MR. TALIB AL-RIFAI'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO ISLAMIC POLITICAL ACTIVISM BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ISLAMIC DA'WA PARTY

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Abstract

Mr. Talib Al-Rifai embarked on his political journey at an early stage, engaging in Islamic activism at the age of twenty-two in 1953. During this period, he established strong connections with numerous figures and members affiliated with Sunni Islamic parties, which expanded his sphere of influence and social network. Despite his close interaction with these organizations, he was careful to maintain his independence and avoided formal affiliation with any specific party or organized movement.

Al-Rifai distinguished himself by his ability to engage with diverse Islamic currents while maintaining his intellectual independence, which provided him with significant flexibility and enabled him to cultivate a broad network of relationships. He was known for preferring to operate within a flexible framework, away from rigid party structures, which enhanced his stature and positioned him as an influential figure beyond conventional organizational boundaries. Although he never officially joined any political organization, his strong ties with leading figures of Sunni Islamic activism made him a significant actor within the broader political landscape. He effectively utilized this extensive network to promote his ideas and advance his causes without being constrained by partisan affiliations. In this way, he succeeded in combining adaptability with steadfast commitment to his principles—earning him wide respect among his contemporaries. [1]

Keywords: Mr. Talib Al-Rifai's, Contributions Islamic Political Activism, Establishment of the Islamic Da'wa Party.

Introduction:

The mid-twentieth century was a period of profound political and ideological transformation in Iraq, marked by the rise of competing nationalist, communist, and religious movements Haddad (2). Within this turbulent landscape, Islamic political activism emerged as a powerful force shaping public discourse and influencing the direction of national politics. Among the figures who played a pivotal role in this sphere was **Sayyid Talib al-Rifai**,(6) whose early engagement in Islamic political activity reflected both his intellectual vigor and his deep concern for the sociopolitical challenges facing Iraq and the broader Muslim world (Al-Rifai, 2003.

Beginning his political journey in 1953 at the age of twenty-two, al-Rifai quickly became an active participant in Islamic political circles. While maintaining close ties with influential figures and members of Sunni Islamic parties, he deliberately avoided formal affiliation with any specific organization, underscoring his commitment to intellectual independence and his belief in a flexible approach to political engagement. This independence enabled him to cooperate across sectarian and ideological boundaries, a quality that earned him widespread respect among his contemporaries Ismael (3).

Al-Rifai's activism reflected a broader vision: the strengthening of Islamic thought and organization as a counterbalance to the spread of communist ideology in Iraq during the second half of the twentieth century. His early support for Sunni-oriented movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Liberation Party was later complemented by his collaboration with Shiite leaders—most notably Sayyid Mahdi al-Hakim—in efforts that culminated in the

establishment of the **Association of Scholars**. These endeavors ultimately contributed to the creation of the **Islamic Dawa Party**, a milestone in the evolution of modern Islamic political movements in Iraq; Jaba (4).

This study examines Sayyid Talib al-Rifai's (6) political trajectory, exploring how his independence, adaptability, and cross-sectarian engagement enabled him to play a central role in shaping the course of political Islam in Iraq. Through an analysis of his relationships, ideological positions, and organizational initiatives, the research highlights al-Rifai's enduring influence on Islamic activism and his contribution to the broader struggle for religious and political identity in modern Iraq

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed sweeping political, social, and ideological transformations across the Middle East, and Iraq was no exception. The collapse of the monarchy in 1958, the rise of Arab nationalism, and the rapid spread of communist and secular ideologies profoundly reshaped the political landscape ; Batatu,(7). In this context, Islamic movements began to emerge as a countervailing force, seeking to reassert the role of religion in public life and to respond to the ideological challenges of modernity and Western influence (Nasr, (12); Kramer, (9). Within this dynamic environment, **Sayyid Talib al-Rifai** (6) emerged as a pivotal figure whose intellectual independence and political activism helped lay the foundations for a new phase in Iraq's Islamic political thought.

Al-Rifai embarked on his political journey in 1953 at the age of twenty-two, a time when Iraq was experiencing ideological polarization between leftist and nationalist Iraq's Islamic identity in the face of growing communist influence (Jabar, (4). Though he cultivated close relationships with members and leaders of Sunni Islamic organizations—particularly the **Muslim Brotherhood** and the **Islamic Liberation Party**—al-Rifai consciously avoided formal membership in any of these groups . This decision not only underscored his preference for intellectual and organizational flexibility but also positioned him as a bridge between different currents of Islamic activism, transcending sectarian and partisan boundaries (Ismael (3).

This approach was particularly significant given Iraq's unique sectarian and political composition. The Sunni-dominated leadership of most Islamic movements often contrasted with the majority Shiite population, leading to tensions and organizational fragmentation (Louĕr, (10). Al-Rifai's ability to maintain constructive relationships with both Sunni and Shiite actors made him an exceptional mediator in this polarized environment. His later collaboration with **Sayyid Mahdi al-Hakim**, son of the prominent Shiite scholar

 currents. His early involvement in Islamic political circles reflected both personal conviction and a deep concern with preserving **Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim**, marked a turning point in cross-sectarian Islamic cooperation. Together, they worked toward the formation of a Shiite Islamic organization that eventually materialized as the **Association of Scholars (Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama')**, aimed primarily at countering the ideological and political influence of the Communist Party in Iraq ; Al-Khalili, (6).

Al-Rifai's intellectual project was rooted in a broader vision of religious reform and political renewal. He advocated for the establishment of Islamic political entities that could engage effectively with modern state institutions while preserving Islamic principles . His activism during the 1950s and 1960s coincided with a growing recognition among Islamic thinkers that the traditional clerical establishment alone was insufficient to address the challenges posed by secularism and socialism (Dawisha, (8). The formation of the **Islamic Dawa Party (Hizb al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya)** in the late 1950s and early 1960s can thus be seen, in part, as a culmination

of efforts initiated by al-Rifai and his contemporaries to organize Shiite Islamic thought into a coherent political framework (Jabar, (4); Nakash, (11)).

Although al-Rifai never held an official leadership position within Dawa or other organized political parties, his influence was unmistakable. His strategic networking and intellectual contributions helped shape the ideological foundations of Islamic political activism in Iraq. By maintaining independence from rigid party structures, he managed to preserve a degree of flexibility that allowed him to adapt to Iraq's rapidly changing political conditions while remaining committed to his principles. His legacy thus lies not only in his direct political engagement but also in his ability to inspire a generation of Islamic activists to envision a political model that combined religious authenticity with pragmatic adaptability.

This research explores **Sayyid Talib al-Rifai's (6) role in the evolution of Islamic political activism in Iraq**, focusing on three interrelated themes: his intellectual independence, his cross-sectarian political engagement, and his contribution to the institutionalization of Islamic politics through initiatives that led to the emergence of the Islamic Dawa Party. By examining his interactions with Sunni and Shiite movements, this study seeks to shed light on the complex dynamics that shaped the formation of political Islam in mid-twentieth-century Iraq and to reassess al-Rifai's place within the broader history of Islamic reformist thought in the Arab world.

Chapter one
Mr. Talib Al-Rifai's Relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood
The ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood began to spread in Iraq in 1942 through Iraqi students studying at Al-Azhar University. Sheikh Muhammad Al-Sawwaf was instrumental in this process (1), as he spearheaded an early attempt to establish a branch of the Brotherhood in Iraq. However, this attempt failed due to the Iraqi authorities' rejection—a rejection that was repeated once again in 1946. Starting from the 1947 uprising against the Iraqi British Treaty (13), the political activity of the Muslim Brotherhood (14) began to emerge prominently.

The Muslim Brotherhood also established the **Palestine Rescue Association** in 1947, with Sheikh Amjad Al-Zahawi (15) serving as its Secretary-General. The association's efforts focused on recruiting volunteers and providing them with military training to participate in the jihad for the defense of Palestine (16). By the end of 1948, a library named the **Muslim Brotherhood Library** was established in Al-A'zamiyyah to promote Islamic culture through the distribution of religious books and publications, guiding young people toward adherence to Islamic morals and values, and encouraging them to join the Brotherhood. The library was also keen on alerting youth to the dangers of deviant ideologies, foremost among them communism, while defending the legitimacy of the Brotherhood's activities and countering the accusations propagated by the security apparatus against them. The Brotherhood's activities in Baghdad expanded to include several districts. In addition to Al-A'zamiyyah, new branches were established, such as the **Bab Al-Sheikh** and **Karkh** sections, where events and activities similar to those organized at the Al-A'zamiyyah branch were regularly held. By the early 1950s, after acquiring **Ja'far Al-'Askari's house (17)** in the **Bab Al-Mu'azzam** area, the premises were transformed into a central headquarters that attracted Brotherhood members from across the capital as well as visitors from neighboring provinces. The headquarters hosted religious seminars and organized weekly lectures and gatherings (18).

