

Sept. 1961

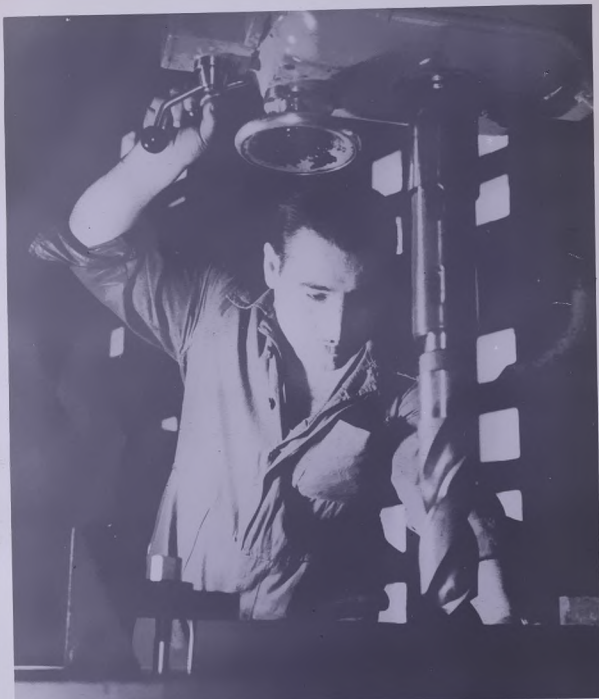
# NEW IRAQ

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A MONTHLY PICTORIAL MAGAZINE ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF GUIDANCE

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Supervised by the Directorate of Popular Arts and Culture

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## ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE REVOLUTION

After the Revolution the Government sponsored a new independent trade policy with the interest of the national economy as its first aim. This new policy ended the old relative policy followed by the previous regime that had made of Iraq a consuming market for products of the Imperialist countries and a source of raw material for their factories.

The National Government has done its best to uproot all traces of that policy. Iraq has now turned to both East and West, dealing with all states on basis of equality in importing and exporting goods with no restrictions but what ensure the public interests. Only two countries are excluded from this free trade policy—France and Israel; the first for its aggressive attitude towards the Arab liberation movements especially in Algeria; the second for its deprivation of Palestine's entity. In this exclusion we find that the policy of neutrality is subjected to the interests of the Arab world and conforms with the policy of Arab solidarity.

The Government also aims, through application of the new trade policy, at protecting and developing local industries, and directing the capital towards these industries. Therefore, all imported goods are now subject to import licences; prohibition has been imposed on the import of such goods that are locally made and meet local demand, and limitation is observed on importation of goods locally produced but have not reached the required level.

### Classification of Imported Goods

One of the plans laid down by the authorities for regulating importation is the classification of imported goods into two categories according to the import licences granted. These two categories are:

1. Goods of restricted importation, for which a fixed quota is allotted for a year. This quota is distributed equally among importers by studying the allocated amounts with the number of applicants in the light of the principles laid down for each item.

2. Goods of unrestricted importation, for which an elastic policy is adopted. The authorities have the right to curtail or raise the quota of licences for importation of such goods according to local need.

### The Basis of Specialization

At the beginning of the second half of the year 1960, a new development took place in the policy of importation by the application of the basis of specialization, and overlooking the previous policy. That is to say, the specialization and experience of the merchant (importer) must be taken into consideration when distributing import licences.

The reasons that led the Directorate to follow this policy are:

1. The situation that called for the previous policy has changed now. As ample goods are available in the markets and warehouses, no increase in prices is envisaged.
2. To avoid freezing of capital in stored goods.
3. To limit the investment of capital in trade

so as to divert it towards industrial and construction undertakings and enterprises.

### The 1961 Plan:

In the last quarter of 1960 a committee consisting of highly qualified members, having wide commercial experience and knowledge in financial and economic affairs, was set up. Represented in this committee were the Banks, the Directorate General of Customs and Excise, the Ministry of Commerce (D.G. of Import and Export), the Central Bank of Iraq, the Federation of Industries, the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce and the Baghdad University. The committee studied extensively the trade policy with the interests of the national economy as their first and foremost aim and concluded a number of decisions to be the basis of a fruitful importation policy. The decisions were:

1. Protecting and developing the national industry.
2. Curtailing the deficit in the trade balance.
3. Managing foreign currency.
4. Curtailing the importation of unnecessary goods and encouraging importation of necessary consumptive goods, so as to avoid rise in prices, monopoly and smuggling.

The Directorate General of Import and Export took into consideration these basis for putting into effect the plan of 1961 and decided the following:

- (a) Fixing a maximum limit for the total value of licences granted annually in accordance with the balance sheet on one hand and the need of the country for production on the other. The Directorate made sure that this limitation shall be in conformity with the economy plans and the general

## OUR TRADE POLICY

policy of the Government, and that the maximum limit is sufficient to cover all possibilities which might arise and which might affect the balance sheet or revenues of the Government or the national income.

(b) Classification of imported goods into groups and distribution of the quota among them, taking into consideration the needs and requirements of the national economy. Classifications of the Central Bank should be referred to when necessary.

Priority is given to production goods, the necessary raw materials for industry and the essential materials for the construction of economy, and the necessary goods for local consumption. Restrictions are imposed upon the importation of consuming goods that are either unnecessary, or can be replaced by goods of similar qualities produced in Iraq, provided that this does not lead to scarcity of goods or to a rise in prices.

One of the results of the policy was the listing of sixteen new items on the list of prohibited items, making a total of forty eight prohibited items of importation. The reason for the increase is the rise of new local industries that have been able to meet local demands. This will gradually lessen importation of such goods at a time when the country hopes to realize a policy of self-sufficiency in connection with a number of items and to encourage exportation as a result of the country's progress and development in the various fields of production.

July 14 Exhibition

The Third Anniversary of The Immortal Revolution.



Training Tower of paratroopers installed by the Ministry of Defence in July 14 Exhibition



This is the third July 14 Exhibition established in 1959 on the first anniversary of the July Revolution. It takes place annually on the 14th of July and is open for one month.

The exhibition is divided into two main parts, the pavilions of Government Departments and the pavilions of national companies and individual enterprises.

Visitors to the exhibition can see in the pavilions of the national companies and enterprises assorted goods such as textiles-silk, woollen, cotton and nylon as well as cement, sugar, drugs, medical products and chemicals including perfumes, dyes and various kinds of soap.

A water fountain in the centre of the exhibition. The pavilions of the Ministries can be seen through the bright lights



Pavilion of the Ministry of Municipalities



Pavilion of the Army  
Factories for textiles  
and blankets



Model of a modern mosque. Pavilion of the Ministry of Housing

Naturally most exhibited products represent light industries, since national industry is in its initial stage, but the craftsmanship indicates the progress the country has already made in this field. The specimens exhibited could be said to excel those of foreign make available in the markets.

The exhibition reveals the gradual development in national industry from year to year. The visitor realises how constant the progress is and is reassured in his belief and confidence respecting the bright future of our country.

This year the number of companies and establishments that participated in the exhibition was fifty four whereas last year they were only thirty three, and the number of visitors this year was 1½ million. The sales at the exhibition doubled: the pavilion of the Government Spinning and Weaving Factory sold 8750 pieces of textiles when only 2000 pieces were expected to be sold during the month. The Army Factories Services sold 5000 dinars' worth of blankets in three weeks compared to the ID. 200 last year. This gives an idea of the great influence of the exhibition in the field of economic activities and its importance in the progress of the national market.

The July 14 Exhibition is a magnificent experiment. Though it was started only three years ago, it represents wide experience. Its organization is splendid, the exhibition of goods successful, and the entertainment attractive.

We are confident that in the success and progress displayed in the July 14 Exhibition lie the foundation for developing it into an International Fair in the near future.



The Government Oil Refinery. A unit for the development of Petrol

## "NEW IRAQ" on a Visit to the Algerian National Company



Scene from a play on the July 14 Stage

On the occasion of the third anniversary of the 14th July Revolution the Algerian National Company paid a visit to Iraq. The purpose of the visit was dual — to join the Iraqi people in the celebrations of the happy anniversary, and to introduce to them the exquisite talents of the Algerians.



One of the many performances presented by the company on the occasion of the third anniversary of the Iraqi Revolution

About two months ago our reporter interviewed the directors of a rising professional group — the Algerian National Company, then on a visit to Baghdad to take part in the celebrations of the third anniversary of the Iraqi Revolution. He met Mr. Al-Rayes, managing director, and Mr. Kateb, producer, who gave him a brief outline of the history and activities of the company.

Formed in 1958 in answer to a request made by the Algerian Executive Committee that preceded the Revolutionary Government, the company's first and foremost duty was to promote the interests of the national cause and bring out to the world a true picture of the cultural and artistic achievements of the Algerian people.

The first performance was in Tunis, then a number of tours were arranged — to Libya, Yugoslavia, China, Russia and Morocco.

The company specialises in folklore-national dancing, singing and music. In dancing, the original rhythm and movement are retained, but expression and theme are developed to suit the national purpose of the project. Plays of typically national nature are presented also. They deal with the struggle of the nation for liberty and independence. So far only two such plays have been produced, both written by Mr. al-Rayes, who is a well-known playwright. "The Sons of the Casbah" depicts the Algerian strife in the city; "The Immortals" shows the heroic sacrifice of the liberation army in the mountains. A third play will soon be produced — "Price of Liberty".

