

## The Evolution of Iraqi and Polish Economic Relations Between 1963-1979

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### *Abstract*

*With the assistance of numerous socialist nations, particularly the Polish government, the government dedicated emphasis to the growth of the economic element, especially when the state became republican. Numerous contracts and economic-related conventions have been reached as a result of the expansion of commercial activity between the two nations. Given that following World War II, these agreements played a significant role in establishing control over the nation's riches. It is also the most potent tool for influencing international relations and foreign policy in a variety of nations, including Iraq.*

*Many elements came together to influence the researcher's choice of subject, chief among them the fact that few academics have written on the history of Iraqi economic diplomacy and its effects on foreign policy, particularly with Poland. On the one hand, the obsession with the lack of references and the difficulty of obtaining historical information constituted an obstacle for researchers. On the other hand, the time frame of the research is seen as a transitional period, both in terms of Iraqi foreign policy and diplomacy history and in terms of the country's modern history. It witnessed the openness of foreign policy to the western (capitalist) and eastern (socialist) camps, as well as the enrichment of Iraqi and Arab libraries with a new investigation into the economic realities of Iraq, particularly in light of its international business contacts.*

*Keywords: economic relations, economic exhibitions, economic exhibitions, agricultural cooperation, transportation and communications.*

### **Introduction**

The two countries' relationships extended beyond just the diplomatic sphere to encompass the economic sphere as well. It is important to note that during the rule of the king, there was little commercial exchange between the two nations. However, with the

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revolution of July 14, 1958, and the proclamation of the republican government, traces of cooperative economic action started to emerge. The mutual visits between the two parties began, and the first of these visits was to the Polish commercial attaché in Beirut, Mr. Jubinski, to the Iraqi Minister of Economy, Ibrahim Kubba, on October 22, 1958. They discussed how the economic activity between the two countries could develop.

Many agreements aimed at fostering economic activity were reached as a result of the Iraqi government's efforts, particularly in the 1970s of the 20th century. Not just the aforementioned are examples of economic collaboration. Cooperation also existed in the area of exhibits. These shows are very significant for promoting economic globalization and understanding other nations' marketplaces. Additionally, it provides chances for international collaboration. Therefore, the Polish government was keen to hold economic exhibitions inside and outside it, and invited Iraqi officials to exhibit them. In addition to holding exhibitions of a commercial nature in Baghdad, and the most important of these exhibitions is the Baghdad International Fair in its many sessions.

#### Industrial cooperation

Industry is a branch of the economy in general, through which services and goods are produced, and it is the only sector through which natural resources can be extracted and then transferred to productive uses. One of the most important features of the Iraqi industrial sector during that stage is its adoption of the socialist method that was prevalent in most socialist countries. It is important to note that the industrial sector in Iraq has experienced a delay for a number of reasons. As a result, the Iraqi government has come to understand how crucial it is to advance this industry through national growth (Al-pumice, (1973), p9).

One of the most important features of this sector during the study period is its adoption of planning as a method for developing this aspect, which ultimately leads to the construction of a large industrial base that relies on the public sector. In the end, it leads to the development of the Iraqi industrial movement (libd, p18)

After the revolution of July 14, 1958, the Iraqi government tended to promote interest in industrial investment by creating economic strategies that might be used to expand this sector. The passage of Law No. (74) of 1959, by which new ministries representing agrarian reform, municipalities, industry, oil, works, and others were founded, was one of the most significant steps the Iraqi government took. Additionally, the Iraqi government has started to improve relations. If the Polish Minister of Chemical Industries invited an Iraqi team, led by Dr. Saadoun Hammadi, the Minister of Oil and Minerals, to visit, and if

talks for cooperation in this area took place there. The conclusion of an agreement for commercial and technological cooperation was another topic of conversation between the two parties (Al-Samurai, (1978), p21)

The delegation included the President of the National Metals Company, seven other technicians from the company, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Economy and Oil, and the General Organization for Industrial Design and Construction. Cooperation in this field did not stop at this point, as the Iraqi government sought to benefit from Polish expertise in the field of construction (Tariq al-Shaab, (1973), No47)

A ten-day tour was initiated by an Iraqi team led by Mr. Qassem Al-Oraibi, the chairman of the General Organization for Construction Industries. This visit was made with the intention of concluding the negotiations for the construction of the thermostone factory, which was chosen to be located in Basra Governorate. The team also received an update on the status of Polish industrial initiatives and institutions (libd).