The Muslim Brotherhood witnessed a significant development in its public presence when it obtained its first official license to operate under the name **The Islamic Brotherhood Association**

(19) on **September 13, 1949**. Within less than a month, the Association established a branch in the city of **Mosul (20)**, with **Sheikh Amjad Al-Zahawi** serving as its President and **Sheikh Muhammad Al-Sawwaf** assuming the position of General Supervisor. The Association's activities expanded rapidly, opening new branches in several Iraqi cities, including **Kirkuk, Ba'qubah, Samarra, Tikrit, Basra, Ramadi,** and **Fallujah**, within a short period. The Muslim Brotherhood soon emerged as one of the most prominent components of the opposition to the monarchical regime, facing continuous persecution and suppression by the ruling authorities. Despite such challenges, the Brotherhood experienced notable growth and influence under strict security constraints. Its impact reached such an extent that the term *"Ikhwan"* (the brothers) came to be used to describe anyone who espoused Islamic ideas, even if they were not members of the organization. This was largely due to the Brotherhood's strong media presence during its confrontation with the regime, as well as its position as the leading Islamic entity of that period (21).

It is essential to pause at a particularly noteworthy phenomenon—the attraction of several individuals from the Shi'i community to the Muslim Brotherhood movement, although this movement was founded upon a distinctly Sunni ideological foundation. This phenomenon raises profound questions regarding the motives and nature of such attraction. What prompted some Shi'a to join a movement grounded in Sunni-oriented Islamic thought? Was it due to the relative moderation of the Brotherhood's ideas compared to other ideological currents? Or was it perhaps the result of an organizational vacuum within the Shi'i milieu at the time, given the absence of a strong Shi'i party or movement capable of mobilizing and attracting adherents? To address these questions, it is necessary to delve into the historical and social context of that period, during which political and intellectual factors played a decisive role in shaping alliances and loyalties. Moreover, the personal relationships between certain Shi'i leaders and members of the Brotherhood had a significant impact on fostering these cross-sectarian interactions. A prominent illustration of this dynamic can be seen in Mr. Talib Al-Rifai's relationship with several members of the Muslim Brotherhood, a connection that may have contributed to fostering closer understanding between the two groups. In this regard, it can be argued that the absence of an influential Shi'i organization at the time was likely one of the main reasons behind such attraction. Some Shi'a found in the Brotherhood a platform through which they could express their political and social aspirations. Moreover, the Brotherhood's broader Islamic discourse—emphasizing **Islamic unity** and **resistance to colonialism**—resonated with certain Shi'i individuals who perceived in it an opportunity to engage in a larger project transcending sectarian divisions.

Mr. Talib Al-Rifai was thoroughly familiar with the principles and ideas of Sunni Islamic parties. He had read the works of **Hassan al-Banna (22)**, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as all the writings of **Sayyid Qutb (23)** and his brother **Muhammad Qutb (24)**. Since the early 1950s, he had maintained close relations with members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq, including a personal connection with its founder, Muhammad Mahmoud Al-Sawwaf. Al-Rifai was a regular reader of the Brotherhood's publications and frequently visited the **Palestine Rescue Association**. He obtained Brotherhood writings and pamphlets through **Muhammad Hadi Al-Subaiti (25)**, a member of the Brotherhood who made earnest efforts to persuade Mr. Talib to join the organization and become one of its members. These attempts took place approximately seven years before the establishment of the **Islamic Da'wa Party (26)**.

When **Abd al-Karim Qasim (27)** announced his decision to permit the formation of political parties, the **Muslim Brotherhood** quickly seized the opportunity to establish an open political

organization aimed at leading Islamic missionary (daʻwa) activity and politically confronting Qasim's government. Furthermore, the organization aimed to combat social corruption and promote moral and spiritual reform of the Iraqi individual. The leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood considered the possibility of establishing a political party under the name *The Islamic Party* (28) and accordingly submitted an official request to the Ministry of Interior on February 8, 1960. However, the Ministry rejected the request on March 27 of the same year. In response, the party's founding committee filed an appeal on April 9, 1960, leading to a subsequent decision issued by the Presidency of the Court of Cassation of Iraq on April 26 of that year.

The ruling granted official approval for the party's establishment and dismissed the Ministry of Interior's claim, emphasizing that the party's principles were rooted in Islamic Sharia, which possesses an inherent capacity to adapt to changing times and contexts, in accordance with its foundations in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Accordingly, the Ministry of Interior notified the founding committee of its final approval for the party's establishment on July 9, 1960. The first founding conference of the Islamic Party was subsequently held in the al-Kisra area of al-Aʿzamiyyah on Friday, July 29 of the same year. The event witnessed a large public turnout from various parts of Iraq, including the northern, central, and southern regions (29).

During that period, Sayyid al-Rifãʿī departed from Najaf and headed toward al-Kāẓimiyyah, where Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr was residing at the time. Sayyid al-Rifãʿī met with him and remained in his company until the afternoon (30). Later, Shaykh Murtaḍā Āl Yāsīn joined their ranks and informed Sayyid Ṭālib of the forthcoming Islamic Party Conference in al-Aʿzamiyyah, urging him to attend. Consequently, Sayyid al-Rifãʿī proceeded to the conference, where he was warmly received upon arrival. His entrance coincided with the conclusion of a speech by one of the speakers on stage, and the attendees requested that he come forward to deliver an address. He obliged and began his speech with the Qur'anic verse: *"To each of you We prescribed a law and a method"* (31), a statement that was met with widespread approval. His address was characterized by a purely Islamic tone, avoiding any sectarian references, and focused on the virtues of Islamic law and the Islamic system. From that moment, he drew the attention and admiration of the members and supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood movement (32).

The Muslim Brotherhood nominated Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifãʿī for the presidency of the Islamic Party, following the speech he had delivered at the conference. Their decision was also influenced by the nature of his relationship with them and by the positive impact his nomination was expected to have on the Muslim Brotherhood's movement in Iraq—namely, the potential to gain broader popular support should Sayyid al-Rifãʿī accept their request. Unaware of this development, Sayyid al-Rifãʿī was visited in his room at al-Qawām School in Najaf by his friend Maʿn al-ʿAjlī (1922–2021), a Shiʿi who had joined the Muslim Brotherhood and later converted to the Sunni sect. During that visit, Maʿn said to Sayyid Ṭālib: "I have come to you with the best of this world and the hereafter. But first, get up and put on your clothes; the car is waiting for us." Sayyid al-Rifãʿī asked him, "What is the matter?" to which Maʿn replied (33): "The Islamic Party Council is now convening in Baghdad. When the discussion arose regarding the selection of a party president, they unanimously agreed to choose you, Ṭālib al-Rifãʿī, as president. The council remains in session, awaiting your arrival so that they may pledge their allegiance to you" (34).

When Sayyid al-Rifãʿī arrived at the residence of Shaykh Murtaḍā Āl Yāsīn, he sought his counsel, saying: "I am in great confusion; I have been offered the nomination for the presidency of the Iraqi Islamic Party—what is your opinion?" Shaykh Murtaḍā replied: "The choice is entirely yours. If you believe yourself qualified, the matter rests with you alone; you are the one to decide." Sayyid

al-Rifāʿī then reflected privately and said to himself: *I will not be able to bear such a heavy responsibility. I will face fierce criticism in Najaf from Shiʿi circles for presiding over a party with a Sunni orientation.* He returned to Maʿn al-ʿAjlī and said, "Please convey my deepest gratitude to the members of the Islamic Party for their confidence in me. Unfortunately, I do not feel qualified for this critical position. My age does not correspond to the gravity of the task, and my experience is limited. Moreover, my acceptance could cause division among the members of my sect. Some may stand by me, but the majority would likely reject the matter and might even turn against me—and I am not prepared to face that." He added: "They have chosen me because I am a Shiʿi and wear the turban, but I am not a leader of the Shiʿa—only an ordinary individual." "If they wish to involve me," said al-Rifāʿī, "they should follow a different procedure—such as submitting a formal request to the religious authority to assign me officially. But for me to assume the position on my own initiative, as a Shiʿi leader of another party, is beyond my capacity." Maʿn responded, "But you are the courageous man who can do it!" To which al-Rifāʿī replied, "Thank you for your kind words. Nevertheless, I am ready to support any president the party chooses, for we all stand together in one trench against disbelief and atheism" (35). Maʿn then returned to the party members, and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Samarraʾī (36) was subsequently elected as president of the Iraqi Islamic Party (37).

There is no doubt that what occurred with Sayyid al-Rifāʿī represents an exceptional case in the history of Islamic political life, as no one before or after him is recorded to have encountered such a unique situation. The reasons underlying his nomination for the presidency of the Islamic Party reflect the depth of his vision and the breadth of his intellectual horizons. He possessed a wide-ranging education and was an avid reader of all that was available to him. This intellectual openness shaped a personality that transcended the narrow confines of the traditional ḥawza (seminary) community, which generally distanced itself from partisan political engagement—particularly with parties of an Islamic orientation. How much more remarkable, then, that this party was one of Sunni ideology? (38). Sayyid al-Rifāʿī's intellectual openness was not the only factor that propelled him to prominence; his close relationship with the religious authority (al-marjaʿiyyah) was also a decisive element in this selection. Having a distinguished Shiʿi figure such as Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī at the head of the Islamic Party was regarded as a shrewd strategic move aimed at attracting a broader base of supporters, particularly given the party's recent emergence on the Iraqi political scene and its need to strengthen its legitimacy and expand its influence. Moreover, the success of the *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr* (Liberation Party) in incorporating several Shiʿi members within its ranks had caused concern among the leaders of the Islamic Party, prompting them to seek the inclusion of Shiʿi figures under their own banner. This was seen as necessary to avoid political marginalization and to secure a meaningful presence within Iraq's complex political landscape. Thus, Sayyid al-Rifāʿī became a symbol of this strategy. His personality served as a bridge between the Shiʿi and Sunni sects and as a vital link connecting traditional ḥawza thought with the dynamics of modern political activism.

Sayyid al-Rifāʿī's rejection of the offer extended to him by the Islamic Party stemmed from his unwillingness to relinquish his identity as a member of the ḥawza (seminary). Moreover, had he accepted, he would have inevitably found himself in direct conflict with the Najafi community, which would have certainly opposed such a move. As the years passed, Sayyid al-Rifāʿī came to feel regret for not having accepted the presidency of the Islamic Party—a position that, had he taken it, might have added a significant chapter to his record of Islamic activism (39). However, were the same offer to be made today, Sayyid al-Rifāʿī would not accept it, given his advanced

age and the fact that leading any political party requires effort and competence that he no longer possesses (40).

Chapter two

Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī's Relationship with the Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr (Liberation Party)

During the period between 1952 and 1953, a group of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr members of Jordanian and Palestinian origin arrived in Iraq, taking advantage of the scholarships offered by the Iraqi government to Arab students for study in prestigious institutions such as the Higher Teachers' House (*Dār al-Muʿallimīn al-ʿĀliyah*), the College of Law, and the College of Medicine. During their stay, these members began engaging with Iraqis and disseminating the party's ideas among them, ideas which met with widespread acceptance. Owing to this positive interaction, Iraq became one of the first Islamic countries to witness extensive proselytizing activity by Hizb al-Tahrir. Within a short span of time, the party succeeded in establishing a strong nucleus of members, which included prominent figures such as Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Badrī (41), as well as leading personalities from the Jaʿfarī school of thought, including Muḥammad Hādī al-Sabītī and ʿĀrif al-Baṣrī (42). One of the party's most prominent positions during this period was its recognition of the Jaʿfarī school as an officially acknowledged Islamic madhhab. Toward the end of 1954, several members of Hizb al-Tahrir applied to the Ministry of Interior seeking a license to engage in political activity; however, the ministry rejected the request, citing its inconsistency with the provisions of the Constitution (43). In response to this rejection, the party issued a statement challenging the government's position, which was distributed simultaneously during Friday prayers in several cities, including Mosul, Baghdad, Basra, and Nasiriyah, as well as in Damascus, Amman, and Jerusalem. The statement contained an explicit denunciation of government policies, prompting the Iraqi authorities to arrest the signatories of the request (44).

The relationship between Hizb al-Tahrir and Islamic movements in Iraq—particularly the Muslim Brotherhood—witnessed significant tension that escalated to open confrontation. Hizb al-Tahrir accused the Brotherhood of lacking political maturity and a revolutionary vision, confining their role to the religious sphere of preserving the Qur'an and Sunnah without possessing a comprehensive political project. In response, the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood adopted strict measures, issuing explicit directives to all its branches to sever any contact or cooperation with Hizb al-Tahrir, while emphasizing the need to avoid any form of communication with its members (45).

The relationship between *Hizb al-Tahrir* and the Muslim Brotherhood was characterized by tension and estrangement, arising from a fundamental divergence in both vision and methodology. Hizb al-Tahrir regarded itself as the sole legitimate representative of Islam, viewing other Islamic groups and parties as mere movements deviating from the proper understanding of Islam or lacking a comprehensive Islamic project. This firm conviction of possessing the absolute truth led Hizb al-Tahrir to adopt a rigid stance toward others, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, which enjoyed broad popular and organizational presence. Instead of seeking common ground or cooperation on shared issues, mutual suspicion and accusations prevailed between the two sides. Hizb al-Tahrir harshly criticized the Brotherhood's gradual reformist approach, considering it a compromise of Islamic principles and an accommodation to political realities. In turn, the Muslim Brotherhood viewed Hizb al-Tahrir's ideas as overly theoretical and impractical, further deepening the rift between them. Over time, these ideological differences evolved into organizational hostility, with each side warning against the other and seeking to undermine it. The rivalry escalated to the extent that *Hizb al-Tahrir* accused the Muslim Brotherhood of intellectual

deviation, while the Brotherhood, in turn, accused Hizb al-Tahrir of extremism and detachment from reality. Thus, the relationship between the two transformed into a field of intellectual and political confrontation, rather than a bridge for cooperation in addressing shared challenges. This hostility persisted for decades, undermining joint Islamic action. The rigid stances adopted by various Islamic parties and movements toward one another revealed a striking fragility rather than genuine strength. Their demands were often marked by recklessness and impulsiveness, provoking the ruling authorities without possessing the necessary means to confront the consequences of such provocation. More critically, they lacked unity and coordination; despite their multiplicity and diversity, each movement operated in isolation, inwardly focused, and convinced itself of its exclusive right to lead the process of change. Had these forces united under a single umbrella and formed a common front, they might have been able to create a more balanced dynamic in confronting the regime and to strengthen their political and social position. However, their fragmentation and disunity deprived them of a golden opportunity to achieve any tangible victory. Instead of complementarity and cooperation, individualistic tendencies and internal divisions prevailed, rendering them vulnerable to weakness and defeat.

In one of their attempts to disseminate party ideology, members of *Hizb al-Tahrir* sought to recruit Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī into their activities. They proposed that he meet with ʿAbd al-Qadīm Zallūm (46), to which Sayyid Ṭālib readily agreed, expressing his interest in learning more about the party's ideas. A discussion session was subsequently held at *al-Jawādayn* School, attended by ʿAbd al-Qadīm Zallūm, Sayyid Ṭālib, and Muḥammad Hādī al-Sabītī. From that meeting onward, a friendship developed between al-Rifāʿī and Zallūm, with the former visiting the latter whenever the opportunity arose (47).

During the monarchical period, *Hizb al-Tahrir* maintained only a limited presence in Iraq, due to its late arrival and weak organizational structure (48). Following the coup of July 14, 1958(49) and the rise of ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim to power, political parties were allowed to operate openly. At that point, the party submitted a request to the Ministry of Interior for legal authorization, but it was once again rejected for the same reasons as before. During this phase of the party's history (50), an intellectual dispute emerged among some of its members who adhered to the Jaʿfarī (Twelver Shiʿi) school of thought, particularly over the issues of *caliphate* and *imamate*. This disagreement led them to secede from *Hizb al-Tahrir*. Among those who withdrew were Muḥammad Hādī al-Sabītī and ʿĀrif al-Baṣrī(51). When a *fatwa* inquiry from Kuwait was presented to Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm regarding the permissibility of joining *Hizb al-Tahrir*, with the clarification that the party did not follow the Ahl al-Bayt doctrine, he affirmed the prohibition of joining any organization that does not adhere to that doctrinal path (52).

Chapter three

Efforts of Sayyid Mahdī al-Ḥakīm and Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī to Establish an Islamic Political Movement

In 1953, Sayyid Mahdī al-Ḥakīm (53) began striving to establish an Islamic political movement that would pursue change based on Islamic principles. In collaboration with several religious scholars, he sought to establish an Islamic council aimed at promoting religious awareness. The council held its sessions during the nights of Ramadan in the courtyard of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), where participants delivered speeches that guided Islamic identity. Sayyid Mahdī al-Ḥakīm would open these gatherings by emphasizing the necessity of organized Islamic activity, calling for an intellectual and social movement to confront the communist tide that had swept Iraqi society at the time, reaching even the neighborhoods of Najaf and the homes of its scholars. However, this

promising initiative failed to continue due to the pressures and harassment faced by its participants from traditionalist currents (54).

In the mid-1950s, specifically in 1955, a conversation took place between Sayyid Mahdi al-Hakim and Sayyid Talib al-Rifai. The former mentioned that he had read the book *"The Philosophy of the Revolution"*, and then wondered: how could these military officers carry out a coup and change the ruling system, while we—Islamists and religious authorities—remain unable to devise a mechanism for establishing an Islamic system of governance? Sayyid Ṭālib replied, "As long as the religious authorities exist, we have no capacity to act. If you, for example, were to announce the formation of a political party, not even your father's religious position would be able to protect you." On a later occasion, Sayyid Mahdī al-Ḥakīm returned to inform Sayyid al-Rifāʿī, saying, "I have discussed the matter with my father (Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm), and let this initiative remain secret between us." He then explained that the plan was based on selecting trustworthy individuals from various Iraqi cities to participate in parliamentary elections during the monarchical era, to form a parliamentary bloc of more than twenty members whose mission would be to oppose any legislation that contradicted Islamic principles. However, this plan never materialized and remained merely ink on paper (55).

Those discussions were nothing more than idle dreams, for realizing their aspirations required a shift from theory to practice, from abstract ideas to concrete action. When Jābir al-ʿAṭṭā(56) and Muḥammad Hādī al-Sabītī left the ranks of *Hizb al-Tahrir*, al-ʿAṭṭā initiated a dialogue with Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī about the importance of establishing a distinct Shiʿi Islamic entity, expressing his desire for al-Rifāʿī to lead this organization. However, Sayyid al-Rifāʿī pointed out the prominent social standing and intellectual depth of Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, whom he considered more qualified to head the project. He advised al-ʿAṭṭā to reach out to al-Ṣadr and persuade him to assume this responsibility. Accordingly, whenever al-ʿAṭṭā visited Najaf, al-Rifāʿī would accompany him to meet with Sayyid al-Ṣadr, where they exchanged views on the challenges facing the Islamic reality. In al-Ṣadr, al-ʿAṭṭā found the personality that truly embodied his hopes and aspirations (57).

Sayyid al-Rifāʿī as a Participant in Confronting the Communist Current

During the rule of ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim (1958–1963), the communists reached the peak of their influence, surpassing all other political forces and parties. They succeeded in consolidating their positions within state institutions and the military establishment, particularly after the government, under communist pressure and influence, undertook a process of purging the ranks of the armed forces (58). As the Communist Party embraced doctrines fundamentally at odds with the teachings of Islam, the *ḥawza ʿilmiyya* of Najaf entered a new and unprecedented phase in its political, intellectual, and social engagement. It consequently oriented itself to initiating a reformist cultural project aimed at confronting this significant ideological challenge. To ensure the success of this endeavor, the *ḥawza* mobilized its scholarly elite and strengthened its intellectual discourse, thereby enhancing the standing of the religious authority (*marjaʿiyya*) and its capacity to respond effectively. This initiative marked a pivotal turning point in the rise of the Shiʿi Islamic movement and its cultural activity. The activist Islamists capitalized on the atmosphere of ideological confrontation, using the umbrella of the religious authority to advance their political project and to organize students of religious studies within the *ḥawza ʿilmiyya*(59).

Communist ideas had a profound impact on Iraqi society, as many people were swept up by this perilous current, which stood in stark contradiction to the traditional values that had long prevailed. On a personal level, this ideological shift even sowed discord within families. One such instance

involved Ḥājj Thāmir al-ʿAṭṭā, who threatened his brother Jābir al-ʿAṭṭā when the latter was speaking with Sayyid Ṭālib about ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim. Their conversation included some criticism of Qāsim, prompting Thāmir to warn his brother: *"Even if you are my brother, I will hand you over to the authorities for speaking against ʿAbd al-Karīm."* Sayyid Ṭālib encountered a similar scene while walking through the markets of Najaf. He noticed a crowd gathered and, upon asking about the cause, was told that a man had insulted ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim — and the people had decided to drag him through the street in punishment. At the broader societal level, communist ideas had deeply penetrated Najaf to the extent that they even found their way into the verses of some *ḥusaynī* elegies. Certain *latmiyyāt* (mourning chants) began to reflect overtly communist and socialist themes. For instance, the *mawkib* (procession) from the city of al-Ḥayy became known for its distinctly communist slogans, chanting: *"Federal union… Soviet friendship… with the People's Republic of China… Eisenhower will fall… O Ḥaydar, O Karrār."* Moreover, communists used the walls of old buildings as places to hang portraits of leading Marxist thinkers—Lenin, Marx, Engels, and Stalin—and they even stood guard over these images to prevent others from tearing them down. These developments had a profound impact on the actions of religious scholars and those of Islamic orientation. Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī, for example, would not leave his home without carrying a sharp instrument for self-defense. The influence of communist thought even extended to the *mawkib* (procession) of the city of al-Rifāʿī, held in Karbala, where participants chanted slogans supportive of communist ideology. Sayyid Ṭālib attempted to replace the *ḥusaynī* chant with one inspired by Baʿthist nationalist slogans—*"Our unity with Egypt… is our support and our victory"*—but he was unable to succeed, as the Communist Party maintained widespread control over most of the *rawādīd* (reciters) leading the *ḥusaynī* processions. Consequently, Sayyid Ṭālib was compelled to withdraw from the forefront of al-Rifāʿī's *mawkib*. Because of his opposition to communist ideology, Sayyid Ṭālib became an important figure in the eyes of the nationalists, who sought to win him over to their side. On one occasion, when Sayyid al-Rifāʿī visited the home of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jazāʾirī, the latter's son, Aḥmad (60), saw him, invited him to his room, and they dined together. During the meal, Aḥmad said to Sayyid Ṭālib: *"We greatly admire your stance against the communists, and to us, Sayyid Ṭālib, you are a man of great worth and importance."* (61)

Sayyid al-Rifāʿī as the Cause of the al-Ṣūrī Crisis

Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī sparked a major crisis in the city of Najaf after promoting a leaflet from *al-Ḥaḍāra* newspaper (62). The publication, titled *"The Wise Donkey,"* had been written by Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Ṣūrī (63), who was known for his leftist leanings. Motivated by his opposition to leftist ideology and his hostility toward the Communist Party, Sayyid al-Rifāʿī decided to purchase numerous copies of the issue carrying that article and distributed them at the College of Jurisprudence, claiming that the person being mocked in the piece was Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm. By nightfall, the city of Najaf was in turmoil. Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm took refuge in his home in the city of Kufa, where people began gathering to express their outrage over the incident (64). Crowds gathered at his residence to express their solidarity and support, unequivocally condemning the statements published in *al-Ḥaḍāra* newspaper. The wave of indignation soon expanded to encompass the Communist Party as well, as numerous newspapers published articles denouncing any form of attack or disrespect directed toward religious scholars (65).

Regarding that incident, al-Ṣūrī stated:

"While I was overseeing the printing of al-Ḥaḍāra, one of the typesetters approached me and said, 'We need a few more lines to fill the last column.' I reflected for a moment, then picked up a caricature cliché and wrote a few humorous words in the voice of a donkey about a Baʿthist doctor—at a time when the Baʿth Party held no significance—who used to give daily advice on washing fruits and vegetables. I wanted to avoid imitating Egyptian newspapers, which would publish a caricature of a donkey labeled 'Ḥimār Afandī' (Mr. Donkey), so I replaced it with 'Ḥimār al-Ḥakīm' (The Wise Donkey). The humor lay in the donkey's expression of gratitude, as he and his fellow donkeys thanked the honorable doctor-announcer for his valuable advice on sterilization and cleaning. Never for a moment did it occur to me that anyone might associate the title with Ḥujjat al-Islām Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm—God knows that I deeply love this great man and hold his knowledge and noble character in the highest reverence." (66)

Al-Ṣūrī further recounted:

"When al-Ḥaḍāra newspaper was released to the markets containing humorous material, it was treated as a grave offense. This created a golden opportunity for malicious propaganda to be spread against me and against al-Ḥaḍāra in Najaf, Karbala, and other southern cities, where the rumors spread like wildfire. Before long, massive demonstrations erupted, sweeping through the streets with organized chants and insults voiced in the local dialect. Amid this turmoil, the Iraqi army in the south was placed on high alert, and an urgent telegram was sent to ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim, demanding that he issue an immediate ruling to punish al-Ṣūrī." (67) Qasim requested a meeting with al-Suri, who subsequently went to the Ministry of Defense and informed the officials there of Abd al-Karim Qasim's desire to meet him. Al-Suri was then escorted to the waiting room until Qasim arrived. Upon greeting him, Qasim explained the crisis that had arisen in the country as a result of al-Suri's statements concerning al-Sayyid al-Hakim in *al-Hadara* newspaper. Al-Suri then clarified his position, emphasizing that the matter was merely a misunderstanding. Once Abd al-Karim Qasim was assured of the true nature of the situation, he immediately revoked all measures that had been taken against al-Suri (68).

Through his actions, al-Sayyid Talib revealed the depth of his aversion and intense hostility toward the adherents and supporters of communist thought. He spared no effort in combating this ideological current. Upon realizing that his conventional methods had failed to achieve his objective, he adopted an approach unbecoming of a religious scholar—resorting to the dissemination of false claims—in an attempt to foment division and hostility between the religious leadership in Najaf and the communist movement. Such actions were intended to compel the religious authority to adopt an antagonistic stance toward the communists, which would inevitably incite their followers and supporters against them.

Al-Sayyid al-Rifaʿi's Position within the Association of Scholars

The origins of the *Association of Scholars* (Jamaʿat al-ʿUlama') trace back to the period following 1958, emerging as a reaction to the growing leftist influence that prompted religious scholars—foremost among them al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim—to seek means of confrontation (69). During one of the meetings held in Najaf, at the residence of al-Sayyid Baqir al-Shakhsh (70), around twenty scholars affiliated with al-Hakim's religious authority convened. Their aim was not to establish a political party or organization, but rather to devise strategies to counter the communist tide that had swept through Iraqi society at the time. As a result of that meeting, ten members were selected to form the nucleus of the *Association of Scholars*, under the leadership of Shaykh Murtadha Al-Yasin. Al-Sayyid Talib al-Rifaʿi joined the group's second tier, which focused on

training its members in the arts of oratory and public persuasion. These members were dispatched to various Iraqi provinces, particularly during the month of Ramadan (71).

The *Association of Scholars* issued a directive statement in which it pointed to the growing influence of the Iraqi Communist Party on the political scene and warned Prime Minister 'Abd al-Karim Qasim against falling under the dominance of this group. The statement emphasized that other forces could serve as far better allies for him. It was, however, accompanied by words of appreciation and praise toward Qasim—an approach that provoked the disapproval of al-Sayyid al-Rifa'i. He turned to Shaykh Murtadha Al-Yasin and said, "My master, how can you lavish such praise upon a man like this? Does he truly deserve all this commendation? Who is he that you should elevate him to such a rank?" Al-Yasin replied, "My son, Sayyid Talib, this is bait… bait" (72), for the religious authority sought to contain 'Abd al-Karim Qasim and draw him into its sphere of influence. To achieve this, it adopted a strategy of flattery and exaltation, referring to him as *the sole leader*, *the devoted hero*, and *the pioneer of Islam and the Muslims* (73).

Al-Sayyid al-Rifa'i was assigned the task of delivering the first communiqué issued by the *Association of Scholars* to al-Sayyid Muhammad al-Qazwini (74) in Basra. Carrying the document, al-Sayyid Talib set out on his journey toward Basra. At that time, checkpoints and trains were being searched by civilian supporters of communism, who discovered the leaflets and confiscated them. They forced al-Sayyid Talib out of the vehicle while he was still in Najaf. He resisted them fiercely, cursing and confronting them, until he was rescued by a car owner who happened upon the scene. When the man inquired about the situation, the group told him that the person they were detaining was a member of the *Association of Scholars* and showed him the confiscated leaflets. The car owner said to them, "Leave him to me; I will handle the matter." Believing that he was a government official, they released al-Sayyid Talib into his custody. The man then helped him into his car and drove him to the government headquarters (*saray al-hukuma*). Despite this ordeal, al-Sayyid Talib did not hesitate to continue his mission; he proceeded to Basra and completed the task entrusted to him (75).

Conclusion

Al-Sayyid al-Rifa'i was among the most prominent figures to leave a lasting impact on the field of political Islam. He was one of the foremost advocates for the establishment of Islamic groups and parties through which the expansion of communism in Iraq during the second half of the twentieth century could be countered. His inclination toward this objective was evident from his early support for Islamic movements with Sunni ideological orientations—most notably the *Muslim Brotherhood* and the *Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb al-Tahrir)*.

Subsequently, al-Sayyid al-Rifa'i, in collaboration with al-Sayyid Mahdi al-Hakim, began working toward the formation of a Shi'i Islamic organization. This endeavor contributed to the establishment of the *Association of Scholars (Jama'at al-'Ulama')*, whose efforts were primarily directed toward confronting the communist movement. These collective efforts later played a significant role in the formation of the *Islamic Da'wa Party*.

References

(1) **Muhammad al-Sawwaf:** Shaykh Muhammad Mahmoud al-Sawwaf was born in Mosul in 1915, where he received his early religious education before moving to Baghdad to study Islamic law (*shari'a*). He was deeply influenced by his teacher, Shaykh Amjad al-Zahawi, who played a key role in shaping his intellectual and missionary outlook. Al-Sawwaf emerged as one of the most prominent figures of Islamic activism in the twentieth

century, playing a pivotal role in Islamic preaching both within Iraq and abroad, and influencing the direction of Sunni Islamic movements. He was among the first founders of the *Muslim Brotherhood* in Iraq during the 1940s. Following the fall of the monarchy, he faced persecution due to his opposition to the new regime, which eventually compelled him to emigrate. He passed away in 1992 and was buried in Mecca. For more details, see: Jasim Muhammad 'Abd Allah Najm al-Luhaibi, *Muhammad Mahmoud al-Sawwaf (1915–1992)*, University of Mosul, College of Arts, Master's Thesis, 2005, pp. 2, 6, 241; 'Abd Allah al-'Aqil, *Min A'lam al-Da'wa wa al-Haraka al-Islamiyya al-Mu'asira*, Vol. 1, Cairo: Dar al-Bashir, 7th ed., 2008, pp. 1040–1041, 1047.

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(11) Nakash, Y. (1994). *The Shi'is of Iraq*. Princeton University Press.

(12) Nasr, V. (2001). *Islamic Leviathan: Islam and the Making of State Power*. Oxford University Press.

(13) **The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty:** Also known as the *Portsmouth Treaty*, it included amendments to the provisions of the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty to safeguard Britain's interests in Iraq. Negotiations began in August 1947, and the treaty was signed on January 15, 1948. Its signing triggered widespread popular opposition, with participation from various nationalist parties. For further reference, see: Salih 'Abd al-'Ali Khalif and Ja'far 'Abd al-Da'im al-Mansur, "The Impact of the 1948 Portsmouth Treaty in Stirring Political Violence," *University of Basra, College of Education for Human Sciences, Basra Research Journal for Human Sciences*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 2019, pp. 40–41.

(14) Muhammad Badiwi al-Shammari, *Transformations of Political Islam in Iraq*, Beirut: Muntada al-Ma'arif, 1st ed., 2011, p. 58.

(15) **Majd al-Zahawi:** Shaykh Amjad ibn Muhammad Sa'id al-Zahawi was born in Baghdad in 1882 into a distinguished family renowned for its scholarship and literary heritage. He received his early religious education in his hometown under the tutelage of several prominent scholars, most notably Shaykh 'Ali al-Alusi, before continuing his studies in Istanbul. Al-Zahawi was a social reformer who played an active role in religious advocacy and reform and was well known for his nationalist and patriotic stances. He served as the *Mufti* of Baghdad and was also a member of the Iraqi Academy of Sciences (*al-Mujamma'*

al-ʿIlmi al-ʿIraqi). He passed away in 1967 and was buried in Baghdad. For further reference, see: Yunus al-Shaykh Ibrahim al-Samarra'i, *The History of Baghdad's Scholars in the Fourteenth Century AH*, Erbil: Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, 1982, p. 102.

(16) ʿAli Saud Shikahi al-Mayyahi, *Thought and Positions of the Islamic Daʿwa Party (1957–1979)*, University of Basra, College of Education, Master's Thesis, 2013, p. 26.

(17) **Jaʿfar al-ʿAskari:** Jaʿfar Mustafa ʿAbd al-Rahman Jaʿfar al-ʿAskari was born in Baghdad on September 15, 1885. He completed his primary and secondary education in Baghdad, after which he traveled to Istanbul in 1901 to study at the Military Academy, graduating in 1905 with the rank of Second Lieutenant. He joined the Ottoman army and participated in most of the wars fought by the Ottoman Empire. Later, he joined the *Great Arab Revolt* under the leadership of Emir Faisal and was appointed Minister of Defense following the establishment of the Iraqi state. Al-ʿAskari served as Prime Minister three times and was renowned for his tactical brilliance and proficiency in several languages. In 1936, he was assassinated by Bakr Sidqi, who had led a military coup in the same year. For further reference, see: Mir Basri, *Aʿlam al-Siyasa fi al-ʿIraq al-Hadith*, Vol. 2, pp. 99–100, 102–104.

(18) **Muhsin ʿAbd al-Hamid**, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq (1944–2003)*, Homs: al-Nadi al-Shababi, 2nd ed., 2011, pp. 108–110.

(19) **The Islamic Brotherhood Association:** One of the political fronts of the *Muslim Brotherhood* in Iraq, the *Islamic Brotherhood Association* emerged after Amjad al-Zahawi applied to Nuri al-Saʿid on June 26, 1949, requesting official authorization for the association. Within less than three months, approval was granted on September 13 of the same year. Following the elections, Amjad al-Zahawi was elected president, while Muhammad ʿAsim al-Naqib became vice president. Muhammad Mahmoud al-Sawwaf was appointed secretary, Ibrahim Mustafa al-Ayyubi served as treasurer, and both ʿAbd al-Rahman Khidr and Muhammad Taha al-Fayyad became members of the administrative council. For further reference, see: Iman ʿAbd al-Hamid Muhammad al-Dabbagh, *ibid.*, p. 63.

(20) Muhammad Badiwi al-Shammari, *ibid.*, p. 58.

(21) ʿAli al-Mu'min, *Sanawat al-Jamr: Masirat al-Haraka al-Islamiyya fi al-ʿIraq (1957–1986)*, Cairo: Dar Rawafid, 5th ed., 2020, pp. 26–27.

