

SADDAM HUSSEIN

The Fighter, the Thinker and the Man

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Part III

IN THE WORDS OF SADDAM HUSSEIN

Introduction to the Dialogue

The hotel where I was staying in Baghdad was on the same road as the presidential palace, less than ten minutes' drive away.

My appointment with the President was at 8pm, and even though I was eagerly looking forward to this meeting, I don't know why I was overcome by a feeling of anguish and concern as I took a final glance over the notes I had made in preparation for my talk with him. These were not actually questions, but more like a working paper for long discussion of more than one problem and issue, all of which require mental concentration and effort, and considerable time in order for their finer points and details to be grasped. Would he find time to spare from the exhausting pressure of work for this dialogue, I wondered. His days were always full, particularly now that Baghdad was being transformed into a large hall to receive the African and Asian heads of state, who were arriving daily to meet the future head of the non-aligned conference to be held in 1982 in the Arab capital. I concede that more than once, I was aware of resentment within myself against these Heads of State! I thought that the time they were spending in their visits and a discussion was reducing my time with him! Should I apologize to them now I was on my way to him?

Saddam Hussein, however, in fact represents a singular phenomenon in terms of his tolerance and working energy. Between visits from these Heads of State he would leave his office, and suddenly appear in one of the ministries or other organizations, in a factory, a school or an army unit. He would then quickly move on to a town, province or district, or one of the villages on the distant borders, visiting their people, his people, entering their houses, asking their men and women, their old and young, about their daily lives and the troubles worrying them, carrying their children on his shoulders, and sharing their food with them. In the mind of the Iraqi citizen, Saddam Hussein has become an important figure, whose position within Iraq's geographical and social map has become that of the respected visitor to be expected at any time, anywhere and everywhere. No man has ever re-cultivated Iraqi territory, from the high mountains of Kurdistan in the north to the sloping plains of Mesopotamia in the south, like this man has. He is washing out the soil, which has become salty from the years of abandonment, subjugation and imperialism. On his way, he is also making a lengthy advance amidst the masses of his people.

Love and interaction with the masses are the deep-rooted feeling in the hearts of those historic leaders for their nations and homelands. This genuine and direct relationship between the leader and his people is a constant proof of the umbilical cord, which links him to the womb of history and the pulse of The Revolution. It also allowed them to listen to Saddam Hussein's speech in the final session of the conference held in Baghdad some months ago to discuss the National Charter. They heard him before them expressing his hatred of the thick solid walls imprisoning the heads of various countries behind the bars of their palaces, and his profound belief that the true teacher of the people is he who

draws his wisdom from that of his people. Each time I contemplated the rhythm of his effusive movement, I always felt there was something legendary in his course. My memory instantly recalls the late Chou En Lai when he said, "In 1949, we began a new and long march, and we have not yet passed its first stage". On this patch of land Saddam Hussein wants to build a new Iraq, and this is what he is actually doing. But with the same effort and toil, he wants constant revolution, and aspires and acts to make its springs flow in abundance on all Arab territory.

Less than two months ago, when I met him at close quarters for the first time. I heard him speaking about the Arab nation, its history, heritage, civilization and mission like a mystic in a trance. Then when he began talking about its present, its potentials, capabilities and future, it was as if he were in an operations room surrounded by geographical, economic, military and human maps, pointing out battle tactics, their strategies forever within his sight.

He suddenly asked me about the Egyptians in Iraq. What were their conditions? And how many were there now? I told him there were now almost a million Egyptians working all over Iraq from the northern to the southern borders. He doubted the number. Had they really now reached a million? I tried to convince him, and a mixture of pride and joy glowed in his eyes. I know that Egypt has a special place in his heart, and all the Egyptians working in Iraq are aware of it too. Every time he goes out amongst the crowds, his ear does not fail to hear the cry of Egyptian voices shouting, "We'd give our souls and blood for you, Saddam!" the same slogan, dear to their hearts, which they always repeated in the past to Gamal Abdul Nasser. It is as if with their deep historical intuition they are recreating the old Egyptian legend once again: "Hours arise! Let not your heart of the past, your living heart die!"

When the car approached the palace gate, it stopped for a moment whilst I told the guards my name, and then passed through.

At 8pm precisely, my friend, Sabah Sulman, Press Director for the palace, accompanied me to President Saddam Hussein's office.

He was standing in the middle of the room exactly, with his tall stature and serene face, its sharply intelligent eyes shining, and in an instant, like a flash of lightning, he read everything inside me!

After a few moments, however, you discover that this great man sitting before you, who represents a living part of contemporary Arab history, has a unique ability, not only to eliminate, but also to destroy any feeling of distance. Despite the awe of his position and the glory of history, you suddenly feel that a warm affection has begun to fill the entire room, and a feeling spreads within you that you are before a brother, friend and companion, and that you have both known each other for many years.

I felt that every moment was equal to several long days, and I had to suppress within myself a strong desire to discuss all manner of subjects with him, and begin at once to complete my task so that I could finish my book.

I attempted to apologize in advance for the time our discussion would take, and tell him that I didn't have questions so much as points on central issues I would like to discuss. I again felt worried and apprehensive. However, he had noticed my hesitation, and smiling, said: "Don't worry, I've set the whole evening aside for you, and so I slept this afternoon for fifty minutes because I knew you were coming!"

And so we began the discussion, the text of which is to be found in the following pages, at 8.30pm on May 13th, 1980.

I. What Is the Meaning of Specificity?

* In all human society, ancient and modern, man's thought is characterized by a patriotic and nationalist stamp peculiar to that particular society, whether in terms of its theoretical concepts or of its practical applications. This is normally expressed by a patriotic and nationalist specificity, the adherence to which is a feature of your theoretical mode of thought and your practical applications. Undoubtedly, this gives rise to a number of questions. How do you regard this specificity, as a form or as an established essence? As a form, does this not mean the possibility of it changing and developing along with the social change occurring in all stages of time? In terms of an established essence, however, how then can we define the common denominator between man and society? In your view, specificity does not preclude the possibility of influence and effect, but how, because of and despite this specificity, can we come to the idea of democratization in human experience, itself the basis for the existence of a practical law on the social level?