#### Section one: commercial cooperation

The trade agreement concluded between Iraq and Poland on January 1, 1959 constituted the cornerstone of commercial relations between the two countries. This agreement came in accordance with the mutual benefits and the desire of the two countries to develop their commercial relations (Al-Waqea' Al-Iraqiya (1959), No. 123). As a result, the Iraqi government worked to improve its business ties with the Polish government. The Polish Minister of Foreign Trade was invited by the Iraqi government in order to document these intentions, and the Iraqi government paid for the Polish delegation's whole stay within the country.

This call came as a result of the positions of the Polish government in solidarity with the Arab peoples and its rejection of the actions of the Zionists. As well as the cleansing campaign launched against Zionist elements in Poland. Likewise, no Polish official visited Iraq (D.K.W, Cabinet Resolutions of 1968, Decision No. 2, dated 5/21/1968).

The agreements and conventions reached between the two countries control trade connections between them. On June 30, 1973, one of these agreements—one governing payments and business relations—was completed. The desire of the two nations to advance their business relations was one of the factors that led to the conclusion of this agreement (Al-Waqea' Al-Iraqiya (1973), No. 2277).

One of the most important aspects of this agreement in terms of oil cooperation is supplying the Polish government with crude oil. But at the same time, the Iraqi government refused to work the Polish crew on Iraqi oil tankers. Despite the official and mutual visits between the

two countries due to the high prices of the Polish offer (D.K.W (1973), Ministry of Planning, and 4, p. 131).

Among the most important goods that Iraq imported from Poland (D.K.W, Ministry of Planning, (1976), p. 133.

Goods imported	Year	value	year	value
soft sugar	1976	2308.6	1977	—
Cement making machines	—	165.4	—	1071.1
Electrical devices	—	170.3	—	1570.0
buses	—	775.4	—	1409.7

Early exchanges of economic delegations between the two countries had a significant positive influence on their trading relations. A business delegation was led by Mr. Saadoun Hammadi, the minister of oil and minerals. The purpose of such trip was to agree to repay the loans provided by the Polish government with crude oil and to make the best possible use of the loans provided by the Polish government within the agreements reached. Similar to that, an agreement was reached to improve the trade balance between Iraq and Poland by setting prices for imported and exported goods, machinery, and equipment (Al-Jumhuriya (1972), No. 234).

The first commercial plan between the two countries was drawn up in 1975 and included the ratio of exports and imports (D.K.W, Ministry of Planning (1975), p. 122.

Year	Imports	Exports	Ratio of exports to imports
1973	4,175	216	4,4%
1974	10,495	74	0,7%
1975	14,276	105	1,7%
1976	12,649	165	1,3%

Section Two: Cooperation in the field of transportation and communication

Iraq's land transportation regulations have been maintained by successive governments in the nation. where a land and railroad transport corporation was founded with that goal in mind. In this regard, the Polish Kolux Corporation and the Iraqi Minister of Transport and Communications signed a purchase agreement in October 1973 to acquire 150 trucks for 3,060,000\$. The aim was to purchase those trucks, which amounted to eight thousand and one hundred tons, for the purpose of transporting sulfur from the fields of Al-Mishraq (Tariq al-Shaab (1973), No. 25).

There is no doubt that the purchase of these trucks contributed to the transportation of goods and merchandise in the field of export. In order to make the most of the advanced Polish experiences in the field of transport, the Iraqi government sent a technical delegation in this field headed by the Minister of Transport and Communications, Dr. Rashid Al-Rifai, for the purpose of increasing cooperation in the field of telecommunications and postal services between the two countries. As well as acquainting him with the Polish institutions in this field (Al-Thawra (1974), No. 1757).