Mr. Kateb, answering a question, said that he and his group have been longing to visit Iraq, for they consider our country Algeria's best friend. The hearty and friendly reception given them by the Iraqis was more encouraging than any they have met before. He thinks that Iraq's complete

support of the Algerian cause, whether morally, materially or politically, is greatly appreciated by his countrymen, and hopes other Arab countries would contribute in the same way to help in the fight against colonial forces.

Mr. Al-Rayes, managing director, spoke of the literary material of the plays performed by the group. He himself, as we mentioned before, writes these plays. He relies on actual incidents, using the Algerian colloquial language. The players, the best his country has known, all cooperate to serve their cause.

Of the future plans of the company, Mr. Al-Rayes said that they all serve the Algerian Government and are therefore always ready to do their duty wherever they are ordered to. He expressed a wish to visit those countries that show no sympathy towards the Algerian movement — the NATO countries for example, to show their people the progress of the Algerians.

We wish the company all success in its mission, and the country freedom and independence.

#### Something about the company:

1. The company started with 20 members — to-day there are 28 including 3 ladies. There are 4 singers: Ahmed Wakbi, Ferid Ali, Tahir Bin Ahmed and Khalifa Mahmood.
2. Mr. Abdul Halim Al-Rayes, managing director and playwright, participated in writing, producing and performing for the broadcasting station in Algiers before the company was formed. He is 36, married, and father of one child.
3. Mr. Mustafa Kateb was a producer and actor at the Opera House in Algeria. He joined the FLN. He is 40, unmarried.



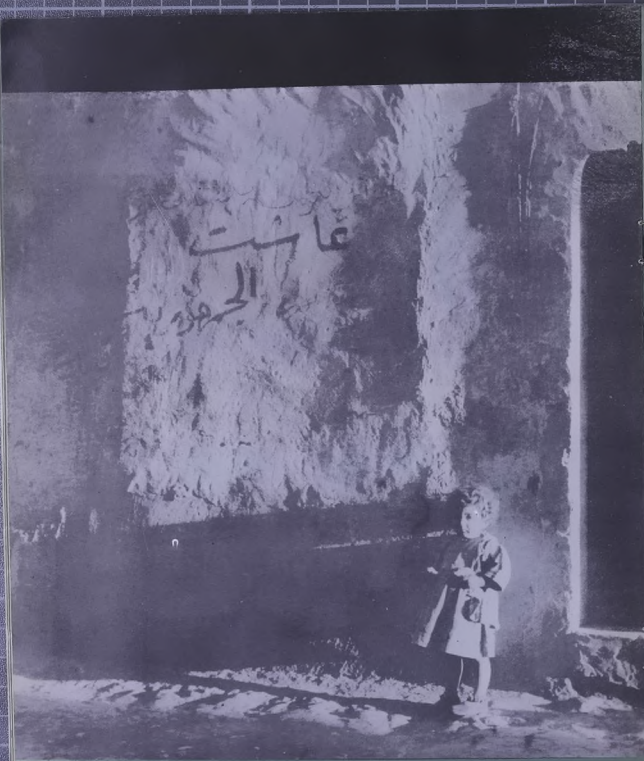
Mr. Kateb, the Company's Managing Director



Hind, an active member of the group



Algerian folkdance



## THE NATIONAL

# ELECTRICITY SERVICE

We will introduce civilization into every house, village and every town through the efforts of the National Electricity Service.

Abdul Karim Qassim

The National Electricity Service was set up in 1959 following a decision to this effect taken by the Council of Ministers the year before. Its administrative board was named, and the chairman was appointed Director General. The Service owns and runs the main power plants in Dehis, Baghdad and Basrah, the minor stations and all installations attached to them. It is also responsible for the execution of all electricity projects throughout the country, basing its services on a non-profit principle.

Work has already begun in the three main power plants: the central, northern and southern electric stations.

**The Central Area Electric Station** — includes four turbo units of a capacity of 20,000 k.w. each, and voltage of 11 k.v. The boilers each has a steam capacity of 100 tons p.h. and 44 kg. pressure per square centimeter and a temperature of 410°C.

The plant is built near Muaskar al-Rashid, Baghdad, and supplies electricity to the central part of Iraq, including the Liwas of Baghdad, Diyala, Rumedi, Kut, Hilli, Kerbala and Diwaniya.

**The Northern Area Electricity Station** — has four turbo units, capacity 15,000 k.w. each, voltage 11 k.v. It is situated near "Dehis" a village 40 km. north west of Kirkuk, and has been in operation since October 1959, and provides the northern Liwas (Kirkuk, Sulaimaniya, Erbil and Mosul) with electricity.

**The Southern Area Electricity Station** — in Najibiyyah, Basrah, where Gurmet Ali joins Shatt el-Arab. Its 3 turbo units have a capacity of 15,000 each, voltage 11 k.v. and boiler steam capacity 75 tons p.h., pressure 42 kg. per square centimeter and temperature 400°C. It serves the southern Liwas: Basrah, Nasiriyah and Umara.

Only the northern plant uses natural gas for fuel; the other two use Bunker 'C' oil but will later use natural gas after it has been made available.

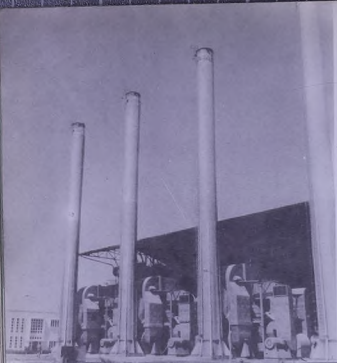
The National Electricity Service endeavours to provide good living conditions to its employees and workers. In all three main plants non-profit cafeterias were opened, also modern bathrooms with special closets for clothes and tools. Plans for the construction of houses for workers in Za'faraniyah (Baghdad) and Nejihiya (Basrah) are under study. In the northern area such houses have already been completed. There are also schools, shopping centres, casinos and rest houses.

The National Electricity Service is studying other plans connected with facilitating living conditions for workers in order to promote production and progress, and thus realise the Leader's promise:

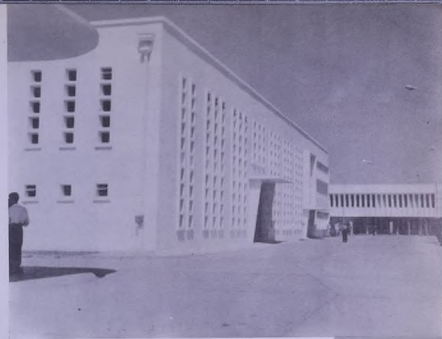
"As a result of the endeavours of the National Electricity Service, civilization will enter every house, village and town in this country".



One of the many electric plants found in all parts of the country



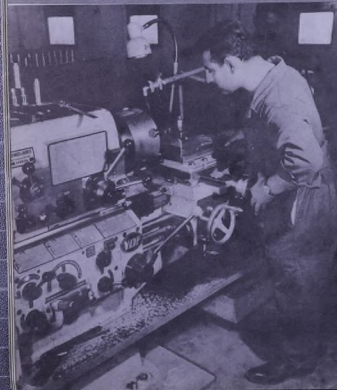
Central power plants on the west bank of Tigris near Muaskar al-Rashid



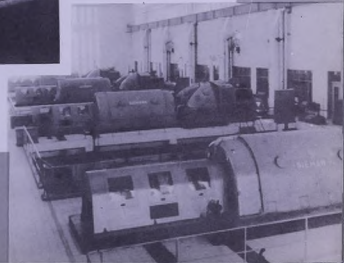
Control equipment, managed by expert technicians  
The workshop of the central electric plant where different kinds of spare parts are manufactured



The workshop of the central electric plant where different kinds of spare parts are manufactured



Scene inside the central electric plant



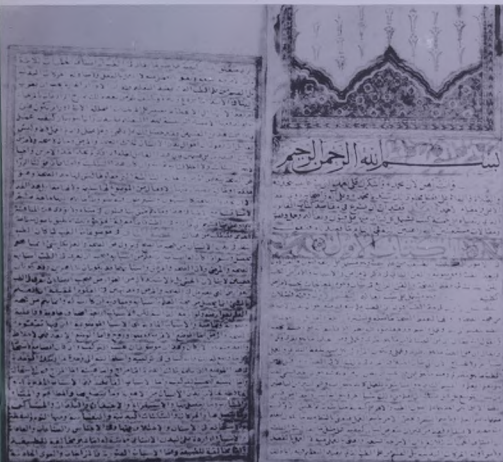


One of the many efficient workers at the workshop

## Cultural Centres in Old Baghdad.

### “THE MUSTANSIRIYA LIBRARY”

Bathrooms for workers —  
with closets for their  
clothes and tool-kits



First page of Avicenna's "Book of Medicine" dating to 1149 Hijra (1737 A.D.) in two volumes. This page deals with botany



The Mustansiriya School (1233 A.D.) enjoyed many of the characteristics of modern universities, and perhaps surpassed them in its perfect dietary system. This system was applied to all individuals connected with the school, students and non-students. The school was administratively and financially independent, and had its own private budget with a yearly income of about ID. 1,000,000, mainly from trusts and grants.

The Caliph al-Mustansir Billah, himself a great lover of learning and books, endeavoured to make this school what it came to be in the world of culture. To ensure scholarly and scientific education fitting for a university of that golden age of learning, he founded its famous library, and presented it with 80,000 volumes from his private library.