* The last question on this point concerns the fact that, in any class society, there are always different forms of social conflict within. What is the specificity of the social class conflict within Arab societies in general, and within Iraqi society in particular? And what, in your opinion, are the differences and similarities between this conflict in Arab societies and in other class societies?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Let us say it is not a human experience as such, and when we say human, we do not mean related to man alone. What we do mean is that it is an experience of human dimension, with a comprehensiveness and effect, which extends further than the local environment. Indeed, its interplay and effect has moved from its indigenous environment to other societies, just as when it first emerged, it must have been influenced by the experiences of other indigenous societies which came before it, thereby providing the opportunity for common ground between different nations, nationalities and societies. A serious process of interaction must be established between these societies, not only in terms of experience and methods, but also in terms of thought and character. This issue therefore constitutes a central axiom, although not a newly discovered one. On the contrary, it is a precept, which has existed to accompany the movement of human societies ever since man has been on the face of the earth, and ever since the existence of different doctrines, including the divine creeds.

In Judaism, Christianity and Islam, for example, the spirit of their respective codes has been taken from the preceding religion, even though each new denomination emerged under more advanced and developed conditions, and despite the long time span between their respective appearances.

Different religions share common points, but there are certain considerations, the most important of which is the gap in time between the emergence of one religion and another. This is basically why each new religion introduces its own particular precepts, but if we look at those of the religion, which preceded it, we find that both are largely similar in spirit. As we said therefore, despite the differing precepts of each religion, there are common points, which in terms of the general aims and the spirit of the general direction provide a human link between the new religion and the one, which preceded it.

All this leads us to say that there is no human experience, which can be called "purely" nationalist when we look at the nationalist issue from a closed point of view. We can therefore firmly state that there is no nation, which does not, in one form or another, contain elements from other nations. This is so even when it plays a leading role in benefiting other nations by means of a human mission for the good of mankind. The elements it contains from other nations and vice-versa, is concealed in the process of interaction, but it is true to say, without pretension or bigotry, that the Arab Nation with its civilization and human spiritual role has played a rich and more comprehensive part than other nations in terms of the offering it has made to mankind. All the divine religions originated in the land of the Arabs, and from here they spread to other nations. When the nation, however, was carrying out its human mission outside its own borders, the other nations, through the process of interaction and effect, adopted its positive characteristics and ideas and then gave them its own particular national stamp. To go back, when we speak of specificity we are not talking about abstruseness, just as when we believe in specificity we are not believing in abstruseness. On the contrary, we believe in giving our ideology the same color as the vessel, which created and developed its foundation. We do not advocate insularity, nor do we deny the interaction of our nation's thought with human thought and the part positive human thought plays in our nation. On this basis, our specificity is not only to be found in our methods, formulae and expressions but also in the premises and intellectual method followed. When we assert our specificity in the above terms, then the fact of a positive role for interaction with the experiences of mankind becomes quintessential to our thinking and concepts. In the same way, we constantly strive in our relationship to acquaint ourselves more and more with the experiences, thinking and history of other peoples. As to how we regard the specificity of the conflict within the nation, the conflict is most often defined by the nature of the tasks facing the nation in its entire historical stage, as well as by the nature of the nation's specificity through this historical stage as a whole, itself created through several other historical and objective factors. On this basis, the present conflict is a nationalist and social conflict, because the nation is divided, and susceptible to remaining divided and colonized. Furthermore, the forces wishing to colonize and control the nation continue in their attempts, using for this, those aides within the nation whom they exploit, and whose interests and aspirations are in contradiction to those of the majority of people within the nation. Whilst there is contradiction between the nation and all the local parasitic and exploited elements within, there also exists contradiction between the nation and its other enemies and adversaries in terms of its struggle for unification and liberation whereby to build the Arab civilization capable of accentuating as it should the nationalist character of the Arab nation, and of executing its human role in terms of civilization outside its national borders in an effective and sophisticated manner.

2 – The Problematic Nature of Purity of Origin and Westernism.

Current Arab thought often wrongly deals with the issue of contemporary and purity of origin on a basis of duality. Some reject purity of origin in the name of contemporariness and vice-versa. If you allow, I regard the issue in another light, and say that its true essence is not represented in the clash or contradiction between purity of origin and contemporariness, but rather in that between purity of origin and Westernization. The meaning of the latter here is Westernization both time and place, namely the divorce from the defined reality, and the adoption in theory and practice of experiences as such from

other societies. This is one form of Westernization. Another is the attempt by any society to return to its past and adopt exactly the same ideas and experiences.

* My question now not only concerns your theoretical attitude towards this issue, but also the practical method of solving this ambiguity in Arab society today. Do you believe that the formula of a nationalist secular state is the ideal formula for achieving purity of origin and overcoming Westernization in time and place? And, if this can be practically achieved, that is to say at state level, what is the nature of the ideology to be used as a substitute to that of our predecessors, which advocates a return to the past, or to the westernized ideology advocating or leading to a severance of roots? Do you think that such an alternative ideology is capable of containing or eliminating all the reactionary tendencies that sometimes hide behind religion and sometimes use the cover of religious sects?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: It is true that sound conduct can only arise from a sound concept. In reply to your question we cannot therefore talk about the practical treatment without first putting forward our theoretical concept to the background of the practical side of replying to the question.

Assuredly you began with the expression "the practical method" because you are familiar with our theoretical premises. However, there is no harm in giving a theoretical background to the practical details connected with the reply to this question.

Sound conduct depends fundamentally on the extent to which our concepts are sound. You replied to the question in terms of theory, and tackling this subject is basically dependent on the way in which man regards the past.

Does he want to return to the past, or does he want to bring the spirit of the past to him? Are his ideas and conduct regressive, or do they move forward with a time that contains the spirit of the past to help and not hinder progress forward? All this occurs with the spirit of the requisites of the new life, which cannot but move and develop, and in which man can be of no significance unless he takes action to this effect. Our party's basic premise on this issue, therefore, is to bring forward the spirit of the past rather than to gradually move -back to the past, in other words, not a step backwards, but an active step forward. When we move the past in the sense of making its values and spirit present for purposes of interaction to affect a life's mission to progress forward, we do not copy the actions and formulae of the past. Instead, we extend a vital bridge to link past and present, and to make way for the future and the required development and moves forward.

When we evoke a series of the past experiences of the Arabs, and study the history of one of the Orthodox Caliphs, for instance, we are not borrowing the formulae he used to tackle an issue, but rather taking only the spirit upon which these were based. When we refer to someone as principled, saying that he did not allow worldly temptations to overshadow heavenly values, instead attempting to evoke the latter whilst simultaneously using his worldly knowledge to serve them, how in this perspective should we then behave in the light of the conduct of this, our ancestor, who is a part of our history? We should not borrow formulae used by him 1400 years ago. Nor should we engage in discussion about which working formulae and applications to take from Umar Ibn al-Khattab, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Abu Bakr or Uthman Ibn Affan. Instead, we should understand the spirit of the course followed by these ancestors of ours, and how to act as men of principle when considering the rights between citizens and ruler, as well as how

to evoke the spirit of justice as seen by the former Caliphs, and how to invoke the spirit and general values of Arab Muslim socialism as demonstrated by Ali and Umar Ibn al-Khattab.

Hence, when we study the activities and concepts of the Arabs across the history of the nation, we benefit profoundly in terms of extending the spirit of the age to these very activities and concepts, whilst simultaneously bringing the spirit of the past to the current age. When develop, and in which man can be of no significance unless he takes action to this effect. Our party's basic premise on this issue, therefore, is to bring forward the spirit of the past rather than to gradually move -back to the past, in other words, not a step backwards, but an active step forward. When we move the past in the sense of making its values and spirit present for purposes of interaction to affect a life's mission to progress forward, we do not copy the actions and formulae of the past. Instead, we extend a vital bridge to link past and present, and to make way for the future and the required development and moves forward.

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Hence, when we study the activities and concepts of the Arabs across the history of the nation, we benefit profoundly in terms of extending the spirit of the age to these very activities and concepts, whilst simultaneously bringing the spirit of the past to the current age. When this happens, we can draw profound lessons from our history and heritage without the fanaticism or regression, which prevents or hinders progress forward. The laws and requirements of the present have therefore provided a living revolutionary presence, since history and heritage will form a bridge, which extends and moves towards us rather than us moving back towards them.

Any incidence of borrowing, therefore, and any formal view of the past or present, allows a grave error to be committed. Hence, to abandon the past is expressive of a formal adherence and superficial affiliation to contemporariness, whilst to relinquish the forward-moving present with its requirements and laws is to formally adhere to the past in a manner, which is neither human nor revolutionary.

Thus, we must also realize that our first ancestors demonstrated a revolutionary adherence to their present, which became a past, whilst their present, at the same time, affiliated itself to them in a revolutionary fashion, this because it was moving forward by virtue of the values and practices which changed reality accordingly.

The basic point in their greatness was that they revolted against past relationships and standards, which were backward. This formula must therefore be absolutely clear before us, and we must understand that any of the current formulae of the present time, which attract some to formally adhere to them, are part of the history of other nations. The movement of these nations was not divorced from their age, which they expressed when they should have had a living connection with their past. Hence, when we borrow their outward appearances we do not truly belong to our nation, and only belong to the present in a way, which is at once formal, fruitless, inhuman and non-revolutionary.

On this basis, when we unfold the facts about modern Western civilization in order to understand them and interact as we should, and when we lay open the experiences of the Soviet Union and other states, we have no wish to formally affiliate ourselves with any of these civilizations which are the fruit of a national and human effort of basic degree, and where the present is connected to the past, or more correctly, where the past moves to the present and connects with it. Other nations belong integrally to their experiences, and are therefore a part of their past whilst still carrying out their duties in their present. If we, on the other hand, outwardly belong to present, then we will be virtually outside our own nation as well as others. Such thought and behaviour would mean we are non-revolutionary, as we would be offering no innovative addition to life, and our role would be restricted to the automatic transferal of the ideas and experiences of other peoples.

Let us return to this subject again and discuss it from a practical point of view, leaving aside the spiritual angle, and take an analytical look at life. Let us say that we have not established for certain that there was a time in life where man felt happy merely because he belonged to earth and remained on its surface. Throughout history, man has constantly strived for what is beyond his vision. However, we sometimes find that this aspiration causes him to adopt from the visible itself, a condition that almost seems to exist outside his will and outside the practical realm of his senses. From the stone idol, which he himself makes, he creates a god, even though the material for this idol is a part of the earth on the surface of which he stands and works. Therefore, man's need to aspire to what is outside his reach, or even to the "spirit" of what he can visibly attain in a material sense does exist. Hence, we sometimes find him making a stone idol, which he looks upon as having a "spirit". The human need to aspire outside and beyond the visible often intensifies when his control of mankind or knowledge of the visible increases, or when his enjoyment of it has reached the point where "all" his material needs as a human being have been satisfied, and he has begun to feel suffocated or "empty" as a result of this material saturation. The same occurs when the demands of life become too much for him and he feels a "vacuum" owing to his inability to control life's affairs, use them to his advantage, and procure his needs as should. Man therefore aspires to the horizon and above, going beyond the visible when he reaches the zenith, when all his material needs are fulfilled, and when he is incapable of obtaining even the simplest requirements of life, when he is healthy, and when he is ill, even though the degrees of aspiration in terms of the need for it differ from one man to the next.

Nevertheless, we find that the aspiration for more and for what is beyond the visible is often found in those whose lifestyle and conditions are too harsh for them, wherever they may be.

These phenomena and their manifestations, as well as the need for them, are therefore human. Let us now return to our Arab society to find that our theory has developed from

this nationalist reality of the nation at a time when it is striving to change this reality, its movement and its becoming in such a way as to renew the nation's potential, thus enabling it to make a contribution, revive itself, and acquire a new cultural form. We must not, however, forget the reality and history of the Arab nation, and how its history was full of the movement of religions and man's aspirations to worship. The nation cannot therefore currently be detached from both heaven and earth. However, the relationship we want between heaven and earth differs from the backward view of our predecessors.

Let us return to the direct reply. Is secularism regarded as apostasy, or does it mean that the state has tasks which it must carry out, and must not be overwhelmingly influenced in either thought or action by any religious condition which makes it specifically belong to a part of the nation without first winning the respect and agreement of the whole nation, and without the nation differing from it? The Arab state we want is one where the Arabs have sufficient freedom of religion, religious beliefs, and membership of religious sects. The state must watch over the different religions, creeds, places of worship, and religious customs without intervening or affiliating itself to any particular group. The modern Arab state must also avoid being a "house" of worship, or an expounder of the faith or of a way of life from a religious point of view, and concentrate on its role and duty as the expounder of the house of the new Arab life in which all men of the nation, whatever their religious denomination or belief, gather together.

This is how we regard the Arab state and its nucleus in Iraq. We therefore make no distinction in watching over the places of worship. We do not devote our attention to the Muslim places of worship and leave aside the Christian ones. We do not oversee the rites of the different Muslim sects to the exclusion of others, because we take the essence of the nation in its links with the spirit, and watch over all houses of worship and respect all the people's religious customs. Were we to make any attempt to unleash any contradiction between the requirements of life with its extensive outlook and the rites of worship in certain practices, which we may judge necessary to them, we would adopt a basic method of enlightenment without using authority in a narrow sectarian sense. This is the basis of man's link with religion. No rational member of the nation who understands the essence of religion and the requirements of life with its wide and profound significance would commit an error, which made him disregard these facts. Were you to ask these people who now practically divide the nation in one Arab country or another owing to their mistaken attitudes and concepts if they wanted to divide the nation, they would reply no, we don't want to divide the nation. Nevertheless, their actual behaviour follows this direction because they are working on false premises, which result in a behaviour, which divides the nation. The rational man, loyal to the nation and its mission, who strives to alienate the dangers of division, fragmentation and disunion, looks at the nation, not as a part but as a whole. Were we to transform the state to a centre of fatwa and impose a religious or sectarian creed, and then we would be taking only a part, and not the whole of the Iraqi people. Other small sections of our Arab people may affiliate themselves to vice-versa, and us but we would not belong to the whole nation, or it to us. As a nation we have amongst us, Muslims, Christians, Kurds and other nationalities, as well as people belonging to the Jaafari, Hanbali, Shafi'i and Hanafi sects. We do not wish to stem the independent interpretation of religious beliefs, as this is neither our affair, nor our duty. Let the Islamic jurists and religious figures discuss

the matter amongst themselves, and let each state his opinion on the nature of his beliefs on the religious question. The state, however, must not impose a new life from a religious standpoint. Were it to do so, it would at best be considered a new religious jurist who must fall in line with the other religious jurists, whether or not he agreed with them, and who must have no affiliations to any particular religious school or sect whenever dealing with life from a religious angle.

The history of Arab Muslims shows that after, and even during the age of the Orthodox Caliphs, they differed widely over the interpretation of the best way to apply religious rulings on earth. This too was at a time when these had not yet been overwhelmed by the independent judgement of the religious schools and sects. So how is it now when the religious rulings interfere in issuing fatwas about the forbidden and permitted in a life where the issues are a thousand times more complex than a thousand years ago, for example? Intrusion by the authorities in issuing their rulings on life from a religious standpoint can only lead to one of two things: hindering the development of life and transforming it into an intolerable hell where the innovativeness of man and his interaction with the spirit and requirements of the age are killed, or alternatively, making religion void of its sanctity, dignity and spirit, and turning it into a cover for justifying many of the aspects of life in a manner harmful to religion.

Let us return to the matter of the religious differences, which occurred during the time of the Orthodox Caliphs and those who directly succeeded them shortly after the death of Muhammad. These people disagreed, and they were the companions to Muhammad Ibn Abdullah when the verses of the Koran were revealed to him. Our theory was formulated to change and interpret life, not to interpret religious rulings or to change life by using independent religious judgement. The unity of the nation in all instances demands that we avoid this, if we are not to drown the nation and alienate ourselves from our historic role in leading a unified nation. From the theoretical and practical angle therefore, the issue does not fall within the framework of the nation's interest.

Let us now pose a question. Suppose the Arab nation was now all one religion and one sect, would your attitude to certain details of the issue be different? The answer is yes, you would, because our ideas do not come packaged, but develop from an existing reality, which is as we have said it is, and not how it is supposed to be. It is therefore of neither practical nor theoretical interest to the nation for those who actually wish to unite the nation and reform its nationalist and human role to think of dealing with life from a religious perspective. This is because at best they will be religious jurists, with the final result of whom not only the "secular" will profoundly disagree, but also at basic level the "religious", whether prominent jurists or otherwise. At best, a small section of the nation will affiliate itself to them and vice-versa, not the nation as a whole. No man can therefore claim to be capable of uniting the Arab nation from a religious perspective if religion is made to be involved in the details of daily life, because he will also pass independent religious judgement, be a disciple to one of the jurists, and for the most part, his family's religious or denominational affiliations will play a fundamental role in interpreting religion and its connection with life. The man in power will then inevitably have connections with a certain sect, as well as a religious affiliation and possible affiliations to a group within the one sect. This affiliation will be the basis for interpreting the daily affairs of life according to religious precepts as he understands them, and he will then find the rest of his people to be outside the framework of this

affiliation. In any case, the practice of interpreting and changing life from the religious point of view was in force before we became, and whilst we were in the process of becoming, Baathists, as was the atheistic communist system. Nevertheless, we rejected those following this system, and directed ourselves towards the Ba'ath method, in which we firmly believed. We are therefore of the conviction that the latter is the sound way in which to change life for the better. This system alone is able to understand the requirements of contemporary Arab life and propose the beneficial solutions to it. Hence, the Ba'ath theory with its revolutionary system was the only method followed by the Baathists, and the tool of their struggle.

There may be those who say these concepts place nationalism above religion or allow nationalism to conquer religion. We say they give nationalism its true level and human role, and leave religion its level and role without causing it any injury. In any case, this interpretation of life is not one made from a religious standpoint, and does no harm to religion. It always respects religious values and principles, and leaves the people and nation free to follow whatever religious beliefs and customs they please. We should say that the Islamic religion is not a substitute for Arab nationalism with its human significances and role. Neither is it in contradiction to it. On the contrary, Islam has confirmed the open and human significances of nationalism, as well as many of the original values and ethics of the Arabs. It has given the Arabs a leading human role, not only within the Arab world, but also outside its national borders. Likewise, it has simultaneously crystallized and deepened its most important characteristics and nationalist elements after strengthening it with its missionary spirit and human role, and strengthening the potential of Islam's earthly mission with the characteristics and pure human nationalist elements of the Arabs.

Islam repudiated the backward and insular tribal spirit amongst the Arabs, and created the right atmosphere for their national unity and their highest human and cultural role. It did not go against Arabism or the national unity of the Arabs, but rather consolidated both. From the characteristics of the Arabs it formed a base for the spread of Islam to the farthest corner of the earth. Therefore, any religious claim which does not take into account these principles, particularly the leading religious role of the Arabs and the absence of any contradiction between religion and Arab nationalism with its human socialist system, can only be hostile to Arabism and have deviated from the true path and the true concepts of the essence of religion.

Nevertheless, we agree with the "religious" that religion may serve as a good tool and weapon by which to oppose the tyrannical, despotic and corrupt rulers in life.

Even so, the Arab struggler must not reach the point where he thinks this is the only tool and weapon by which to counter corruption and oppression. He must be careful not to hold the sword by its blade, and pioneer the use of religion as a weapon or cover for resisting the fragmentation of the people, the revival of backward opinions and theories, and the impediment to the progress of life and the spirit of present time, without which our nation will remain enslaved and incapable of radiating or making a nationalist human offering.

3 - The Concerns of Socialist Development.

The question of building socialism in Iraq is one of your personal concerns, and the achievements so far made reveal the seriousness, which you, yourself, as well as the Ba'ath Party, attach to this vital issue. This is shown in the fact that a public industrial

sector has been built, collective and state farms and co-operatives in the agricultural sector, and 92% of the external trade supervised by the state. Nevertheless, there are certain dangers surrounding this experiment:

A -The danger of the technocrat;

B - The danger of the bureaucrat;

C - The danger of "The new class" which may be formed, and whose interests may be crystallized in fields such as "contracting".

* What is your opinion on these dangers in terms of the Iraqi experiment?

* Real estate capitalism, particularly in the housing sector, still holds a prominent place within Iraq. What in your view is its economic future?

* How can the dangers, which may result, be prevented from allowing the balance of external trade to favour the capitalist states of the world in terms of both import and export, if we assume that this is true?

* Readers of your book on technology are lead to believe that you envisage the possibility of technology in the world today, in the shadow of global competition, and in relation to the states directly able to defend themselves like yourself, being neutral. To what extent can this belief be correct and within what limits? What is your view of the statement sometimes made about the Third World in general to the effect that the new colonialism is infiltrating by means of technological dependency? What immunity can Iraq expect to have in this field, and is it the immunity of the revolutionary authority? Of popular supervision, the independence of political will, or what?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: I will give you an overall reply to your question instead of answering each part in turn. Our party's view rejects the insular type of intellectual sectarianism. In other words, it rejects the notion that the revolutionary theory is perfect from the start in terms of analyzing and dealing with the details of daily life and continues without any essential change. We believe that the concepts and methods of revolutionary theory are produced and guided by the reality, with which it has a constant interplay.

When the reality moves forward, therefore, the theory is likewise enriched and develops alongside it. The links of its theoretical concept and revolutionary methods of tackling different matters thus remain open for all new additions and adaptations.

Experience has equally taught us that when revolutionary thought advances along with the reality, it also develops from it and interacts with it. Hence, when dealing with the economic, political and cultural matters of life within a specific stage, we must presume on such a basis this state of interaction, which itself presumes a continual change for the better of ideas and methods. At the same time, we must have complete confidence in our dealings that we are absolutely right in the light of the practical and intellectual concept of life, which we have.

Meanwhile, whilst having the maximum of confidence in the Tightness of our dealings, we must suppose that these should also be in a constant state of flux. From the overall movement of the reality new facts will then arise which will oblige us to review any of our dealings being carried out for the good of the general system adopted and believed in by the body representing the leader of authority and society. When the system is a socialist one, it must be strengthened each time the system or conduct followed is reviewed, and this requires us to look at it openly in a way which encompasses and strives for everything which achieves man's happiness, even when such measures demand

the perpetual change of methods and formulae which express the socialist system and achieve the happiness of mankind. To say that our aim should be constant, and to review the methods and formulae of our socialist system, is to strengthen it. We should not only endeavour to increase the ownership of the socialist sector in agriculture, industry and the services according to a conventional mode of thought taken from the experiences of other states and regimes within this field. In the Iraqi countryside, for example, the socialist sector now has 80% of the agricultural land. This comprises the agricultural co-operatives and the collective and state farms. However, when we talk of strengthening the socialist system in terms of agriculture, this does not always mean we should increase the area of control over new territories to add to these farms and cooperatives. It does mean, however, that we should seek to develop our methods and working formulae, our agricultural relations within the socialist sector, and the relationship between the socialist and private sectors.

This must be done in a way which increases the productivity of both sectors, eliminates the disagreements within them, and makes the peasant happier and more contented, whilst simultaneously achieving happiness for the Iraqi and Arab citizen in general by improving and streamlining the amount and quality of production in the proper manner. Socialist concepts and systems, ever since their modes of thought and human applications have been in existence, have shared general concepts fundamental to them.

There are basic and pivotal laws, the essence of which has been agreed upon, in all human and socialist systems, avocations and theories, including the socialist systems of religion.

The first of these is that socialist society should be free of exploitation, and that ownership in the social and political condition should not constitute a social and political consideration, or a social and political degree, which places the owner above his fellowmen by virtue of the volume or type of his property.

Ownership, therefore, is not only rejected in its exploitative forms, but also when it becomes a social or political consideration, which grants social and political consideration, which grants social and political favour to property owners, and which discriminates to their privilege. The outcome of these concepts and the socialist system is that the right environment for man is created, and he is made to feel happy and behave so. In our programme, therefore, socialism is not only a system whereby to rectify or revolt against the various exploitative economic relations. Nor is it a case of satisfying the stomach. Instead, it is one of creating a new man, and satisfying his spiritual and material needs. In our opinion, the happy man is not only the man satiated and satisfied with his lot. This concept may be more the result of our practical study than it is the result of our theoretical study.

In other words, our practical study of the experiences of other peoples has had more effect on our concepts and experiments than the theoretical study of human thought, whether capitalist or socialist. This is because in the process of our study we remarked upon various peoples who were not suffering from hunger, but who were nevertheless unhappy. The result, therefore, of all the factors we are looking into is that man should feel he is in the society he desires, and that he is happy. In socialism, it is not only important for your distribution of the available wealth to be equal, but also, and on a level which interacts with it, for the socialist system to bring about a developed quantities and

qualitative wealth along with the development of the requirements and needs of the age for the modern man in the new socialist society.

Without this, you bring about equality only in terms of hardship and poverty, and not in terms of happiness and comfort. Socialism does not only aim to make people equal in their "misery" and despondency, and to equally distribute the available qualitative and quantitative wealth, but in addition, to create for them a wealth balanced with the demands and requirements of life with its meanings, conditions and formulae, developed according to the socialist system, which interact with human development in the world generally.

This is because we are not isolated from the world. In today's world, therefore, when we study import methods, say that the socialist sector has 92 % of the external trade, and that this programme prevents exploitation and also creates happiness for man, we have reached the required level. This level could last ten years, but we could discover at any time that it does not bring man happiness. The required proportion for the socialist sector is only 90 %, so we will forego 2 % and use the 90 %, and within this concept, will have strengthened the socialist programme. As long as man is unhappy with his programme, he cannot adhere to the socialist revolution with its socialist system. The unacceptable condition, the adherence to which exacts coercive behaviour on the part of the state towards its citizens, will result in a condition of doubled rejection. When we ask what do the Iraqis want? —They are clothed and fed, our national industries produce national goods, and we import for them the necessary foodstuffs—we must realize that as a human being, these are not all the Iraqi wants. At times, he speaks out against the way things are sold in the socialist sector, whereas at others he does not question whether prices are cheaper in the socialist or private sector, but discusses which of them makes it easier for him to obtain the goods with a sounder uninterrupted system. This human condition exists, and is forever in our minds. We are therefore unable to say that the formulae for socialist application we have now reached are final and will be the same ten years hence. No. From time to time, you will see that we review the formulae we use and the arrangements and measures we follow. However, this we will do to ensure the absence of any exploitation within society, as well as the absence of social and political considerations given to ownership, which favour property owners over others and place them on a higher level. We will also work to ensure that ownership has no power which affects the authority of the people and their representatives by influencing the organizations of state and society, and that all this leads to true happiness for the people. With this, the application of the socialist system conceived by the Ba'ath Party will not be rigid, but ever changing. Any rigidity for purposes of guaranteeing the stability of social relations and life will be relative.

Let us return to the question of our economic and technical relations with the Western states, and reply to the essence of your question, which asks if technology can be neutral. Let us say that potential is created by will, and all potential is first preceded by will. However, will also interacts in time and place with the potential. Let us go back to independence and say that it is essentially a will. This will is linked to an overall concept of life and the free and independent human role played within it... a man who is neither dominated, controlled or used by external elements. Will, will create a new condition, but will also interact with the new conditions and potentialities which it itself creates. To answer the question, when Iraq speaks confidently of its link with Western technology in its current potential it differs from other Arab countries.

The confidence with which we speak of our link with foreign "technology" is a result of the material, spiritual, political, cultural and economic potentials created by the Revolution and its leading party, the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party. Therefore, in terms of the absence of any negative effect which threatens its revolutionary course in its relationship with Western and other technology, the same does not apply to Northern Yemen, Sudan, or Egypt, for example, as it does to Iraq. On this basis, we do not regard technology as having no political essence. Soviet technology is communist. American technology is American, bourgeois and capitalist. French technology is French, bourgeois and capitalist. Technology, therefore, is not without a political essence. Even when these states export their technology abroad, they are acting from political motives, as well as others, including transferring their political and social character to the societies to which they are exporting.

Let us return to the hypothesis with which we began, namely that humanity interacts in its experiences, civilization and culture. Let us then mention another topic to which we previously referred, namely that socialism is not only a process of distributing the wealth fairly, nor of filling the stomach. Instead, it is a realization of human happiness or, in other words, satisfying and contenting the human condition, which aspires to something, better and moves with time and place. Furthermore, it creates wealth and better develops it. We are therefore neither unable, nor right to isolate ourselves from humanity with its new practical and technical facts. This is because we do not only wish to fairly distribute the wealth, but also to create wealth in a sophisticated manner in order to satisfy not only the physical, but also the human needs of our people.

At the same time, we wish to provide better potentials for strengthening and interacting with the will in a way, which also strengthens independence more and more. Such objectives are not achieved by isolating oneself from foreign technology and science in an age where both constitute the most important of its elements and standards.

Can we now have the independence we want and aspire to, in today's world, without being scientifically and technologically sophisticated? The reply is absolutely not. Thus, isolation is the condition, which may now formally appeal to us; and it may appear to some that we are independent. From the practical point of view, however, this will make us dependent, and have a negative effect on us in one way or another within the general laws which are moved by the final state of today's norms. The most important of the latter is that different peoples have their political status and the international treatment they receive based on a number of considerations, the most significant of these being a knowledge of how technically and scientifically advanced they are. We will therefore lack the ability for independence according to the measure of the scientific and technical gap in our own country and the Arab nation as compared to the other developed nations, which wish to extort from us, make us dependent on them, and minimize the happiness of our people. The most developed countries, even when they satisfy the physical needs of our people, do not satisfy their human needs as long as they dominate and extort them. This is our socialist experiment, which we advocate and in accordance with which we work.

Hence, the advanced technology we need to build and defend ourselves is in the developed nations, and the best of it is to be found in the most scientifically and technically advanced. The Soviets therefore have it, as do the Americans, the French, the English, the Italians, the Germans and the Japanese. The Iraqis, Ghanaians, Kenyans and

Cubans do not. Hence we must bring it over here in order to make our people happy, allow our national potential to make our experiment flourish more, and make our will more effective in retaining our independence and effecting our human role which must not be forgotten.

In brief, whichever nation is able to build a national technology, which brings happiness to its people, is better than the nation importing technology. Likewise, whoever imports technology without conditions is not the same as those who import technology with conditions attached.

For any country to import technology on its own conditions, three basic factors must exist: first, a firm and independent political will; second, a superior economic power enabling it to have the foreigner as a contractor and not an administrator; third, a national cadre capable of understanding the technology brought in, thus precluding the need for extensive foreign participation and the imposition of conditions which leave it at the mercy of the other as regards the use of the technology and the stipulation as to its type, quite apart from the other dangers. All these factors are to be found in Iraq.

We now come to reply to your question about whether the extent of our economic relations with the West in general is greater or lesser than with the Communist states, including the Soviet Union. The answer is that our economic and technical relations are greater with the West. We must, however, examine the gross national product of the West as compared with that of all these communist states. To know the clear superiority of the former by a large margin is to know that the West plays a greater role in economic and technical relations, and in external trade, throughout the world in general than the communist states. The latter often have contracts with the West to develop their national technology by introducing Western technology into their own countries. Some of these contracts are run according to conditions well known to all. We unhesitatingly say this because it is not to detract from anyone's experience, but to talk about reality as it is, and not how we would wish or hope it to be. Were it possible to have matters as we wished, we would have hoped for something else. Let us say that the technology of civilized life in the West is superior to that of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries. This is undisputed even by the Soviets or the others. In other words, the technology, which produces consumer goods of a particular kind in civilized social life, is more sophisticated in the West than its equivalent in the Warsaw Pact countries. To the extent to which we wish to advance, develop and satisfy the human needs of our people, achieve their happiness, and increase their resistance to the temptations of life aspired to in the developed world, we display a greater tendency to approach the more sophisticated. But, if you were to ask me about Soviet military technology, I would tell you it was excellent. And if you were to ask me about the proportion of Soviet military technology in the Iraqi army as compared to the others, I would reply that the Soviet Union had the overwhelming share.

We are not therefore searching for the local political nationality of the technology, but rather for ways of strengthening the nationalist and patriotic identity of our country and nation, and so we adopt that which serves our nationalist and patriotic interests and aspirations. Were you to ask me how many dams we had built and what the Soviets' role was, I would tell you they played a very important role, because they were able to build them to excellent specifications, and dams are not one of the more complicated aspects of social life. In saying this, we are not looking to serve Soviet interests, but instead to serve

our own interests on a basic level, as is the case with our economic, political and technical relations with the other countries of the world. Life is naturally a case of give and take in its human relations. Therefore, when the Soviets strengthen our independence by virtue of our military purchases from them, we must take this into account in our dealings with them in other fields, in order to encourage the spirit of mutual co-operation, provided that it does not create vital defects in our national interests.

Were this 1970 and the economic transactions with the West of the same volume as now, Iraq's political identity would have been distorted. Even though this is mere hypothesis, it means that we imported technology with loans, and we were not then as politically experienced as now. With loans then, there would be social and economic conditions and considerations, which would compel the local social, economic and political identity of the technology within Iraqi society to move in a direction chosen, for the most part, by the foreign nations. But now it is not like that. The foreigner now agrees contracts with us, completes the project, hands over the keys, bids us farewell and returns to his country after receiving the price for his efforts and his goods. He now basically enters into negotiation with us eager to win the project and in competition with a host of other nationalities. Such is the case with the Soviets, the English, the Germans and others. Were the political and economic conditions other than they are now, however, we would have to use our relations to arouse the political sympathies of the foreign states in order for them to agree to finance our projects with conditions. Hence, the Soviet or rather Communist notion that projects with the West can only transform political essence and erode society is true of a society, which has no capacity for defence.

It is true of a society, which does not possess a solid, and conscious nationalist will to decide its political and economic directions and its social life. It is also true of a society, which has no struggling revolutionary Socialist party, and no satisfactory amount of scientific advance. If the society were otherwise, then the dangers brought by communist technology would be no less than those of Western technology. However, there is no danger in a society like ours now, and so if the Soviet's contractual agreement to transfer chosen items from the West to their societies in order to develop them is true, then it is also so in the society of the great July Revolution. Although in another degree, we are as confident as the Soviets that this will not have a negative or essential influence on social, economic and political life in our own country. Perhaps we can say that we are more able than the Soviets to negotiate with the West without conditions over certain civil projects. Possibly this is because the Soviets cannot pay in hard currency, as we can, according to the size of our projects. Naturally we have a larger number of projects, but the matter is a relative one. We are therefore assured that the political and social essence of Western technology will not be transferred to our society to the degree of posing a serious threat to our society and the course we follow. Nevertheless, these "dangers" will result if we close ourselves to Western science and technology, and will do so from behind the walls and borders. When our national production remains undeveloped despite our increased financial potential and the increased method of subsequent human development in the social economic life around us and in the world as a whole, and when our countrymen travel and see for themselves what is developed when they see everything in Iraq is underdeveloped, then the concepts of Western technology will succeed in transferring its social and political essence to our society in a destructive manner.

The result of all this, therefore, is that with our political will, our economic capacity, and our technical ability as developed over the past twelve years, is that we make use of Western technology, and not vice-versa. If we do not use Western technology, it will use us from outside our borders. This we have clearly stated to some of our friends amongst the communist states. We told them that they had to develop their methods and techniques because they had become backward compared to others in their economic and technological dealings.

In any case, the interest of our people is the vital issue, and our people can see for themselves when they compare factories. Indeed, they will compare them according to which nation owns them, because the revolution has made them open-minded, lifted the cover from their eyes, and crystallized their abilities in controlling various phenomena and coming to a knowledge of their finer points.

4 - What is the Future of Unified Action?

Arab unity is a basic side in the triangle of the major aims for which the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party has been striving and struggling for more than thirty years. In your opinion, unified action must take into consideration, both now and in the future, two important factors, namely those of the economy and of international relations. However, Arab unity now seems to be further away rather than closer for a number of reasons, not least the weakness of Arab economic interaction. This was apparent in the resolution of the economic session held by the Arab League in Baghdad in 1978, as well as in Egypt's withdrawal as a regime from the Arab ranks.