This visit had fruitful results for the two countries. After reviewing a number of factories in the field of transport and shipbuilding, a work program was signed between the Ministries of Post and Telecommunications of the two countries. In addition to signing an appendix for cooperation between the two countries in all fields of transport (Al-Thawra (1974), No. 1762).

In reaction to this visit, Mr. Edward Kovaljk, the Polish Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, traveled to Iraq at the request of Mr. Saadoun Ghaidan, a former member of the Leadership Council. The two countries' relations in the post- and telecommunications sectors were to be improved, and discussions were held in order to sign a joint record of cooperation between the two ministries. The Polish team was briefed on the cable and wireless institutions as well as several tourist and archaeological sites, and they voiced their respect for the Iraqi government's attention in this aspect (Tariq al-Shaab (1977), Nos. 1045 and 1046).

Official visits between the two countries continued with the aim of developing relations in the field of transport. The Iraqi Ministry of Transport invited the Polish Ministry of Transport. The Polish government responded to the invitation and sent a delegation headed by Undersecretary of the Polish Minister of Transport, Mr. Andrzej Markowski. The aim of that invitation was to enhance cooperation and exchange of experiences between the two ministries (Tariq al-Shaab (1978) No. 1469). The delegation was received by the Iraqi Minister of Transport, Dr. Makram Jamal, who expressed his hope that this visit would contribute to increasing cooperation in this field (Tariq al-Shaab (1978), No. 1471). Talks began between the delegations of the two countries, and the Iraqi side was headed by Undersecretary Dr. Suhail Muhammad Salih, while the Polish side was headed by Mr. Andrzej Markowski (the same source).

The conclusion of those extensive discussions between the two countries saw the signing of a joint statement of cooperation. Where the minutes called for enhancing and expanding collaboration between the two nations in the fields of transportation and communications, particularly rail and water transportation (land transport). Additionally, according to Tariq al-Shaab (1978) No. 1472,

the Polish government promised to give the Iraqi government with all the cadres it requires in this regard.

### Section Three: Agricultural Cooperation

In most economies across the world, established or developing, the agriculture industry has a favorable place among the basic production sectors (Al-Samarrai, Iraq Resources 1975, p. 24). The Iraqi government has sought to spread collective and cooperative relations in the agricultural sector. And also to the creation of new agricultural relations and socialist patterns by organizing the peasants in state farms. Seriously provide agricultural cooperatives and collective farms. This can be done by mobilizing the masses and taking the necessary political and economic measures to increase production in the socialist sector (Seventh Agricultural Congress, 1977, p. 21).

The Iraqi government issued several laws aimed at promoting the agricultural sector. The Agricultural Council was established under Law 116 of 1970. This council was granted great powers to manage the agricultural sector. The Iraqi government also issued the Agrarian Reform Law 117 of 1970, which was carried out through the establishment of peasant associations, cooperatives, and state farms (Al-Waqea' Al-Iraqiya (1970), No. 1884).

For the purpose of benefiting from the experiences of the Polish government in developing the agricultural aspect, the government sent an official delegation headed by the Undersecretary of the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. The aim of that visit was to strengthen the existing relations and cooperation between the two countries, examine the soil, reclaim the land, organize irrigation, manage agricultural mechanization units, and design animal and agricultural fields along the lines of the Polish organization (Tariq al-Shaab (1974), No. 180).

On this basis, the Iraqi government cooperated with the socialist countries, especially the Polish government. A Polish delegation of twelve experts arrived in Baghdad, headed by the Undersecretary of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Andrzej Kassala. This visit came at the invitation of the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. The two sides discussed ways to develop relations between the two countries in the agricultural field and how Polish institutions could implement a number of projects to develop livestock and agricultural wealth inside the country (Al-Thawra (1974), No. 1874).

The talks between the two parties resulted in the possibility of Poland contributing to the reclamation of large lands from the large Abu Ghraib and Dujaila projects, the establishment of an agricultural complex and the establishment of two large farms belonging to the state. They also agreed to establish a large project for the production

of eggs and other projects related to livestock (Al-Thawra (1974), No. 1875).