The Library operated along lines drawn by al-Mustansir. It had a three-man staff who received ample provisions in addition to their wages. It may be interesting to see this arrangement set down in the style of that period. The library was to have:

1. A keeper, to whom is allotted daily ten pounds of bread, four of meat, with vegetables and wood for the fire; also ten dinars in cash every month.
2. A supervisor who receives five pounds of bread, two of meat and three dinars a month.
3. A librarian, whose job is to hand books to readers; he receives four pounds of bread and a meal prepared in the school kitchens, and two dinars a month.

A fixed fee was charged for the use of the Library, for reading or scribing. Stationary for scribes was supplied free of charge.

#### The Mustansiriya Library:

The Library grew rapidly to become one of the most important cultural centres in Baghdad during the 7th and 8th centuries (Hijra). It housed 400,000 volumes dealing with different branches of knowledge. It became a mecca for scholars and researchers who came from all parts to benefit from its

treasures, and its halls witnessed the compositions of rare and valuable books.

To give an idea of the importance of this Library it is enough to mention here that the posts of keeper and supervisor were assigned only to great men of learning, men of established scholarly reputation.

Among the many who managed the Library was the well-known historian Abdul Razak Bin al-Footi, author of "Mojam al-Akbar" (in fifty volumes), and "Duraril Asdaf Fi Ghuraril Awsal" (in twenty volumes), and a biography of scholars numbering 500. He was appointed supervisor and then keeper of the Library. Another was Ibn al-Sa'ee, also a historian whose compositions neared 13 volumes. He was keeper at the Nidhamiyah School Library in Baghdad, then at the Mustansiriya Library. Another keeper was the renowned physician (Sinjer), Majidildin bin al-Sabbagh al-Baghdadi (688 Hijra).

The post of librarian, though secondary in importance, was also assigned to learned men, many of whom were known for their exquisite handwriting and scribing.

As was mentioned before, the Mustansiriya Library attained the peak of fame during the 7th and 8th centuries (Hijra). Its progress followed that of the Mustansiriya School. But in 795 Hijra (1392 A.D.) the fall of both school and library, as of all other centres of learning, took place with the first invasion of Taimurlink. Schools were closed, libraries ruined, books looted or burned. On his second invasion of the city at the beginning of the 9th century (Hijra), Taimurlink made sure that knowledge and learning breathed their last. Nothing was left of the Mustansiriya Library to indicate its greatness and the part it had in that age of enlightenment.

Later the school resumed its activities for a time, but the library never recovered its previous position.

An attempt to reconstruct the whole school has been made and the work is still in progress. In 1380 Hijra (1960 A.D.) restoration of its different parts neared completion. The authorities decided to make use of the parts already done, and now the east wing houses a collection of Arab Calligraphy (of which an account was given in a previous issue of this magazine). One of the halls in this wing, believed to have been the old library, is used now as a room for scripts. About 2,340 volumes have been removed to it from the library of the Iraqi Museum, a modest number indeed compared to what was brought from the Mustansir's library on its opening day. Yet the hopes are great that the library will develop and grow, for there exists a vast number of collections of rare scripts scattered in mosques, libraries and in private possession. When the present Mustansiriya Library comes into possession of these priceless collections it will restore the fame and renown of its predecessor.



A copy of the Holy Koran (Twelfth century Hijra)

A librarian at work



## The Rising Republic of Iraq and Modern Progress in Civil

### "New Iraq" on a visit to the Civil Aviation

Aviation

Service Institute.

The need for up-to-date airports fully equipped to receive modern and jet aircrafts has become more urgent as a result of the rapid progress civil aviation has achieved, and the constant increase in air transport throughout the world. Similarly, there is a great need for skilful technicians capable of supervising aircraft traffic and safety, and ready to offer the required services both before and after take-off.

Since tower contact with the plane by means of the latest telecommunication devices is of vital importance to the safety of the plane, as scientific and technical directions and instructions are by these means given to the pilot from starting till landing at destination, it was found necessary to develop these devices at the Baghdad Airport in order to meet the requirements of modern aviation.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation—a department attached to the Ministry of Communications—having international technical responsibility for facilitating and maintaining the safety of international air transit in Iraq, has always been keen on training its officials and employees in all technical fields connected with air control, meteorology, telecommunication, maintenance of the various technical equipments and fire rescue, all according to internationally approved programmes and instructions followed by all member states of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

#### New Preparations

Owing to the increase in civil air transport in Iraq and the rapid increase in world airlines, the Government decided to construct a modern airport which would be one of the largest in the Middle East. Sufficient funds have been allocated and world experts have been invited to arrange the execution of this project. All the necessary prelimi-

nary steps have been completed and the project is under the study of international tenderers for its execution.

