

Politics and Religion in Iraq and Syria: What is the Ba'ath Party?

By [Jason Langley](#)

Global Research, January 16, 2013

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Religion](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#), [SYRIA](#)

The Ba'ath Party was made famous in the West by the late Iraqi dictator and one-time ally of the United States Saddam Hussein[1]. It is largely regarded in the West as something to be associated with the most "evil of evils" since the 1991 Gulf War.

As NATO/GCC backed mercenaries and ultra-conservative Islamic militias battle the Government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, the Ba'ath Party is once more a phrase that is popping up in the Western mainstream media, mentioned in the kind of tones one would associate with when referring to Nazi Germany. But what exactly is the Ba'ath Party? How did it start? What does it actually stand for? And why are Western media consumers nagged into blind opposition against it by their leaders and the mainstream media?

The Ba'ath Party began in Syria in April 1947, formed by the merging of Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar's Arab Ba'ath Movement and Zaki al-Arsuzi's Arab Ba'ath. The newly formed Party's objectives were secularism, socialism, and pan-Arab unification, as well as freedom from Western influence.[2] To that end, the Party was influential in securing independence for Syria from France, and took control of the country in 1963, holding it ever since. However, all was not plain sailing for the Party in the early days, with bitter in-fighting between progressive elements and those of a more nationalist flavour. Eventually, the nationalists won control, bringing the al-Assads to power.

In July 1968, Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr, predecessor to Saddam Hussein, led the Ba'ath Party to victory in a bloodless coup in Iraq. The Party ruled Iraq until Hussein's overthrow by the United States and its Coalition of the Willing in 2003 under the pretext that Saddam Hussein was involved in the September 11 2001 attacks on the US, that he had weapons of mass destruction, that he was ready to use them and could do so in forty five minutes, and various other excuses that, at best, have turned out to be outright lies.

After Hussein's regime was toppled by the Coalition, the Ba'ath Party was outlawed in Iraq, an act which some suggest helped fuel Sunni elements of the insurgency that followed.

And now, it seems, decision-makers in the West have decided that it is the turn of Syria's Ba'athists to fall. While many could look at Iraq and say with great confidence that Iraq was a resource grab targeting Iraq's oil, as well as a money making exercise for mercenary companies, arms manufacturers, mega-corporations like Halliburton and its subsidiaries, and the banking cartels, Syria is different. Syria produces oil, yes, but nowhere near the scale that Iraq does.

Syria's closeness with Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah will obviously stand out as a reason

why the US, Israel, the EU, and the GCC want Assad's government gone. But factoring in the Ba'ath Party's three objectives of secularism, socialism, and pan-Arab unification, we see more ideological reasons, as well as the motivation for the militias operating under the Al Qaeda and Muslim Brotherhood umbrellas.

Starting with pan-Arab unification, one is reminded of the line "united we stand, divided we fall". A united Arab people is an idea that is utterly intolerable to the colonialists of the West, who rely on division and playing indigenous peoples off against each other to get their way in the region, allowing the blood to flow while they go about their business.

A fine example of this can be found in the incident in 2005, when heavily armed British SAS soldiers were captured in Basra, Iraq, after shooting at police officers while dressed as locals.[3] It appears that the British were hoping to provoke a response from locals who would blame their particular demographic's main 'rival' demographic and seek revenge. And with the West's propensity for false flag attacks, one may well ask just how many of the countless bombings, shootings, and similar atrocities that the Iraqi populace suffered - and are still suffering today - were in fact the responsibility of covert Western agents playing the divide and conquer game.

Socialism is obviously not something the West's capitalist masters will tolerate. Great effort has been made to nullify the threat that 'socialism' poses to the current paradigm in the West, as we can see with centre-left mainstream parties in Britain, France and so on becoming centre-left in name only, their policies and actions undermining their marketing. Grass roots left-wing political organisations are largely marginalised in the national political discourses of the major powers of NATO. Western media outlets tailored to consumers of a conservative bent spend a lot of time and effort scaremongering over socialism.

Leftist, socialist, communist, Maoist, Marxist, Leninist, and so on are phrases that are used to induce negative responses and as shortcuts to winning public debates by conservatives, regardless of the differences in actual meaning between the terms. Many conservatives in the West, particularly in the United States, equate the word socialism with the spectre of the Soviet Union, its mere utterance enough to cause many over a certain age flashbacks of the Cold War.

And then there is secularism, an idea abhorrent to Saudi Arabia and the US client-emirates, as well as the ultra-conservative Islamic groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, who dominate the rebel movement in Syria.[4] Saudi Arabia is one of the foremost exporters of radical Islamic ideology in the world, and has a human rights record that makes medieval Europe look positively progressive in nature.

Meanwhile, Western leaders are happy for ignorance to flourish at home, and with many media consumers in the NATO bloc mistakenly assuming that all Arabs are Muslim, it may come as a surprise to many that among the founders of the Ba'ath party, Michel Aflaq was actually Greek Orthodox Christian, while al-Bitar was Sunni Muslim, and al-Arsuzi was an Alawite. This same ignorance is what allows Israel to portray its systematic violence against the Palestinians as defending Judaism against Islam to Western audiences. You will rarely hear about secular and Christian Palestinians, and even less the Druze, from the mainstream media.

As it has often been said, it does not serve the governments of the West to have an informed public who may actually question the official narrative that they are fed by the

vast propaganda/infotainment machine of the US and Europe if they knew a little more about the history and the motivations behind world events.

And while the primary motivation behind the attempt to topple the Ba'ath Party in Syria may be for the strategic benefit of the Israelis and the US in their quest against Iran, there are other motivating factors that should not be ignored, for they help us to see a more complete picture.

Notes

1. <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/08/18/1029114048796.html>
2. <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/history/baath-party.html>
3. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/british-uncover-operation-in-basra-agents-provocateurs/990>
4. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/unmasking-the-muslim-brotherhood-syria-egypt-and-beyond/5315406>

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Jason Langley](#), Global Research, 2013

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Jason Langley](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca