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In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

This day I have perfected your
religion for you and completed
my favor to you. I have approved
Islam to be your religion

(From Surat Al-Maida - verse (3))

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9. The paper should be supplemented with a bibliography of the sources used separate from endnotes. In the case of having foreign sources, there should be a bibliography apart from the Arabic one. The books and research papers should be ordered alphabetically.

10. All tables, pictures, graphs, and charts should be printed on separate sheets. There should be reference to their sources(s) below the table or other forms, together with their locations in the text.

11. The curriculum vitae of the researcher should be attached in case the researcher contributes to the Journal for the first time. It is necessary to show whether the research paper was submitted to a conference or a symposium for

publication or not. There should be an indication to the sponsor of the project, scientific or nonscientific, if any.

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4. The evaluator should ascertain that the research paper submitted harmonizes with the general aim of the Journal and its policy in publication.

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10. The evaluator's remarks, together with the paper itself, are sent to the main office of Basrah Heritage Center, or emailed using the Center's official email (See point 12 of the Researcher's Guide).

Opening Address

Praise be to God and God's blessing and praise be upon His Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his own Household. Our scholarly journal 'Basrah Heritage' now inaugurates its sixth year addressing the illuminating heritage of Basrah. it aspires to be an icon of Basrah profuse heritage and thought, providing scholars, intellectuals, and young educated people with the required knowledge and information about the city.

It is to be noted that the dialectics of 'heritage' is still manifest in human thought at large. Older generations of scholars and savants have recognized the significance of heritage being an incarnation of their scholarly contributions. The Holy Quran points to heritage in Surat Al-Fajr: "And you devour the inheritance all with greed." (Verse 19). Heritage, however, could be shaped as money, thought, a life approach, wisdom, or compilations, manuscripts or inscriptions. These all represent the deep-rooted presence and effective impact of those old scholars on life. A question

may be raised in this respect: What is our attitude towards all this rich heritage? In fact, due to the assiduous efforts of devoted scholars, researchers and enthusiasts, research work on heritage will continue consistently to uncover more and more treasures.

This new number of our journal investigates and explores more aspects of the glorious heritage of Basrah. It covers various topics: language, history, inquiry, travels literature, proverbs, Orientalists' travels, and Imam Hussain's elegy of Karbala and its reflections on Basrah people. The journal has also a research paper in English on the Industrial Activities in Basrah during the 1960s.

Hopefully, our dear readers will find this new number of our journal both original and enjoyable.

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Industrial Activity in Basra

(1968 - 1979)

النشاط الصناعي في محافظة البصرة

(١٩٦٨ - ١٩٧٩)

Refel H. Khammas Al-Zaidy,

Assistant Lecturer

م.م. رفل هشام خماس الزيدي

Abstract

Industrial activity in Basra is considered to be the mainstay of Iraq's economy. Basra, among Iraqi other governorates, has been characterized by its economic diversity, being the only port of the country. Basra has also witnessed economic prosperity following the political and economic developments in Iraq in 1968. The industrial activity in Basra motivated the industrial institutions to replace the foreign work force by Iraqi workers. This also helped to set up some projects such as Chemical Fertilizers Plant, the State Company for Paper Industry, Iron and steel Plant, Cement Plant, Electrical Power Plant, Petrochemical Plant, etc.

The study also deals with oil nationalization, the monopolistic companies, and the economic agreements concluded with socialist countries. There is a section on the oil industries in the city including Basra Oil Company, as the oilfields played a vital part in activating the industrial sector in Basra. Such an industrial activity led to a number of economic and social transformations including

terminating the hegemony of foreign monopolistic oil companies and imposing full national sovereignty on the national oil wealth. It also supported the country in carrying out its development plans and improving the economic conditions of Iraqi governorates at large.

ملخصُ البحث

يعد النشاط الصناعي في محافظة البصرة العصب الرئيس لحياة العراق بصورة عامة ومحافظة البصرة بصورة خاصة، حيث كانت البصرة تتمتع في التنوع الاقتصادي؛ لأنها الميناء الرئيس للعراق، فضلا عن ذلك الازدهار الاقتصادي الذي دخلت فيه المدينة بعد التطورات السياسية والاقتصادية التي حلت في العراق بعد عام ١٩٦٨ .

ان النشاط الصناعي في محافظة البصرة شجع المؤسسات الصناعية على احلال الايدي العاملة العراقية بدلا عن الاجنبية، واقامة بعض المشاريع التي من ابرزها معمل الاسمدة الكيماوية، والشركة العامة للصناعات الورقية، ومعمل الحديد والصلب، ومعمل الاسمنت، ومحطة الطاقة الكهربائية، ومعمل البتروكيماويات، كما تطرق البحث الى تأمين النفط، والشركات الاحتكارية، والاتفاقيات الاقتصادية التي عقدها العراق مع الدول الاشتراكية، والى جانب ذلك الصناعات النفطية في محافظة البصرة التي منها شركة نفط البصرة ونشاطها، فقد كان للحقول النفطية الاثر الكبير في النشاطات الصناعية في البصرة.

وقادت سياسة النشاط الصناعي في محافظة البصرة إلى العديد من التحولات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية سواء في ما يتعلق بالتخلص من الشركات الاحتكارية

النفطية وفرض السيادة الوطنية الكاملة على الثروة النفطية في البلد، ودعم الدولة في تنفيذ خططها التطورية والنهوض بالمحافظات العراقية في المجالات كلها بصورة عامة، ومحافظة البصرة بصورة خاصة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: (البصرة، النشاط الصناعي، الاتفاقيات التجارية، الثروة النفطية، معمل).

1. Introduction

The political and economic developments that occurred in Basra at the end of the 1960s played an important role which highlighted Basra as a main economic city. This has been enhanced by its economic potentialities, mineral fortune, and strategic location. The political developments following 1968 coup in Iraq led to better political stability in the country, granting Basra a distinguished economic status.

The Iraqi government paid special attention to the industry sector. The state sector thus had direct responsibility in industrial projects. As part of this policy, a number of factories and plants were set up leading to a noticeable increase in the Iraqi work force who were mostly from the countryside. The 1970s witnessed a progress in the oil sector. The Iraqi Oil Company started exporting oil extracted by Iraqi cadres. Work also prospered in Zubair and North Rumaila Oilfields. Then, monopolistic companies were nationalized, therefore the cartel that used to control the oil industry came to an end.

In the commercial sector, the general tendency in the

country following 1968 coup was to provide protection and state intervention in the international economic relations. The government also recognized the importance of economic growth for the conclusive development of the country.

2. The Influence of the State Economic Policy on International Activity in Basra

2.1. Industrial Projects in Basra

The Iraqi government paid due attention to 'planning' and 'economic development' to bring about economic, social, and political changes. It also sought to liberate Iraqi economy and resources from subordination with the aim to build up a developed and solid economy¹.

Basra is considered to be one of the leading industrial cities in Iraq. So many industries are located in Basra. It is the only Iraqi city that overlooks the sea. It has Iraq's trade and oil ports. It has a great reservoir of oil and gas. Moreover, the industrial concentration in Basra stimulated migration waves from the countryside especially from Missan and

Dhi Qar seeking for work opportunities².

After 1968, the government sought to achieve economic independence. It adopted the socialist central system³ to be a political tool in the overall development process⁴. As such, the city witnessed the rise of many industries accompanied with a rising work force⁵. In 1969, the government paid more attention to the public sector by founding a number of state establishments giving the government control over economic activity⁶.

2.1.1. Chemical Fertilizers Plant

The Iraqi government set up a giant industrial project in Basra in terms of investment. It therefore signed a contract with Mitsubishi for Heavy Industries on 4 November, 1968. In 1969, a decree was adopted to establish the State Enterprise for Chemical Fertilizers Industry in Basra with a capital amounting to 12 I.D. millions. Then, a second plant to produce uria fertilizer was set up in the same site with a capital amounting to I.D. 32 millions. The project was completed at the end of 1970. On 28 August, 1970, the Ministry of Industry concluded a contract with a contractor

to carry out the project⁷ with a production capacity amounting to 325 tons of sulfur⁸.

The factory is situated on the bank of Shatt Al-Arab River, Abu Al-Khaseeb district, on an area of 50 kilometers with a total cost of 11 I.D. millions. The location was chosen for a number of reasons, most important of which is the nearby gas natural resources which is the raw material of the production. Being close to Shatt Al-Arab facilitated two things: (1) conveying equipment and machinery to the factory facility;(2) exporting products through river transportation⁹.

The Fertilizers Factory is considered to be one of the big productive projects where the government sought to upgrade production. In 1971, for example, the Factory produced 20.833 tons of uria. It also helped to tackle the unemployment problem due to its increasing need of a work force to cope with the escalating production. In 1979, its production amounted to 350.875 tons¹⁰, leading therefore to bring more foreign currencies to the country.

2.1.2 The State Company for Paper Industries

This company is a branch of the State Company for Petrochemical Industries.¹¹ It is located in Basra. The Factory was constructed by two German companies, namely Sulzer and ESCHER Wyss, in 1970, and was located in Al-Hartha, north of Basra. It was built on an area amounting to 11.750.000 square meters. Production started in 1973.

The Factory played an important part in meeting the needs of the local market to paper. The revenues were used to maintain and improve the equipment.¹² The productive capacity amounted to 130.000 tons of various types of paper, while the production cost came to 11.250 I.D. millions. In 1976, the Factory was expanded where new lines were added under the name (Basra 2). The new expansion brought about more foreign currencies to the country through exporting the surplus production to other countries.

The Paper Factory had a positive social influence as it led to reducing unemployment which was prevalent at that time. Other professions also benefitted from collaborating

with the Factory including workers and technicians working in jobs such as construction, electricity, water, etc. Between 1970 and 1979, the production capacity of the Factory remained limited.¹³

2.1.3 Iron and Steel Factory

The Factory is situated in Khor Al-Zubair, about 45 kilometers to the south of Basra city center. Such location was chosen due to the availability of cheap energy resources, namely gas, which is being burnt in this place. The State Company for Iron and Steel is affiliated to the Ministry of Industry and Minerals. It is owned by the government.¹⁴

This project was carried out in 1973 when the Iraqi government concluded a contract with a French company to set up the factory with a capacity amounting to 400.000 tons a year of products. In 1974, the Iraqi government signed a contact with the same company to establish the Spongy Iron Project with a capacity amounting to 750.000 tons a year.¹⁵

The iron and steel industry assumes special importance to the Iraqi economy owing to its role in activating other

important industries. This industrial activity also attracted industrial investments and provided job opportunities for a large number of work force. The total number of employees in this facility amounted to 1373 with an investment amounting to 8.4 I.D. millions. During the period 1976-1979, the production of the Factory came to 400.000 tons a year.¹⁶

2.1.4 Iron Pipes Factory

This Factory has been built up in Um Qasr, near Basra Port. The Factory produces pipes according to the specifications of the APL that are used as pipelines for oil and water.¹⁷ The Factory was constructed in 1973 in line with international standards. Its production capacity in 1973 amounted to 150.000 tons. ¹⁸

In 1974, the Iraqi government signed a contract with a German company to provide the Factory with modern machinery. The contract included also expanding the factory 3 production units into 6 to upgrade production up to 30.000 tons a year. The aim has been to meet the needs of the Ministry of Oil and Water Resources.

The company employed qualified cadres working in the fields of production, control and planning. Those employees have been trained in a number of countries such as Mexico, France, Algeria, and Egypt. Their total number amounted to more than 6.000. The Factory continued its production until it was stopped in 1979 with a production capacity that came to 250.000 tons per year.¹⁹ The employees were then distributed to various state offices and companies.²⁰

2.1.5 The cement Factory

This Factory is situated in the southern-eastern part of Um Qasr district, 78 kms of the center of Basra. The cement industry is one of the oldest industries in Iraq, as the idea of establishing such an industry goes back to the 1920s. Some political and financial obstacles hindered setting up a cement factory up to 1949 when the first line of cement production started in Baghdad with a production capacity that amounted to 80.000 tons a year. Storing cement was commissioned to local agencies in Basra where the quantities produced were sold to local and outside markets.²¹ The Iraqi government then signed an

agreement with the soviet Union to set up the cement factory in Basra. the new project started producing cement in 1974 with a production capacity that amounted to 200.00 tons a year.²² The consumption of cement in Iraqi markets doubled in 1977 due to the increasing demand. Although limited quantities of cement were exported after 1974, the total production capacity did not surpass 200.000 tons up to 1979.²³

Basra Cement Factory gets its raw materials from Muthanna Cement Factory. It gets water from Um Qasr Liquefaction Project, in addition to electricity which is so vital for the production of cement. Industry as such is closely connected with the construction activity in the country.²⁴

2.1.6 Electric Energy

Electricity is, no doubt, so important for industry. Due to its connection to economic and social development, electric energy was expanded to meet the rising needs of the population. Basra in particular witnessed the establishment of some power plants including Al-Najeebiya Steam Generating Plant that was completed in 1961 and

expanded in 1975.

Al-Najeebiya Power Plant is located in the north of Basra, at the west bank of Shatt Al-Arb River near Garmat li. Its production capacity amounts to 240 mega watt and consists of four generating units²⁵ that were added in 1975, while two units with production capacity amounting to 200 mega watts were also added. Later on, the government expanded the Plant through an agreement with Export Russia Techno PROM. It was linked to the national network.²⁶

During the 1970s, a number of gas power plants were set up in Basra to cope with the industrial development. For example, Khor Al-Zubair Gas Power was set up in 1977 with a production capacity that amounted to 256 mega watt. Then Al-Shiaiba Gas Power Plant was set up with a production capacity that amounted to 120 mega watt. Basra, generally, is suitable for establishing gas power plants making use of the natural gas in the area which has no sulfur.²⁷ In 1979, Al-Hartha Power Plant was established 18 kms from the city center of Basra. It is considered to be one of the biggest power plants in Iraq in terms of capacity, efficiency and

technology. Its production capacity amounts to 800 mega watt getting natural gas or oil from gas isolation complexes in Basra.²⁸

2.1.7 Petrochemicals Plant

This Plant is situated not far away from the South Gas Plant, about 28 kms from Basra-Safwan Highway. This Plant was established in 1977 ²⁹ in Khor Al-Zubair according to Decree No. 90 of 1970 ³⁰. It was named the General Enterprise for Petrochemical Industries. On the same year, the government signed a contract with the U.S. Lumis Teen Company with a cost of one billion dollars to produce 1500 tons a year. The complex includes operative and productive units covering all technical services.³¹

The Plant is an integrated industrial complex employing 3327 persons. Its location facilitated supplying it with natural gas from the South Gas Plant, and also from Basra Plant for Oil Refining to get its total needs of oil. This helped to lower the transportation cost and helped in carrying its products to the local and international markets.³²

3. Oil Monopolistic Companies and Nationalization

The Iraqi government realized that carrying out its plans and programs depends mainly on oil revenues, which were under the control of the monopolistic companies at that time. First, the Iraqi National Oil Company was commissioned to invest North Rumaila Oilfield in Basra. It then moved forward to conclude an agreement with the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, to start investing North Rumaila Oilfield. The Iraqi Oil Company, thus, signed a contract with the Soviet Mateen Expo Establishment on 21 June, 1969, to lend the Iraqi government a loan amounting to \$72.5 million including supplying Iraq with Surveying Equipment, Soviet experts in plan preparation processes, and training Iraq cadres. Another agreement was signed with a cost of \$9.5 million covering supplying exploration and drilling equipment, providing experts, technical services and training courses for the employees of the Iraqi Oil Company in the Soviet Union. With time, the Iraqi-Soviet relations began to improve.³³

The Iraqi government took a political step to secure

OPEC support.³⁴ On June, 1970, a letter was sent to the Oil Organization asking the member states to back up Iraq in its confrontation with the monopolistic companies and its inclination to have its own national rights. OPEC stood by Iraq in its meeting held on 26 June 1970. Some members had reservations on showing absolute support until Iraq uncovered the sort of procedures undertaken against these companies.³⁵

As a step forward, the government launched on July 1970 a broad media campaign against the foreign monopolistic companies working in Iraq. The campaign started with two addresses by President Ahmad Hassan Al-Bakr and Oil Minister Saadoon Hammady³⁶ on the occasion of starting drilling in North Rumaila Oilfield by Iraqis. Such steps were undertaken to prepare the people for any developments or any possible confrontations with the monopolistic companies.³⁷ On its part, the Iraqi Communist Party backed up the Iraq-Soviet Union agreement especially in the industry sector and the policy adopted by the Iraqi government in both production and

marketing in agreement with the socialist countries and Soviet companies. It also supported the Iraqi government stance towards monopolistic companies.³⁸

The economic attitudes, especially in the oil industry, forced the Iraqi government to approach socialist countries. The government thus tended to change its internal policy particularly towards the Communist Party. It, for this purpose, issued on 15 November, 1971, the National Action Pact where the Communist Party and other political parties were called for negotiation to form a coalition government based on a national front encompassing a number of political parties together with Al-Baath Party.³⁹

The negotiations with the foreign oil companies were resumed on the 2nd of May, 1971, when Saleh Mahdi Ammash, Iraqi Deputy President, and Saadoon Hammady, the Minister of Oil, held a meeting with Jefri Stwkwyl, the representative of the monopolistic companies in Iraq. Another meeting was held on 28 September, 1971, and Saddam Hussain became in charge of the negotiations with foreign oil companies. A meeting, to this effect, was

decided on January, 1972.⁴⁰

The 1st of June, 1972, is considered to be an important event in the modern history of Iraq.⁴¹ On this day, some procedures were taken by the government to face the foreign companies' refusal. The 'Steadfastness Committee' began to take crucial decisions related to the nationalization of the operations of foreign oil companies that were, for a long time, exploiting Iraqi oil revenues for their interests while Iraq was undergoing economic and social backwardness. President Ahmad Hassan Al-Bakr announced Decree No. 69 which nationalized Iraqi Oil Company, transferring all its ownership to Iraq including Basra Oil Company. The French shareholder was given an opportunity to arrive at an independent agreement in appreciation of France stand towards Israel.⁴²

Since 1972, Iraq adopted a new policy to increase its production capacity, promote independence of its neighbors and foreign companies, and develop oil facilities such as refineries, pipelines and oil tankers. This led to doubling Iraq's production of oil from 731.000 barrels a day

to 1.5 million barrels a day. Yet, Iraq suffered a lot during the 1960s as a result of long struggle with the foreign companies. The production then increased in a rate that amounted to 67% in comparison with 184% in Iran and 221% in Saudi Arabia.⁴³

Iraq Oil Company reaction towards the nationalization announcement was intense. The Company resorted to decrease the amount of oil extracted from North Rumaila Oilfield in Basra. It also imposed economic boycott on the oil of North Rumaila. It claimed oil concession of the Iraqi nationalized oil which was invested then by Iraqis. It further threatened to file cases against any country or side that buys Iraqi oil claiming that it was stolen. Finally, it increased oil production in some Arab neighboring countries to compensate the Iraqi nationalized oil.⁴⁴

The Nationalization Law No. 69 of 1972 stipulated that all facilities and rights related to oil industry including exploration, drilling, crude oil production and production of gas have to be transferred to the Iraqi government. As a result, a state company was established under the name of

The Iraqi Company for Oil Operations into which transferred all property, rights, and nationalized assets. On the 1st of March, 1973, Iraq achieved full victory in this respect when Iraq Oil Company, Mosul Oil Company and Basra Oil Company were controlled by the Iraqi authorities.⁴⁵

When the October War, 1973, broke out to liberate Sina' and Swiss Canal, the Iraqi government announced Law No. 70 of 1973 where it nationalized the communal shares of Standard Oil New Jersey and Mobil Oil Corporation, two American companies, with Basra Oil Company, limited. At the end of 1973, the law of nationalizing the communal share of Kulbankian foundation amounting to %5 was nationalized. ⁴⁶

At the end of 1975, the government enacted Law No. 200 where the remaining foreign communal shares with Basra Oil Company, limited, were nationalized. In March, 1976, the final settlement of the affairs between the Iraqi government and the foreign companies working in Iraq was concluded. As a result, the whole oil and gas resources in Iraq were run by Iraqi institutions away from any foreign

intervention. That was the first basic step towards total political sovereignty. The government then reformulated the Iraqi National Oil Company in 1976 and allocated special areas for it for oil investment in cooperation with the international independent companies for the period 1978-1079.⁴⁷ Following the successful nationalization of foreign oil companies working in Iraq, the Iraq National Oil Company signed during the 1970s a number of contracts and protocols to develop the new oilfields with Soviet,⁴⁸ Brazilian⁴⁹ and Indian⁵⁰ companies.

4. Economic Agreements

The Iraqi government sought to expand cooperation with socialist and capitalist countries. It therefore held new agreements for economic and technical cooperation with socialist countries especially the Soviet Union. It also concluded other agreements with the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria to grant Iraq long-term loans for low interests with the aim of upgrading the industrial sector especially in Basra.⁵¹

4.1 Economic Cooperation Agreement with Socialist Countries

After 1968 coup, the Iraqi government concluded a number of agreements for economic and technical cooperation with some socialist countries to improve relations with them. These agreements are as follows:⁵²

4.1.1 Economic Cooperation Agreement with German Democratic Republic, 1969

This agreement was signed on 25 June, 1969. According to the agreement, the German Democratic Republic lent Iraq a loan of 30 million Iraqi Dinars, with an annual interest of 2.5%. The loan was used to execute industrial development projects in Basra oilfields, preparing economic and technical studies, supplying equipment, and training Iraqi cadres for this purpose. The Iraqi Oil Company⁵³ paid the loan by crude oil.

4.1.2 Cooperation Agreement with the Soviet Union to Develop Oil Industry

This agreement was signed in Baghdad on 4 July, 1969.

It included operating North Rumaila Oilfield in Basra to produce 5 million barrels a year with the prospect of increasing production up to 15 million barrels a year. It also included setting up oil pipelines in Fao Port, in addition to studying the designs proposed by Iraqis. In this context, the Soviet government lent Iraq a loan amounting to \$50 million with 2.5% as an annual interest. The loan was used to meet the costs of operating Rumaila Oilfield, Ertawi Oilfield, in addition to other 5 oilfields in the south of Iraq and develop them. According to the agreement, the Soviet technical experts offered technical assistance, equipment and machinery to back up the exploration of oil, developing iron ores in Iraq, in addition to technical designs such as the marine ships project in Basra.⁵⁴

4.1.3. Oil Cooperation Agreement with Bulgaria

This agreement was signed in Sofia on 29 September, 1970. Basically on oil industry, the Bulgarian institutions provided the Iraqi institutions with integrated industry projects, production lines, machinery, equipment, technical assistance on oil exploration, developing mineral resources,

and training Iraqi cadres. Bulgarian experts were sent to Iraq to help engineers, technicians, and other employees, to run the oil industry. Besides, the Bulgarian government lent a loan to Iraq amounting to \$12 million to be paid back by Iraqi oil.⁵⁵

4.1.4 Agreement of Economic and Technical Cooperation with the Soviet Union

This agreement was signed in Baghdad on 8 April, 1971. According to the agreement, the Soviet government lent Iraq a loan amounting to \$22 millions with an annual interest of 2.5%. The Soviet government financed the technical assistance offered to Iraq to execute industrial projects such as Mosul Oil Refinery with pipelines to supply it with oil from Kirkuk, and Basra-Baghdad pipeline for oil products.⁵⁶

4.1.5 Cooperation Agreement with Romania to develop Oil

Industry

This agreement was signed in Baghdad on 28 December, 1971. According to the provisions of the agreement, the Romanian government lent the Iraqi Ministry of Oil and Minerals a loan amounting to \$35 million with an annual interest of 2.5%. The loan was used to supply equipment, special operations of the Iraqi National Oil Company and Basra Oil Company to develop the oil, gas, minerals industries especially in Basra. 57

4.1.6 Cooperation Agreement with Hungary to Develop Oil

Industry

This agreement was signed in Budapest on 31 August, 1972. Basically on economic and technical cooperation to develop the Iraqi oil industry, the Hungarian government lent Iraq a loan amounting to \$ 50 million with an annual interest of 2.5% with the aim of developing the Iraqi national industry in various fields. The agreement included also paying back the loan through limited exports of Iraqi

crude oil to Hungary. The agreement was ratified by issuing Law No.5 of 1973.⁵⁸

4.1.7 Agreement of Economic Cooperation with the Soviet Union

The agreement was signed in Baghdad on 3 November, 1973.⁵⁹ The Soviet Union agreed, according to this agreement, to lend Iraq \$150 millions with an annual interest of 2.5%. The agreement covered industrial projects such as Al-Najeebia Power Plant with a capacity of 750 mega watt and Cement Factory in Basra.⁶⁰

4.2 Private Sector

The Iraqi government adopted after 1968 new economic policies that aimed at supporting the public sector, especially the industrial sector. In line with this, Basra received due attention, and industry in it witnessed a noticeable development.⁶¹ Basra embraced most of the industries except for those of textiles and basic mineral industries which were mainly located in Baghdad. Food industries and beverages came first (around 71.5% of the total number of industrial institutions). The private sector

investments amounted to about 70.5%.⁶²

In 1969-1970, the food industries concentrated in Basra. The majority of these industries were concerned with dates squeezing and other date products. There were also other industries of flour, ice, non-alcoholic beverages, etc.⁶³ Basra location on the Arab gulf facilitated contacts with other countries, especially exporting dates products.

The government tended to back up the private sector especially after the successful move of nationalizing foreign oil companies. This led to a marked increase in the oil revenues in 1972. Investment, for this reason, was activated in various economic spheres. Promoting the private sector, the government promulgated the Law of development and Organization of the Industrial sector No. 22 of 1973. The Law was enacted to broaden exemptions and provide more support so that both public and private sectors would be able to participate more actively in the industrial development mprocess.⁶⁴

The new Law paid due attention to national capital in order to enable the private sector to participate effectively in the industrial and economic activities, stability, and

providing flexibility for its activities. In 1973, the government enacted the Industrial Supervision Law No.92 of 1973. According to this new law, the Research and Industrial Supervision Directorate, Ministry of Industry, undertook observing the private industrial products both qualitatively and quantitatively, committing the industrial projects to produce quantities in accordance with the quantities and qualities defined, supervizing the imported products, protecting consumers, and assuring international quality standards for all goods produced inside Iraq.⁶⁵

In 1974, the private sector invested in the dairy industry. Such industry remained rather limited due to the raw material (i.e. milk), in addition to the availability of foodstuff products in the local market especially the dried imported products. These new projects were generally small, each specialized in one product. An example is Al-Bachary Dairy Factory with a capital of I.D 20 millions, with a production capacity amounting to 180 tons of milk and its derivatives, employing 9 workers only. There was also Al-Rafidain Dairy factory in Ashar, Basra.⁶⁶

As to the timber industry, Basra at that time had 7 small factories employing 114 workers. The textile and tanning industries had two workshops only as the local demand in Basra was not prepared for big factories. The population of the city depended mainly on Baghdad to meet their needs, and also on the markets of neighboring Arab countries.⁶⁷

In 1975, the Law of Development and Organization of Industrial Investment No. 22 of 1973 was amended. According to this amendment, the projects and services in Basra were considered industrial projects. They therefore enjoyed the privileges and exemptions in force.⁶⁸ In 1978-1979, the private sector was given more opportunities to have a better role in the transformational industry in Basra, and therefore to depend less on oil revenues. The transformational industries in the city thus developed from 11.1% into 17.9% out of the total industry during 1978-1979. The main aim of the government was to upgrade the efficiency of the private sector and promote the local products.⁶⁹