#### The Civil Aviation Service Institute

In order to meet the necessary requirements of technical experts in the field of civil aviation, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has set up a special institute for training efficient experts. The Institute is situated near the present Air Port in a building designed by experts from the International Civil Aviation Organization together with Iraqi engineers. The Institute was inaugurated during the first anniversary of the Revolution in 1959.

#### Achievements of the Institute

The first course at the Institute was a six month course in air control, followed by an eighteen month course in meteorology and then a twelve month course in telecommunication equipment maintenance. Then followed a course in weather observation, a course in radio sound, and a course in teletype.

#### Regulations of the Institute

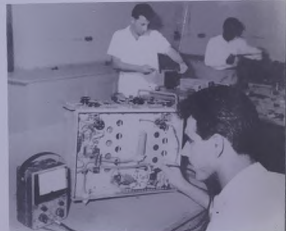
Instructing and teaching is conducted in English. Applicants from other departments are admitted. The students receive temporary daily wages, each according to his academic certificate or degree. After graduating, they are appointed in their special technical posts. In addition to training new officials and employees, the Institute also trains old officials in order to bring their technical knowledge up-to-date, and to acquaint them with the latest instructions circulated by International conferences of world organizations that have relationship with the various branches of aviation, as instructions change from time to time.



Students of Air Control Course training



An air controller directing a pilot during landing. Radio engineering instructor explaining the right way for setting up an apparatus.



Training in the workshop in repair and maintenance of wireless devices



An Iraqi lady training  
in Meteorological technics

### The Staff

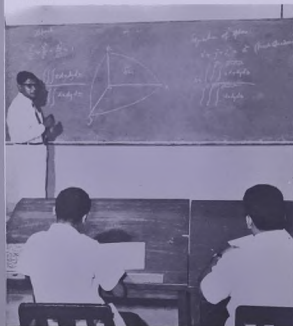
The staff at the Institute includes five foreign professors of different nationalities selected by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. The International Civil Aviation Organization or the International Meteorological Organization appoints these professors or deputs them to member states. Six Iraqi professors are selected from among the officials of th Directorate of Civil Aviation to teach at the Institute with the foreign professors.

The Institute is provided with audio-visual aids. There is a special section fitted with complete modern equipment, a theatre, tower, meteorological apparatus for surface and upper air observations, weather forecast training maps, teletype and other aids for training technicians in these fields. The Graduates of this Institute receive certificates authorising them to work in civil aviation within their specialization. Advanced graduates are sent abroad to continue their training and gain experience in their respective fields.

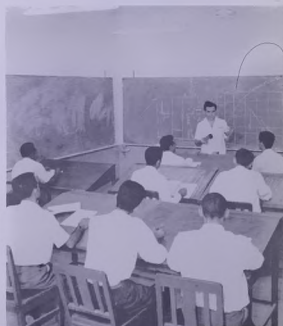


An expert from the International Civil Aviation  
Organization giving a lecture in advanced mathe-  
matics

An expert from the International Civil Aviation  
Organization giving a lecture in advanced mathe-  
matics



An instructor explaining to students  
the use of an apparatus sent by balloons to study  
higher altitudes



An air information instructor showing the students  
how to draw air maps





## Construction Movement in the Capital.

### July 14 Casino and Recreation Grounds

- Following the policy laid down by the Government for the construction and improvement of the Capital, the Amanat al-Asima (the Baghdad City Council) has undertaken the construction of July 14 Casino and Recreation Grounds which were inaugurated by Maj-Gen. Abdul Kerim Kassim last July during the third anniversary celebrations of the glorious Revolution.
- The Casino is situated close to the Baghdad Airport, at the crossroads that connect Baghdad with neighbouring Arab countries, and with the southern provinces of Iraq.
- The place is considered the pride of architecture in Baghdad for its elegant style, the beauty of its gardens and the arrangement of

**The July 14 Casino and Recreation Grounds.**  
A wonderful collection of photographs displaying modern architecture in modern Iraq

saloons and fun grounds, and above all for its having the most up-to-date casino in Baghdad.

- The Casino is beautifully designed in the shape of an aeroplane. It consists of three parts. The first, which is the main building, covering about 3000 square meters, is made up of two stories: the upper is a glass enclosed area, with a concrete ceiling in the form of huge plane wings; the other is a vast, open area reached by stairs and slopes passing over water fountains and beautiful gardens. The main building has a bar, a kitchen and a veranda overlooking the garden and fountains.
- The second section is the cabaret where entertainments are held. It consists of a lawn and fourteen balconies paved with red bricks, a dance floor, an out-door bar and a stage.



- The paths leading to this cabaret are designed in the shape of an octopus.
- The third section includes the roads, parking places and entrances. It has been charmingly and attractively designed to ensure easy and smooth traffic into and out of the casino. The whole place shows conformity and elegance that are both pleasing and breathtaking.



## ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA:

### A LIGHT THAT DID NOT FAIL

This is an article by Professor E.A. Speiser, formerly Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Baghdad, and Chairman of the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A. The work was published in the National Geographic Magazine, January, 1951. It contains a valuable collection of plates that feature different stages in the development of Mesopotamian Civilization.

According to Prof. Speiser, Mesopotamia gives "tremendous perspective" to modern civilization. Its history covers the slow stages of the evolution of man and the different civilizations accumulated all along several millenniums of steady progress to end with our modern culture.

Unlike the rest of the ancient Middle East, Mesopotamia has left clear, unblurred passages, showing the successive progress of civilization. The reason lies in the vast number of written records left behind, and in the nature of Mesopotamian ancient sites.

The Mesopotamian mounds have a unique feature: They are accumulation of rungs that take us back to periods preceding written history. They tell the story of mankind in closely linked chains.

Prof. Speiser bases this work on the astounding discoveries he made during his mission to Iraq, which proved to be of greatest value in the study of ancient civilization and its development.

In 1927 he headed an expedition to explore prehistoric sites in Iraq. While covering the area north of Mosul he was attracted by a mound rising 75 feet above the ground. A preliminary examination of surface remains indicated that the mound was partly a record of unknown times piled up about 50 feet. The mound contained twenty six occupation levels of which only the upper six fall within the historic age. Here at last was a site consisting of successive prehistoric levels that could explain the story of man since the beginning of agriculture.

This was Tepe Gawra (The Great Mound). The excavation results exceeded the Professor's expectations. After careful examination of these levels he came to the conclusion that the Mesopotamian civilization was primarily of a cosmopolitan nature. Different distinctive cultures, varying in tradition and nature succeeded each other, each contributing to the original civilization and helping to carry it to other countries.

The Professor gives an outline of the newly discovered history of civilization.

The initial stage was the last prehistoric phase of the evolution of mankind, lasting roughly until about 3000 B.C. It covers the last Neolithic (stone-age) settlements and the whole of the Chalcolithic (copper-stone) period. Prof. Speiser asserts that this was by no means a primitive phase. There were several cultures, each had its own perfected arts and maintained at the same time, active relations with neighbouring cultures.

The historic age was introduced by two revolutionary factors: metallurgy and writing. The first changed the concept of space by stimulating geographical explorations; the second, a Mesopotamian development, changed the concept of time by linking the past and the present, the present and the future.

With the invention of writing we come to know the principal actors in Mesopotamian civilization.

In Lower Mesopotamia the Sumerians came from unknown regions and settled there. Prof. Speiser thinks that they could have introduced metallurgy into the country since the appearance of metallurgy in Tepe Gawra corresponds with the introduction of a new element of settlers in the south, who were later known as the Sumerians. They were gifted people. Their arts and skills blended perfectly with the Mesopotamian culture; their strength and culture dominated the greater part of the third millennium, under the Early Dynasty. Their civilization spread quickly and

wide, influencing other cultures to a great extent.

A period followed when the Semeitic element came into power under the leadership of Sargon of Akkad. Both cultures blended and complemented each other. After the neo-Sumerian period, toward the end of the millennium, Sumerian power dwindled and eventually came to an end. But the culture they had developed had spread to distant realms to be adopted, and, later, brought back to the motherland by invading nations. Their language continued to be the language of religion and science for the next three millenniums. Their culture expanded and branched into two channels. In the south the Babylonians guarded it. Their power reached its peak during the 18th and early 17th century B.C., under Hammurabi.

In the north Ashur attained prominence and its state became a world empire. While Babylon was culturally superior, Ashur was the stronger of the two, politically and militarily. They took turns in dominating the country until they were both subjected to foreign rule. The invaders came from the mountains in the north attracted by the fertile valley. Babylon was conquered by the Kassites, Ashur by the Hurrians who ruled Palestine, Syria, Asia, Minor and Assyria.

But political power was not enough to keep the Hurrian's military victories; culture, the essence of might, was missing. Soon Ashur and Babylon emancipated themselves.

There followed a period of unequalled growth and expansion of the two nations during the first millennium. The Assyrian Kings were successful warriors and they conquered the Egyptians, long-time rivals of Mesopotamians (7th century). However, soon followed the fall of their empire after the combined attacks of Medes and Babylonians in 612 B.C.

Decades later Babylon was conquered by Cyrus of Persia (539 B.C.) after it had enjoyed a brief golden age under Nebukadnesser II.

Like the Medes, Kassites and Hurrians before them the Persians derived their strength from the cultural influence exerted by Mesopotamia during a period of three millenniums. In spite of the Persian conquest, Babylon kept its cultural career. Two centuries later Alexander the Great made the city his capital, a thing that Prof. Speiser considers "a telling tribute to the country's Prestige throughout the civilized world". The death of Alexander brought an end to Babylon, to Mesopotamia and to its age-old culture. Nevertheless different elements of this culture blended with other cultures and found channels into the western civilizations and eventually came down to us again.