(22) **Ḥasan al-Bannā:** He was born in al-Maḥmūdiyya, in the al-Buḥayra Governorate, on October 14, 1906, into a scholarly family that combined elements of both Salafism and Sufism. He studied the Qur'an and Islamic sciences at the *al-Rashād* School before continuing his formal education, graduating from *Dār al-ʿUlūm* in 1927. Al-Bannā worked as a teacher in Ismailia, where he founded the *Muslim Brotherhood* in 1928 as a reformist movement aimed at integrating Islam into public life. However, his growing conflict with the authorities culminated in his assassination on February 12, 1949. For further details, see: Muḥsin Muḥammad, *Man Qatala Ḥasan al-Bannā* [Who Killed Ḥasan al-Bannā], Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1st ed., March 1987, pp. 9–10; Ḥasan al-Bannā, *Mudhakkirāt al-Daʿwa wa-l-Dāʿiya* [Memoirs of the Mission and the Preacher], Kuwait: Āfāq, 1st ed., 2012, p. 84; May ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Dāwūd, "*Nashʾat Jamāʿat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn wa-ʿAlāqatuhā bi-Baʿḍ Nuẓum al-Ḥukm fī Miṣr: Qirāʾa Sūsiyūlūjiyya*" [The Emergence of

the Muslim Brotherhood and Its Relationship with Certain Political Regimes in Egypt: A Sociological Reading], *Journal of Scientific Research in the Humanities*, Ain Shams University, Egypt, No. 19, Vol. 2, 2018, pp. 3–4.

(23) **Sayyid Quṭb:** He was born in the village of Mūsha in the Asyūṭ Governorate on October 9, 1906, and moved to Cairo in 1920, where he pursued his education and graduated from *Dār al-ʿUlūm* in 1933. He subsequently worked as a teacher and later at the Ministry of Education. Initially affiliated with the Wafd Party, he joined the *Muslim Brotherhood* in 1953, before being imprisoned and eventually executed in 1966 on charges of conspiring against the regime. For further details, see: Ṣalāḥ ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Khālidī, *Sayyid Quṭb: Min al-Mīlād ilā al-Istishhād* [Sayyid Quṭb: From Birth to Martyrdom], Damascus: Dār al-Qalam; Beirut: al-Dār al-Shāmiyya, 2nd ed., 1994, pp. 15–17.

(24) **Muḥammad Quṭb:** He was born in the village of Mūsha, in Asyūṭ Governorate, on April 26, 1919. Following the death of his father, he moved to Cairo, where he completed his education and graduated from Cairo University in 1940. He then worked as a teacher and translator before being imprisoned for his activities with the *Muslim Brotherhood*. After his release, he emigrated to Saudi Arabia, where he continued his intellectual work until his death in 2014. He was buried in the al-Maʿlā Cemetery in Mecca. For further details, see: Muḥammad al-Majdhūb, *ʿUlamāʾ wa-Mufakkirūn ʿAraftuhum* [Scholars and Thinkers I Have Known], Vol. 2, Riyadh: Dār al-Shawwāf, 4th ed., 1992, p. 277; Sharīfullāh Ghafūrī, *al-Maqāl al-Adabī ʿinda Muḥammad Quṭb min Khilāl Kitābātihi: Jamʿan wa-Dirāsatan* [The Literary Essay in the Works of Muḥammad Quṭb: Collection and Study], Tehran: Iḥsān, 2nd ed., 2023, pp. 20, 27–30, 62.

(25) **Muḥammad Hādī al-Subaytī:** He was born in al-Kāẓimiyya in 1930, where he completed his early education before enrolling in the College of Engineering at the University of Baghdad. He first joined the *Islamic Liberation Party* and later the *Islamic Daʿwa Party*, eventually becoming a member of its three-member leadership council following the withdrawal of Sayyid al-Ṣadr. Al-Subaytī assumed the party's leadership in 1963, sparking intellectual debate due to his advocacy of a non-sectarian discourse, which led to the withdrawal of ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī. Nonetheless, his leadership left a lasting impact through his efforts in party organization and his authorship of ideological writings in *Ṣawt al-Daʿwa* [The Voice of the Daʿwa]. He was arrested in 1981 by Jordanian intelligence and handed over to Iraq, where he died in prison in 1988. For further details, see: Ḥasan Laṭīf al-Zubaydī, *Mawsūʿat al-Aḥzāb al-ʿIrāqiyya* [Encyclopedia of Iraqi Political Parties], p. 408; ʿĀmir Ḥamīd Sulṭān al-ʿĀbidī, *Muḥammad Hādī al-Subaytī wa-Dawruh al-Siyāsī ḥattā ʿĀm 1981* [Muḥammad Hādī al-Subaytī and His Political Role up to 1981], M.A. Thesis, College of Education, al-Mustansiriyya University, 2017; *al-ʿIrāqiyya al-Akhbāriyya* [Iraqi News Channel], *Program*, Vol. 2.

(26) https://youtu.be/3k1hYt66vDQ?si=9JweSS_0cqZcEAWS

(27) **ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim:** He was born in one of Baghdad's working-class neighborhoods, where he was deeply influenced by the simplicity of its life and the authenticity of its values. At the age of seven, he moved with his father, Qāsim Muḥammad al-Bakr al-Zubaydī — a merchant by profession — to the city of al-Ṣuwayra. Upon returning to

Baghdad, he completed his primary education, graduating in 1927, after which he enrolled in the Central Secondary School. He briefly worked as a teacher in al-Shāmiyya before joining the Military College, from which he graduated in 1934 with the rank of second lieutenant. Qāsim continued his military career by joining the Staff College in 1940, graduating in 1941, and later received advanced training courses in Iraq and London in 1950. He took part in several military operations, including the Middle Euphrates disturbances in 1935, the May Movement of 1941, and the Barzan uprisings in 1945. In recognition of his distinguished performance, he received numerous medals and steadily rose through the military ranks—from *zaʿīm* (brigadier) in 1955 to *farīq rukn* (major general) in 1963. On July 14, 1958, Qāsim led a group of Free Officers in overthrowing the monarchy and proclaiming the Republic of Iraq. However, he soon consolidated power in his own hands, centralizing authority and contributing to political divisions and the weakening of national unity. In response to his increasingly authoritarian rule, the Baʿath Party formed a revolutionary front that ultimately overthrew him on February 8, 1963. For further details, see: Ḥamīd al-Muṭabbiʿī, *Mawsūʿat Aʿlām al-ʿIrāq fī al-Qarn al-ʿIshrīn* [Encyclopedia of Iraqi Figures in the Twentieth Century], Vol. 2, p. 149; Mīr Baṣrī, *Aʿlām al-Siyāsa fī al-ʿIrāq al-Ḥadīth* [Political Figures in Modern Iraq], Vol. 1, p. 293.

(28) **The Islamic Party:** The *Iraqi Islamic Party* was founded on April 26, 1960, following a ruling by the Iraqi Court of Cassation in favor of its establishment. This decision came in response to the Ministry of Interior's earlier rejection of the party's application for a license on February 8 of the same year. After the court's approval, the party's founding committee established its first headquarters in the al-Aʿẓamiyya district of Baghdad, thereby becoming the first officially recognized opposition entity in Iraq. During its inaugural founding meeting, members of the Central Committee were elected through a secret ballot. Dr. Nuʿmān ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Samarraʾī was chosen as the party's president, while Mr. Faliḥ Ḥasan al-Samarraʾī assumed the position of secretary. Other founding members included Shaykh Ibrāhīm Munīr al-Mudarris, the poet Walīd al-Aʿẓamī, and Shaykh Ṭāha Jābir al-ʿAlwānī. For further details, see: Kāẓim Aḥmad al-Mashāykhī, *Tārīkh Nashʾat al-Ḥizb al-Islāmī al-ʿIrāqī* [The History of the Emergence of the Iraqi Islamic Party], Baghdad: Dār al-Raqīm, 1st ed., 2005, p. 23; Khamīs Dahhām Ḥamīd, *al-Ḥizb al-Islāmī al-ʿIrāqī: Dirāsa fī al-Tanẓīm wa-l-Afkār wa-l-Mawāqif* [The Iraqi Islamic Party: A Study of Its Organization, Thought, and Positions], *Midād al-Ādāb* Journal, College of Arts, al-ʿIrāqiyya University, Vol. 3, No. 5, 2013, pp. 607–608.

(29) Muḥsin ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, *ibid.*, pp. 183–185.

(30) Rashīd al-Khayyūn, *Amālī al-Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī* [The Dictations of Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī], Beirut: Dār Madārik, 1st ed., 2012, p. 107.

(31) *Sūrat al-Māʾida* (The Table Spread), verse 48.

(32) *al-ʿIrāqiyya al-Akhbāriyya* [Iraqi News Channel], *Abʿād* [Dimensions], Vol. 2, *ibid.*

(33) Rashīd al-Khayyūn, *Amālī al-Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī*, pp. 110–112.

(34) *al-ʿArabiyya al-Akhbāriyya* [Al Arabiya News Channel], *Iḍāʾāt* [Illuminations], *ibid.*

(35) **Disbelief and Atheism:** This refers to the spread of communist ideology in Iraq during the 1960s, which prompted Islamic circles to resist and attempt to eradicate it. For further details, see: *Khībat al-Masʿā: Ṣuʿūd wa-Suqūṭ al-Ḥizb al-Shuyūʿī al-ʿIrāqī fī ʿAhd ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim (1958–1963)* [The Failure of the Endeavor: The Rise and Fall of the Iraqi

Communist Party under ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim], Tunis: al-Ṭalīʿa Publications, 1979; Zakī Khayrī and Suʿād Khayrī, *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh al-Ḥizb al-Shuyūʿī al-ʿIrāqī* [Studies in the History of the Iraqi Communist Party], Vol. 1, 1st ed., Golden Jubilee Edition, 1984.

(36) **ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Samarraʾī:** He was born in Samarra in 1935 into an Arab Muslim family. Having memorized the Qur'an at an early age, he went on to graduate from the College of Sharīʿa in Baghdad in 1952. He worked in education and administration before earning his Ph.D. from Cairo University in 1972. Al-Samarraʾī combined academic scholarship with Islamic activism through his affiliation with the *Muslim Brotherhood* and his leadership of the *Iraqi Islamic Party*. In 1968, he moved to Riyadh, where he taught at both Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University and King Saud University until his retirement in 2003. He passed away in 2021. For further details, see: Jāsim al-Muṭawwaʿ, *Ḥadīth al-Dhikrāyāt* [Memories Talk], interview with Dr. Nuʿmān al-Samarraʾī, 2011, https://youtu.be/NL8N75aVlCI?si=NdixwcRqJbNFU4Ay;
Wasan Saʿīd ʿAbbūd, "*Nuʿmān ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Samarraʾī wa-Nashāṭuhu al-Siyāsī (1948–1961)*" [Nuʿmān ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Samarraʾī and His Political Activity (1948–1961)], *Ain Shams Arts Journal*, Vol. 46, 2018;
Fāʾiza bint ʿAbd Allāh al-Suqbānī, "*Raḥim Allāh Abā al-Mundhir al-Duktūr Nuʿmān al-Samarraʾī*" [May God Have Mercy on Abū al-Mundhir, Dr. Nuʿmān al-Samarraʾī], *Al-Jazīrah Newspaper*, December 23, 2021,https://www.al-jazirah.com/2021/20211223/wa1.htm

(37) Rashīd al-Khayyūn, *Amālī al-Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī*, pp. 113–114.

(38) This question was addressed by Imam Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn Āl Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ in a *fatwa* issued on 12 Dhū al-Qaʿda 1372 AH (corresponding to July 22, 1953). For further details, see: Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Ṭurayḥī, *al-Shīʿa wa-l-Shuyūʿiyya: Masājilāt fī al-Dīn wa-l-Mārksiyya* [Shiʿism and Communism: Debates on Religion and Marxism], Part I, *Mawsūʿat al-Mawsim*, al-Kūfa Academy, Netherlands, 2008; Raḥīm ʿAjīna, *al-Takwīn al-Fikrī li-Shuyūʿī Najafī* [The Intellectual Formation of a Najafi Communist], p. 124.

(39) *al-ʿIrāqiyya al-Akhbāriyya* [Iraqi News Channel], *Abʿād* [Dimensions], Vol. 2, *ibid.*

(40) *al-ʿArabiyya al-Akhbāriyya* [Al Arabiya News Channel], *Iḍāʾāt* [Illuminations], *ibid.*

(41) **ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Badrī:** He was born in Samarra in 1929 and received his religious education under prominent scholars such as Amjad al-Zahāwī and Qāsim al-Qaysī. He began his career as an imam and preacher in 1948 and later moved to Baghdad, where he became known for his outspoken criticism of successive governments, leading to his imprisonment and house arrest during the rule of ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim. Al-Badrī subsequently joined the *Islamic Liberation Party* and later the *Muslim Brotherhood*. He was recognized for his opposition to socialism, which he articulated in his book *Ḥukm al-Islām fī al-Ishtirākiyya* [Islam's Ruling on Socialism] (1965). He was executed in 1969 following his confrontation with the Baʿathist regime and was buried in al-Aʿẓamiyya. For further details, see: Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām: Qāmūs Tarājim li-Ashhar al-Rijāl wa-l-Nisāʾ min al-ʿArab wa-l-Mustaʿribīn wa-l-Mustashriqīn* [Al-Aʿlām: A Biographical Dictionary of the Most Prominent Arab, Arabized, and Orientalist Figures], Vol. 4, Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm lil-Malāyīn, 13th ed., 1998, p. 15; ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAqīl, *Min Aʿlām al-Daʿwa wa-l-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya al-Muʿāṣira* [Prominent Figures of the Contemporary Islamic Daʿwa and Movement], *ibid.*, p. 457.

(42) ʿĀrif al-Baṣrī: He was born in Basra in 1937, where he completed his early education before moving to Najaf and graduating from the College of Jurisprudence in 1963. He later earned a master's degree in Sharīʿa from the Institute of Islamic Studies in Baghdad. Al-Baṣrī served as a professor at the College of Uṣūl al-Dīn (Fundamentals of Religion), an agent (*wakīl*) of the religious authority (*marjaʿiyya*), and imam of the al-Zawiya Mosque. Initially affiliated with the *Islamic Liberation Party*, he later withdrew from it under the influence of the founders of the *Islamic Daʿwa Party*, becoming one of its most prominent leaders and contributing significantly to expanding its religious and social activities. In 1974, he was arrested for his involvement with the party and sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Court. The sentence was carried out at Abu Ghraib Prison on December 5 of the same year. For further details, see: Ḥasan Laṭīf al-Zubaydī, *Mawsūʿat al-Siyāsa al-ʿIrāqiyya* [Encyclopedia of Iraqi Politics], p. 365.

(43) Muḥammad Muḥsin Rāḍī, *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr: Thaqāfatuhu wa-Manhajuhu fī Iqāmat Dawlat al-Khilāfa al-Islāmiyya* [The Islamic Liberation Party: Its Ideology and Methodology in Establishing the Islamic Caliphate State], Baghdad: al-Jāmiʿa al-Islāmiyya, College of Uṣūl al-Dīn, M.A. Thesis, 2006, p. 61.

(44) Ḥasan Laṭīf al-Zubaydī, *Mawsūʿat al-Siyāsa al-ʿIrāqiyya* [Encyclopedia of Iraqi Politics], Beirut: al-ʿĀrif, 2nd ed., 2013, p. 138.

(45) Wasan Saʿīd ʿAbbūd, *al-Khilāfa al-Islāmiyya fī Fikr Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr al-Islāmī al-ʿIrāqī (1954–1969)* [The Islamic Caliphate in the Thought of the Iraqi Islamic Liberation Party (1954–1969)], *Journal of the College of Arts*, University of Baghdad, No. 57, 2017, pp. 322–323.

(46) ʿAbd al-Qadīm Zalūm: ʿAbd al-Qadīm Yūsuf Zalūm was born in Hebron in 1923 and became one of the most prominent Islamic figures of the modern era. After obtaining his degree from al-Azhar University, he succeeded the founder, Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī as the leader of *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr* (the Islamic Liberation Party). Zalūm authored numerous influential works, including *Kayfa Humidat al-Khilāfa* [How the Caliphate Was Destroyed], *Niẓām al-Ḥukm fī al-Islām* [The System of Governance in Islam], and *al-Amwāl fī Dawlat al-Khilāfa* [Finances in the Caliphate State]. He passed away in Beirut in 2003. For further details, see: Mūsā ibn Waṣl ibn Waṣl Allāh al-Sulamī, *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr wa-Ārāʾuhu al-Iʿtiqādiyya (ʿArḍan wa-Naqdan)* [The Islamic Liberation Party and Its Doctrinal Views: Presentation and Critique], Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Umm al-Qurā University, College of Daʿwa and Uṣūl al-Dīn, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2007, p. 28.

(47) Rashīd al-Khayyūn, *Amālī al-Sayyid Ṭālib al-Rifāʿī*, pp. 101–102.

(48) ʿAlī al-Muʾmin, *ibid.*, 2020, p. 27.

(49) The July 1958 Coup: A military coup organized by the army under the leadership of Abdul Karim Qasim on July 14, 1958, which resulted in the elimination of the royal family and the transformation of the system of governance from a monarchy to a republic. Qasim assumed the positions of Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. For more details, see: Jaafar Abbas Humaidi, *The Contemporary History of Iraq*, pp. 263–264; Mounir Qasmiya, *The Revolution of 14 July 1958 in Iraq*, Algeria: Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2016, pp. 19–22.

(50) Wissan Saeed Aboud, *The Islamic Caliphate in the Thought of the Iraqi Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami (1954–1969)*, pp. 321–322.

(51) Mohammed Mohsen Radi, *Op. cit..*, p. 62.

(52) Abdulhadi al-Fadli, *The Islamic Movement in Iraq*, Qatif: Publications of the Committee for the Works of al-Allamah al-Fadli, 1st ed., 2014, p. 47.

(53) **Mehdi al-Hakim:** Born in **1935**, Mehdi al-Hakim showed an early passion for Islamic activism. He pursued his religious studies in **Najaf** under several prominent scholars, including **Mulla Hussein Quli al-Hamadani**, **Mohammad Kazem al-Khorasani**, **Habibullah al-Rashti**, and **Mohammad Hassan al-Shirazi**. He devoted his youth to intensive social and religious activities and is considered one of the pioneers who utilized the **Husseini pulpit** to disseminate religious discourse among the public — a practice that was then uncommon within the seminary circles of Najaf. Following the **July 14, 1958, coup**, he actively opposed the **Communist movement** in Najaf. In **1964**, he moved to **Baghdad** to represent his father there until **1970**, a period marked by significant achievements, especially in **Kadhimiya**, where he contributed to the establishment of numerous religious projects. However, his extensive activities made him a target of the regime. On **June 9, 1969**, he was accused of espionage, forcing him to flee Iraq secretly and seek asylum in **Pakistan**. The authorities continued to pursue him abroad, subjecting him to **three failed assassination attempts** before finally assassinating him during his visit to **Sudan in 1988**. **Sources**: Jaafar al-Dujaili, *Encyclopedia of Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf*, Vol. 13, p. 279; Wissan Saeed al-Kar'awi, *Sayyid Mohsen al-Hakim and His Political and Intellectual Role in Iraq (1946–1970)*, p. 26; Joyce Wiley, *The Shi'ite Islamic Movement in Iraq*, trans. Mustafa Numan Ahmed and Hanaa Khalif Ghani, Baghdad: Al-Kitab Press, 2011, pp. 144–145.

(54) **Saleh Jua'yul al-Saray and Karar Abdul-Hussein Joudah**, *The Shiite Islamic Movement in Iraq: The Foundations and Factors of Emergence (1958–1963)*, University of Thi-Qar, *Journal of Thi-Qar University for Humanities*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2020, p. 45.

(55) **Rashid al-Khayoun**, *Amali al-Sayyid Talib al-Rifa'i*, pp. 97–98.

(56) **Jaber al-Atta:** Jaber Mohammed al-Atta was born in **Najaf in 1930**, where he completed his **primary, intermediate, and secondary education**, before graduating from the **College of Medicine at the University of Baghdad in 1956**. He later obtained a **Higher Diploma in Internal Medicine in 1972**. After completing his military service as a reserve officer at **Al-Diwaniyah Hospital**, he worked as a physician at **Al-Nasiriyah Hospital**. Politically, he first joined the **Independence Party**, then the **Muslim Brotherhood,** and the **Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami)**, before becoming an early member of the **Islamic Da'wa Party**, where he served as its **first representative in southern Iraq** and a **member of its General Leadership** since the 1960s. He studied religious sciences under **Ahmad Amin**, **Sayyid Talib al-Rifa'i**, **Mehdi al-Hakim**, and **Sheikh Mohammed Sadiq al-Khalisi**. Al-Atta was **arrested three times**—in **Basra (1959)**, **Baghdad (1977)**, and again in **1985**. He passed away in **2011**. For further details, see: Salah al-Khirsan, *The Islamic Da'wa Party: The Phase of Construction and Change (1957–1979)*, Beirut: Al-Mustafa, 1st ed., 2019, pp. 102–104.

(57) **Saleh Jua'yul al-Saray and Karar Abdul-Hussein Joudah**, *Op. cit.*, p. 46.

(58) **Phoebe Marr**, *Modern Iraq: The First Republican Decade*, Vol. 1, trans. Mustafa Numan, Cairo: Dar Misr, 2009, p. 32.

(59) **Saleh Jua'yul al-Saray and Karar Abdul-Hussein Joudah**, *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

(60) **Ahmed al-Jazairi:** Sheikh Ahmed ibn Abdul Karim ibn Ali ibn Kazem al-Jazairi was born in **Najaf in 1924**, where he received his early education from his father and uncle, **Sheikh Mohammed Jawad**, both prominent jurists and scholars of their time. He absorbed from them principles of **reform, renewal, and the call for national liberation**. Al-Jazairi actively participated in the **Iraqi national movement**, defending **Arab unity** and opposing **colonialism and injustice** through his writings, which eventually forced him to emigrate to **Cairo**, where he passed away in **1963**. For more details, see: Jaafar al-Dujaili, *Encyclopedia of Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf, Poets of Najaf, 14th Century, Part 3*, Vol. 19, p. 381.

(61) **Rashid al-Khayoun**, *Amali al-Sayyid Talib al-Rifa'i*, pp. 133–135.

(62) **Al-Hadara Newspaper:** A literary and cultural newspaper published weekly, first issued on **October 15, 1937**, with **Mr. Mohammad Hassan al-Suri** serving as editor-in-chief. Its publication ceased after the completion of its first year. It resumed with **Issue No. 21 on July 24, 1941**, printed at **Al-Ghuri Press** after being registered with the **Najaf Post Office under No. 107**. Publication again stopped after the second year, but it later resumed after being relocated to **Baghdad**, transforming into a magazine from its previous status as a newspaper. For further details, see: Mohammad Abdulhadi Aboud, *Najafi Press 1939–1958 (A Historical Study)*, University of Kufa, College of Arts, PhD Thesis, 2008, pp. 47–49; Ali Shamkhi Jabr, *Highlights of Najafi Press and Its Intellectual and Reformist Role (1910–1968)*, Karbala: Ahl al-Bayt University, *Journal of Ahl al-Bayt University*, No. 10, 2010, p. 269.

(63) **Mohammad Hassan al-Suri:** Born in **Najaf in 1889**, he worked as a writer for numerous Najafi newspapers and magazines, most notably **Al-Hadara Newspaper**, which he founded in **1937**. He later moved to **Baghdad**, where he continued his work as a writer. He passed away in **1960**. For further details, see: Razaq Kurdi Hussein and Diyaa Noor Hamza, *The Emergence and Development of Najafi Press (1945–1958)*, University of Kufa, *Journal of the Kufa Studies Center*, Year 7, No. 31, 2013, p. 213.

(64) **Rashid al-Khayoun**, *Amali al-Sayyid Talib al-Rifa'i*, pp. 139–140.

(65) **Mohammed Saeed al-Turaihi**, *The Shi'a and Communism: Dialogues on Religion and Marxism, Part I*, *Al-Mawsim Encyclopedia*, Kufa Academy, Netherlands, 2008; **Mohammed Hadi al-Asadi**, "The Fatwa of Imam al-Hakim on Communism," p. 130.

(66) *Al-Mawsim (Journal)*, Vol. 1, No. 89, Kufa Academy, Netherlands, 2008, p. 130.

(67) *Al-Mawsim (Journal)*, *Op. cit.*, p. 430.

(68) **Mohammed Saeed al-Turaihi**, *The Shi'a and Communism: Dialogues on Religion and Marxism, Part I*, *Al-Mawsim Encyclopedia*, Kufa Academy, Netherlands, 2008; "**Mohammed Hassan al-Suri and the Senior Religious Authority Sayyid Mohsen al-Hakim During the Era of Leader Abdul Karim Qasim**," p. 432.

(69) *Al-Mawsim (Journal)*, *Op. cit.*, p. 432.

(70) **Baqir al-Shakhs:** Sayyid Mohammed Baqir ibn Sayyid Ali ibn Sayyid Ahmed ibn Sayyid Ibrahim al-Shakhs al-Mousawi was born in **Al-Ahsa in 1899** and studied in **Najaf**, where he remained until his death. He studied under several prominent jurists of his era, including **Mirza al-Naini**, **Sheikh Mohammed Hussein al-Isfahani**, and **Sheikh Mohammed Reza al-Yasin**, who granted him **Ijazah in Ijtihad**, making him one of the leading scholars of his time. He passed away in **1962** and was buried in **Najaf**. For further

details, see: Jaafar al-Dujaili, *Encyclopedia of Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf, Poets of Najaf, 14th Century, Part 3*, Vol. 19, p. 359.

(71) **Rashid al-Khayoun**, *Amali al-Sayyid Talib al-Rifa'i*, pp. 124–125.

(72) **Rashid al-Khayoun**, *100 Years of Political Islam in Iraq, Vol. 1: The Shi'a*, pp. 90–91.

(73) **Saleh Jua'yul al-Saray and Karar Abdul-Hussein Joudah**, *Op. cit..*, p. 57.

(74) **Mohammed al-Qazwini:** Born in **Najaf on May 5, 1935**, into a distinguished scholarly family, he was raised and cared for by his cousin, **Sayyid Mohammed al-Husseini**, after losing his parents. He joined the ranks of the **Najaf seminary** from a young age, receiving religious education in its esteemed institutions, eventually becoming one of its most prominent teachers and jurists. He passed away in **1994**. For further details, see: Dakhel Sayyid Hassan, *Dictionary of Orators*, Vol. 2, Beirut: Al-Mu'assasa Al-'Alamiya, 1st ed., 1996, pp. 53–58.

(75) **Rashid al-Khayoun**, *Amali al-Sayyid Talib al-Rifa'i*, pp. 128–129, 131.