4.3 Oil Industries in Basra

4.3.1 Basra Oil Company

Basra has a great oil fortune. This made the city an arena for political or military struggle. The struggle on oil in Basra and Iraq at large has preceded the establishment of Basra Oil Company.⁷⁰ The 1968 coup stimulated oil companies working in Iraq, including Basra Oil Company, to reduce production due to political circumstances.⁷¹ The Iraqi government then undertook steady steps in executing an independent national oil policy. In line with this, the government signed a cooperation contract with the Soviet Union on the 21st of June 1969. The Soviets provided technical assistance to develop North Rumaila Oilfield.⁷²

Oil industry witnessed in the 1970s a noticeable growth in the development of oilfields in Basra, raising production capacity and setting up pipelines for exporting oil or internal transportation. The Iraqi National Oil Company increased the number of national seismological teams and the oil rigs run by Iraqis, in addition to a number of companies, to upgrade the production capacity.⁷³ The

National Oil Company opened a main branch in Basra on 16 December 1969. The Basra branch headquarters settled in Hakimiyya.⁷⁴

The activities of the Company witnessed a marked development in the 1970s. It executed the stages of investment and development of North Rumaila Oilfield, and brought oil production into 42 million tons a year. Other types of activities witnessed noticeable expansion such as drilling, constructing an oil facility, executing projects for natural gas production in North and South Rumaila Oilfields, developing new oilfields and executing the investment of natural gas.⁷⁵

Southern Oil Company came first in Iraq in oil extraction industry, and occupied the second rank in the classification of foreign companies. Its activities covered an area amounting to 80 square kms in the following governorates: Basra, Dhi Qar, Najaf, Karbala, and Waset. In the mid 1970s, a decree was issued on basis of which the activities of the French Oil Company Erap⁷⁶, working in Missan and Seeba, were liquidated, and then the Company's facilities were

annexed to Southern Oil Company. On 15 July 1970, the Hungarians started drilling the first well in North Rumaila Oilfield according to the contract concluded with the Kimokomblibs Corporation. Within one year, they could drill four oil wells in this oilfield, preparing them for production in 23 September 1970. The second stage began in North Rumaila Oilfield to produce 18 million tons. On their part, the Soviet experts and technicians laid pipelines from North Rumaila Oilfield to Fao Port covering a distance extending to 138 kms in 1972. They also constructed 8 crude oil tanks in Fao and 4 crude oil tanks in North Rumaila.⁷⁷

In 1973-1974, Iraq's oil foreign policy corresponded with OPEC's prices. This happened when Iraq's oil revenues rose due to the quantities of Basra Oil Company exported oil.⁷⁸

Southern Oil Company continued to work until it was nationalized in 12 December, 1975, where the government enacted Law No. 101 of 1976-1977 which is concerned with regulating the Ministry of Oil. This new law was promulgated in harmony with the new framework of the country where oil operations were linked to the state central planning.⁷⁹

During 1978-1979, the Southern Oil Company began to carry out a number of oil projects in Basra including wells drilling and increasing the export capacity of oil. The quantities of crude oil produced and exported in Basra amounted to about 3162 million barrels a day (44.8%) of the total produced and exported amounts of Iraqi oil.⁸⁰

4.3.2 Basra Refinery

The Iraqi government negotiated with the Czech Techno Export Corporation on Basra Refinery with a production capacity amounting to 3 million tons a year. This refinery is ranked second after Salaheddin Refinery. It was opened in 1974. During the negotiations with the Czechs on the project, Naji Taleb ⁸¹ urged the Czechs to finish constructing the refinery according to the terms of the contract, adding that "as a socialist country, we don't want any troubles with our Iraqi workers."⁸²

The production started in 1974, and the refinery's production expanded from 70 thousand barrels a day into 150 thousand barrels a day after completing all installations. The General Company for Oil Investments

was commissioned to undertake such an expansion. The Company held negotiations with the Czech Techno Export Corporation on executing the project on 26 February 1975. The Iraqi company insisted on the pre-fabricated project, while the Czech Corporation demanded that the Iraqi side should undertake the civil engineering works and deliver equipment to the site under the supervision of Czech experts⁽⁸³⁾. The refinery was supplied with crude oil from Al-Zubair Oilfield⁽⁸⁴⁾.

During 1976 - 1977, a new line for the Refining Unit of Basra Refinery was opened with a capacity amounting to 70.000 barrels/a day. Then, the production capacity of the Refinery amounted to 1.400.000 barrels/a day.⁽⁸⁵⁾ In 1979, the refinery had a number of units including two units for light oil, two units for improving gasoline, and two for oil refinement. Basra Refinery used one type only of crude oil, namely Al-Rumaila light oil, known for its good quality⁽⁸⁶⁾.

4.3.3 Oilfields

Oil production of Southern Oil Company started growing including new oil wells. The total production of Basra oil

fields represented 65% of the total production of Iraq. The following are the oilfields in Basra⁽⁸⁷⁾:

(a) Seeba Oilfield

The oilfield is located about 30 kms to the south-east of Basra. It extends to the east of Basra towards Iran border across the Shatt l-Arab. The oilfield was discovered by the French Erap Company in 1968. The Seeba1 Well started to work during 1968-1969, and Seeba2 Well started in 1074. The production of both wells amounted to 3 thousand barrels a day. The French Company then submitted the oilfield to the Iraqi National Oil Company after drilling 3 wells⁽⁸⁸⁾.

(b) North Rumaila Oilfield

The foundation stone of the development and investment project of North Rumaila Oilfield (first stage) was put on 15 July, 1969, with the help of the Soviet Union. The Iraqi Oil Company completed the oilfields for production, gas isolation station, pumping station, oil tanks in Fao and the pipeline of carrying crude oil from the oilfields to Fao Port⁽⁸⁹⁾.

On 24 December, 1969, the Soviet experts, working in the Iraqi National Oil Company, executed works related to the investment of oilfields owned by the Iraqi Company in the south of Iraq. Before that, the Soviet experts have accomplished the primary surveys in North Rumaila Oilfield, and supplied designs of the project⁽⁹⁰⁾.

This oilfield is one of the most important oilfields in Iraq. It is the 9th international oilfield in ranking. It was inaugurated on the 7th of April, 1972, and later developed on 28 April, 1974, with the help of Soviet Techno Expert Corporation. Its production stations are seven, oil wells 20, and production capacity amounts to 457 thousand barrels a day⁽⁹¹⁾.

(c) Ertawi Oilfield

This oilfield is situated 25 kms to the west of Rumaila Oilfield. It was discovered by Basra Oil Company in 1953. Working in the field was halted due to technical reasons. Later, the Iraqi National Oil Company, in cooperation with the Soviet Techno Export Corporation, resumed operations in the oilfield in January, 1972, by drilling up 4 oil wells as a first stage⁽⁹²⁾.

(d) Lehais Oilfield

This oilfield was discovered in 1961, 90 kms to the west of Basra. It was directly invested by the Iraqi national Oil Company. The first stage in the Oilfield started on 7 April, 1972. The first well produced oil in 5 March, 1973, in cooperation with Techno Export Corporation. The production capacity of the Oilfield amounted to 49 thousand barrels a day⁽⁹³⁾

(e) West of Qurna Oilfield

This oilfield is situated to the north-west of Basra, about 65 kms. It is a giant oilfield discovered by the National Oil Company in cooperation with a Soviet Corporation on March, 1973. The total number of oil wells is 247; its production capacity amounted at that time to 391 thousand barrels a day⁽⁹⁴⁾.

(f) Magnoon Oilfield

This oilfield is situated to the north of Basra nearby to the Iranian borders. It was given this name (crazy) due to the huge quantities of oil reserves in it. It is also one of the giant oilfields as reserves are estimated between 15-20 billion barrels in a rather small area, besides its nearness

to the earth's surface. The oil flows automatically by the accompanying gas. It was discovered by Petro Pars, a Brazilian Company, in 1976. The first oil well in the oilfield produced around 4 thousand barrels a day. The total production of the oilfield amounted to 350 thousand barrels a day⁽⁹⁵⁾.

During 1978-1979, The National Oil Company put plans to increase the production capacity up to 5.5 million barrels a day after discovering a number of giant oilfields in Basra such as Magnoon, West of Qurna, Naher Omer, Lehais, Ertawi, and others. The Ministry of Oil put a plan to double the capacity of oil liquidation and gas industrialization to be invested, and also to supply factories, plants, and power plants⁽⁹⁶⁾.

It is noted here then that that the 1970s witnessed the beginning of oil outburst, with a surplus in the country's budget. There occurred also an expansion in economic policies, and a noticeable increase in the investment appropriations directed to various economic activities. This was especially valid for Basra owing to the abundance of oil

reserves in the city.

5. Conclusion

Industry in Iraq played an integral part in changing the political, economic, and social conditions in Iraq in general and in Basra in particular. The Iraqi government looked into the industrial sector as a central goal, applied later to achieve political independence. The government approved new plans to grow oil and non-oil economic resources by adopting the central socialist system.

Since 1968, the government paid attention to big industrial projects in Basra to invest its natural resources and make use of its strategic position to accelerate the process of industrial development. Basra occupied first position in the number of industries established in it due to the large number of industrial institutions, work force, and the ability to pay the employees. The industrial sector in Basra, thus, was markedly diversified.

The political conditions, at that time, constituted a direct factor to secure economic development, carry out big economic projects, link the Iraqi economy with various

countries, create an economic balance and integration between the financial policy and investment policy.

The period 1968-1979 is considered to be of high importance in the modern history of Iraq, where a giant economic power of various features was formulated.

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