#### A Way of Life Endures:

In Prof. Speiser's opinion, the Mesopotamian civilization survived even after the collapse of the state mainly because of the Mesopotamians' way in adjusting themselves to nature and society.

Nature to the ancient Mesopotamians was "a combination of capricious and violent forces, each personified by one or more gods". Because the actions of the gods were unpredictable, life for the ordinary man was uncertain; he had to please them for his own good. This applied to the king as well, for the king in Mesopotamia was also a mortal "subject in his submission to the gods", and not supernatural as in Egypt. In this respect all men were equal. It followed then that the rights and responsibilities of man decided the place of society in nature. Here we have the essential foundation of democracy.

The uniform writing is the oldest writing in history



Since all men were equal, and since the king was a mortal and liable to fault, it was natural for him to seek advice when making decisions rather than act on his own and commit a fatal error. Assembly approval became so essential that even the gods resorted to it. This meant parliamentary democracy.

Equality of men before the law means personal dignity and security which encourage a sense of property and hope.

This rudimentary form of democracy was considered by the Mesopotamians as the "essence of civilized life". No wonder it appealed not only to the inhabitants of Mesopotamia but those nations that came in contact with them as well.

#### The Key Position of Writing, Law and Literature:

The key to all the development and progress of this culture was writing, a by-product of the Sumerian philosophy and local system of life. The sense of private property led the Sumerians to identify their property and possessions, and their gifts to the gods, using personal markers (cylinder seals). Gradually the use of notations extended to names of objects and then words, and finally syllables. The last was a decisive step in moving from the concrete to the abstract, thus "resulting in a flexible medium for recording speech and thought". The next step-developing from the syllabic to the alphabetic-was the achievement of another Middle Eastern nation.

Writing promoted sciences, like linguistics, mathematics and astronomy, law and literature. Sumerian was essential beside any other mother-tongue. By the end of the third millennium scholars had produced bilingual texts with translations and explanations.

Law was a fundamental element in the cultural structure of Mesopotamia. It was the charter of human rights that guided the king, who was the servant of the law, responsible before the gods for its enactment. It also regulated social life. The code of Hammurabi, besides being a charter of human rights, was a book of instructions on family, society, government, commerce, arts and crafts and professions.

Uniform script and the Akkadian language were studied throughout the western civilized world. In the second millennium Mesopotamian epics were taught to scholars and diplomats in Egypt.

Mesopotamian literature was also adopted, its epic literature was especially popular. The immortal tale of Gilgamesh was translated into four languages in the middle of the second millennium, and some of the best Greek epics, the "Odyssey" and the legend of "Uranus and Cronus" could be traced back to Mesopotamian origins. Even the Old Testament did not escape the influence of Mesopotamian culture, especially in its concept of law.

Prof. Speiser sums up his admirable treatment of this subject by emphasizing the fact that "the ideals that have sustained mankind to this day are in many ways the same ideals that were tested and refined in the magnificent laboratory which Mesopotamia maintained during the thousands of years of its historic progress". He adds that in the study of this civilization the vital elements to look for "are law and writing, and beyond these the abiding sense of the rights and obligations of the individual in a changing and dramatic world-pointing a way to hope in man's struggle for civilization".

A delicately designed face of a woman made of ivory discovered in the ruins of the Assyrian Capital, Nimrud, (Kalah) dating to the eighth century B.C.







View of Shahrabazar (Chwarta) — by Othman, Sulaimaniya

## THE READERS' ALBUM



Spring in Mosul —  
by Perchanik Tatossian



Sulaimaniya Rest House — by Ali Hamdani



A view of Basrah —  
by A. Amir al-Zubaidi, Baghdad



Sarwa Lake, Near Halaboha — by Safwat Rashid  
Sudki, Baghdad

### "ATA SABRI"

- Born in Baghdad 1913.
- Brought up in an artistic environment from childhood as his father was also an artist.
- Graduated from the Primary Teachers' College and was appointed a teacher in Baghdad.
- Was granted a scholarship to study drawing and painting at the Royal Academy for Arts in Rome in 1937.
- Returned to Iraq in 1940 because of the second world war without having finished his studies.
- Was sent by the government to London in 1946 to study at Slade School, London University, then went to Goldsmith for two years and returned to Slade School to finish his studies there.
- Took part in several exhibitions, both national and international, among which was the private exhibition he held in Hampstead in London. He was chairman of the Administrative and Organization Committee.
- An independent artist who follows a gentle academic style and prefers drawing landscape in this country.

## IRAQI

## ARTISTS



# NEW IRAQ

