karim Qasim to power.

Among the many reforms introduced by Qasim's government was a 1959 Personal Status Law that (ostensibly, at least) equalized terms of inheritance, granted women greater marriage and divorce rights, and generally elevated the position of women in Iraqi society. Pursley is deeply skeptical of the idea that the law represented anything that could be truly thought of as secular progress. She rather employs a close reading of the nuances of the Arabic language to situate the law within its Islamic jurisprudential context. In so doing, she develops an immanent critique of the outwardly secular law to reveal the ways in which it served only to more deeply inscribe masculine and Islamic notions of selfhood in Iraqi society.

In contrasting the outer appearance of the Personal Status Law with its inner meaning, Pursley demonstrates the limits and contradictions inherent in the discourse of development. But she also demonstrates that the law came about as a result of the unprecedented political mobilization of Iraqi women. A key figure leading this mobilization was Naziha al-Dulaymi, a Baghdad gynecologist and an important leader of a vibrant Communist movement in Iraq, the League for the Defense of Women's Rights, or al-Rabita (114). In January 1959, Qasim appointed al-Dulaymi as the minister of municipalities, making her the first woman to hold a cabinet position in Iraq's modern history. Just as had al-Husri's gender-neutral curriculum, al-Dulaymi's appointment piqued US government anxieties. A US secret service agent in Iraq correctly assessed that al-Dulaymi's elevation indicated growing Communist influence. As Qasim embraced Communism and the cause of gender liberation, the CIA began devising plans for his overthrow.¹

As the US administration looked for collaborators in its effort to overthrow Qasim, it found a willing partner in the Ba'th Party. A shared gender anxiety provided an affective bond between the CIA and the Ba'th. As Pursley demonstrates, Ba'thists were able to exploit the Personal Status Law as a key rallying point in an effort to coalesce a conservative coalition in opposition to the Qasim-Dulaymi affront to Cold War gender norms against women playing active and leading roles in the affairs of state. Ba'thist propagandists (assisted by the CIA?) were able to paint the law as part of a Soviet plot to "abolish" the traditional family. In the weeks and months ahead, the Ba'th turned out a steady stream of articles that "linked communism both to the sexual promiscuity they perceived among European communists and to the anti-Arab *shu'ubiyya* movement of the 'Abassid period, which... 'promoted equality in wealth and women, anarchy, and the dismantling and destruction of the family structure and the teachings of religion'" (170).

In the face of Ba'thist critiques, Qasim attempted to maintain his hold on power by curbing Communist influence in Iraq. But as Pursley demonstrates, Qasim's demobilization of Communist-led popular organizations such as al-Dulaymi's al-Rabita only served to undermine his base of support without doing anything to lessen hostility toward his regime from the CIA-Ba'thist alliance. Ultimately, that alliance succeeded in murdering Qasim in February 1963.

Scholars have long noted that Qasim's unwillingness to allow the Communists to remain under arms proved the undoing of his regime. But Pursley approaches the dilemma from a very different angle. She engages the memoirs of Iraqi Communists who later came to regret their former alliance with Qasim. For these Iraqis, the "Soviet line that communist parties in decolonizing countries should form an alliance with the anti-imperialist segment of the bourgeoisie" was fundamentally misguided (158). By the time these activists and intellectuals recorded their memoirs in the 1980s, many had grown deeply critical of the idea that "capitalist development under Qasim would serve some imagined national interest, rather than subjecting workers to greater exploitation" (158).

Pursley's Iraqi interlocutors may be unfair to characterize Qasim as seeking to further capitalist development. Another way to look at it is that Qasim's moves against the left in 1960–61 were motivated by a desire to create political space needed to nationalize the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC). The constraints

¹I discuss US efforts to overthrow Qasim in *The Paranoid Style in American Diplomacy: Oil and Arab Nationalism in Iraq* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2021).

he placed on an autonomous left were indeed part of a strategy of alliance with an anti-imperialist segment of the bourgeoisie that was in a position to manage and operate a nationalized oil industry. Toward this end, Qasim presided over the formation of OPEC in September 1960. The following year, he nationalized 99.5 percent of the IPC's concessionary area. Both were preparatory moves in anticipation of full nationalization. In response, the CIA redoubled its effort to forge an anti-Qasim alliance with the Ba'ath Party. One can differ with Qasim's strategy or tactics, but I think the CIA was right to view his ultimate objectives as threatening to the cause of capitalist development.

The question of where multinational corporations fit within the economic development of Iraq is very much within the realm of political and ideological struggle. But Pursley warns against exaggerating the significance of this question and laments that emphasis on "political and ideological struggle between central party organizations continues to dominate the scholarship, thus analytically repeating Qasim's mistake" (173). Rather than focusing on the conflict between Qasim and the Ba'ath, Pursley points to the considerable area of overlap between the two sides and enjoins scholars to focus instead on the lesser-known history of "subaltern mobilizations" against the prevailing biopolitical order (155, 172).

Pursley's attention to subaltern voices and her warnings to avoid analytically repeating Qasim's political mistakes are deeply considered and deserve to be read widely by scholars of modern Iraq and anyone interested in the role of gender in processes of post-colonial state formation.

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Quagmire in Civil War. Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020). Pp. 340. \$32.99 paper. ISBN: 9781108708265

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Afghanistan, Vietnam, Chechnya. In popular imagination, these are places synonymous with unending wars. Reminders of the failures of seemingly great military powers to either accomplish their goals or withdraw gracefully, these wars last longer than observers expect them to. Foreign and domestic actors find themselves trapped. Blood is spilled and treasure expended long after the costs of continuing the war outweigh the expected benefits. This is because withdrawal threatens to increase rather than decrease those costs. These are quagmires. Policy and media accounts speak about quagmire as a nebulous and intrinsic property of certain conflicts. However, Schulhofer-Wohl's masterful book sets out to demonstrate that quagmires are made, not found. They are the result of strategic interactions between belligerents and interested foreign powers. *Quagmire in Civil War* not only makes a novel theoretical contribution and tests it effectively using a mixed-method empirical strategy, but it also leaves the reader with clear policy implications. In this unlikely volume, one finds a modicum of hope. A great deal of suffering can be averted by a shift in the decision-making of foreign powers with interests in conflict zones.

The book makes several important contributions. The most important is to our theoretical understanding of civil war, its strategic dynamics, and the role of foreign intervention in changing its trajectory. It opens with a formal model that explicitly addresses the dynamic role of international influence in civil war and treats it as more than an exogenous input. Instead, the model manages to unpack the precise strategic influence of foreign backers while simultaneously preserving the agency of domestic actors. The model accomplishes these twin objectives by expanding our understanding of the set of options available to domestic players. They are choosing, not just whether to fight or withdraw, but *how* to fight. Once engaged in a civil war, domestic players can choose between a high-cost type of fighting that seeks to acquire territory or a low-cost non-territorial fighting that preserves the status quo. To develop this distinction, the author argues that offensive military operations to take and hold territory require more