Negotiations continued between the two sides. On the second day, it resulted in the possibility of the Polish government contributing to the establishment of agricultural complexes in the Al Nai projects in Diyala Governorate and Hor Rajabti in the same governorate. Three committees emerged from the meeting to prepare the agricultural and technical cooperation protocol between the two countries. Which emphasized the establishment of training centers for Iraqi agricultural cadres, as well as sending many of them abroad (Al-Thawra (1974), No. 1880, Al-Thawra (1974), No. 1881).

On August 12, 1974, in Warsaw, an agreement on collaboration between the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform marked the end of the relations between the two nations. The administrations of the two countries wanted to enhance and improve their agricultural connections, which led to the conclusion of this agreement (Al-Waqea' Al-Iraqiya (1975), No. 2453).

#### Fourth Section: Economic Exhibitions

##### Baghdad International Fair

Between the two countries, a number of exhibits of a commercial character were held. The Baghdad International Exhibition, which was founded in 1957, is the most significant of these exhibitions. It used to be known as the Agricultural Industrial Exhibition and featured domestic goods. It was run by the Baghdad District Mutasarrifate (Hussein, 2020, p. 182). The exhibition was attached to the Iraqi Exhibitions Authority, which was established in 1959. Since that time, it has been called the July 14 Exhibition under Law No. 21 of 1959 and became affiliated with the Ministry of Economy (Al-Waqea' Al-Iraqiya (1959) No. 131).

The exhibition has gained international status since 1964 and is considered the real beginning of it. Five Arab countries participated in it, Kuwait-Syria-Egypt-Jordan-Lebanon, and the exhibition began to develop and flourish, and it has specific sessions to be held every year. In the beginning, it lasted from October 1 to October 20, i.e. a period of twenty years (Hussein 2020, p. 182, Al-Thawra (1973), Issue 1561). However, later this period was shortened during its fourteenth session in 1977, and it was held from the first to the fifteenth of October every year (Al-Thawra (1976, Issue 2401).

The exhibition had other contributions. It is considered a technical and applied institute through which Iraqi universities can benefit from it in conducting field research in the fields of chemistry and other fields (Tariq al-Shaab (1977), No. 1227). The exhibition is one of the interfaces of economic cooperation between the two countries,

especially since its ninth session held in 1972 (Al-Jumhuriya (1972), No. 1513). This session of the exhibition is considered a major economic event, as the number of participating countries reached twenty-four countries, including Poland, and one hundred and seventy-five companies (Al-Thawra (1972), No. 1480). The Polish pavilion in the exhibition occupied an area of forty-six square kilometers in which its economic products were displayed (Al-Thawra (1972), NO 1519).

The Counselor at the Polish Embassy, Mr. Michel Sir, who attended the exhibition, indicated his country's readiness to provide the Iraqi government with devices and equipment to develop the economic aspect. Especially after the conclusion of the economic and technical cooperation agreement in the same year, which represented the basis for the exchange of relations between the two countries (the same source). As for the tenth session of the exhibition, which was held in October 1973, twenty-three countries participated in it, including Poland. Two hundred and sixty-two foreign companies and institutions belonging to nineteen countries and ninety-nine Iraqi companies from the public and private sectors participated (Hussein, the previous source, p. 185).

#### Conclusion

1. Despite the creation of diplomatic connections from an early date, beginning in 1927, they were weak and relatively infrequent before the revolution of July 14, 1958.
2. Both exports and imports made up a sizable portion of the two countries' commerce. The development of commerce, both domestically and internationally, was impacted by the economic agreements that Iraq and the other side reached.
3. As a result of Polish agricultural professionals playing a significant part in developing plans for agricultural projects and constructing numerous state farms, the economic ties between the two countries saw the rise of the agricultural aspect and irrigation projects.
4. As a consequence of the interchange of specialists and economic cadres, the economic exhibits staged in Baghdad and Warsaw were instrumental in the development of the economic aspect between the two nations.

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