* It is now also apparent in the acute disagreements between certain Arab countries even to the point where arms are sometimes taken up. What is your perspective on the future of unified action in the near, medium and long-term range?

* And how can it be truly activated without the occurrence of practical clashes with certain Arab regimes, whether in the Arab East or the Maghreb, and in particular the oil states with an extremely high level of national income?

* To what extent can we imagine that Arab regimes where the domestic economy and foreign deposits are subject to the control of the Imperialist states are truly able to adopt the slogan of Arab unity?

* Can we say that Arab unity will not be achieved in the future until these regimes collapse?

* Do you believe that a true Arab unity can be established without a unified social and democratic Arab Egypt? And to what degree do your current Arab alliances on the political level serve your unified revolutionary ideology?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Even though we advocate that our three aims, unity, freedom and socialism, be linked as one for the purposes of interaction and the dialectic relationship, we must neither forget that our party has attributed unity with more spiritual and practical importance. In order to strengthen the foundation and potential of unity and socialism, we must not forget that, if unity is to be achieved, it requires high-level action, both technical and revolutionary, as well as sacrifice. It is a process of raising thought and conduct to the level of human and nationalist eminence actually exacted by unity. Unity, therefore, in the sense of the new form to be taken by Arab society and the Arab world, can only be according to this concept. As to action for unity and the relative preparations to be made for it, it has other levels and degrees, some of which may be lower and less demanding than the achievement of unity itself. However, it is also a case of being more advanced

than Arab society and relations now are. Hence, we must differentiate between two states: The state of the unity for which we are struggling in its final phase—relatively final, of course—and the action for unity, or the action to be taken before and until unity is achieved, including that which provides the requirements for its new material and spiritual form. We therefore regard with particular importance some of the first steps which are useful to the process of unity and the best national relations, including the spread of cooperative relations between the different Arab regimes, as well as the spread of interaction between the Arab people by meeting and discussing opinions and thoroughly looking into other matters. We consider all this to be an activity, which serves Arab unity and finally leads to it. Nevertheless, we do not consider it to be unity itself or a substitute for it, and so we cannot imagine the unity we hope for as being anything other than a superior revolutionary action and act. Neither can it be anything other than a condition of steadfastness and development to the highest level of sacrifice, commitment to principle, and intellectual and political equanimity.

On the basis of this understanding, the requirements for unity are not to be found in the Arab world of today. When we talk of preparing its requirements and its intellectual, social, political and economic environment at the lowest level, to later reach the highest, we believe, despite what we know of its negative aspects and defects, that the people and regimes of today's Arab world have the wherewithal for action of this kind.

We must not forget that the call for Arab unity is not merely a matter of principle. Nor is it one of historically reviving the constitutional position of the Arabs as it was long ago. Instead, it is a matter of a new qualitative form, and a case of defending the nation to counter the dangers it actually faces now and in the long term. Because we view matters in this light, we believe that the more the dangers facing the nation increase, and the more its greed increases, then the more urgent the demand for unified relations between the torn parties to the nation becomes. In our opinion, the dangers will augment, and those already present will develop their technical potential for taking counteraction in other fields. The increasing dangers will not therefore deny the nation unity, but will strengthen it.

With respect to economic relations, the role of the economy is fundamental to the process of unification and of directing national and patriotic interests in a way, which will help or hinder it.

The same applies to the economy and economic relations in all the national unities, which have occurred over time, including the unity of the Arab nation in previous historical stages. In the present day and age, it is only to be expected that you acknowledge the role and importance of the economy, and that this has augmented over and above what it was in the nation, thirty, forty and fifty years ago. At the same time, however, if we regard the issue from a regional point of view, then the issue of regional economic capability may play a negative role and prevent the nation from attaining unity. When the Saudi and Iraqi economic potential is extremely high, unity becomes further from reach if we consider matters from a local and regional point of view. However, as long as we look at them from a principled nationalist angle, and regard them as a process of rising above the life and conditions prevalent today to a more advanced stage of development in terms of our view of the nation and its human and nationalist roles, then the expansion of the economic and other potential in any Arab country with a belief in unity will render this potential an effective means for building the model and strengthening unified relations. It

will also be an effective weapon in its service and in strengthening independence and unification.

The nation is not in one single state as far as potential is concerned. Thus, whoever holds a principled view, is ready in practical terms to behave according to unified principles, and has excellent economic potentials, will find it easier, in the least assessment, to find unity with the poor members of the nation.

We must, however, avoid the danger of a class conflict between one entire nation and another. There should be no class conflict, for example, between the rulers and people of South Yemen and those of Saudi Arabia, or between Iraq and North Yemen, Iraq and Sudan, or Egypt and the rest of the Arabs. In order to avoid these dangers, the poor Arabs must have their share and portion, and it is incumbent upon those in power to ensure that this to be achieved. Starting with this attitude, we have created a clause for economic co-operation, which runs in this direction in the eight-point National Charter. Hence, even though we do not regard as impossible the occurrence of new complications arising from the international situation, from oil, and from the new international economic and political relations in terms of hindering the tasks of unity, we do not forget that there is another face to this.

Oil has a positive side, which can be an effective means of serving unity and a decisive weapon in countering the adversaries to unity, whether local or international. The question of whether the positive aspects overcome the negative or vice-versa depends on the leader in each Arab country and on who directs these nationalist relations.

Nevertheless, the final outcome which we see on the horizon is that the nation must become one, because the issue of unity is neither a technical nor a circumstantial need, but rather a historical need which in turn relies on historical reasons of principle. This historical need is not linked to a temporary solution, a temporary period of time, or a temporary history, but to the role, which the nation humanly wishes to play and practice, and the nationalist role it wishes to have. Such a role can only be achieved through Arab unity.

As to the form, which Arab unity should take, it is an issue with no "static" link to any form in preference to another. The issue instead is one of a human condition, which must therefore have a developed action and outlook. On this basis, we do not say that Arab unity is the condition where local and national specificity is entirely refuted, but one which creates new and joint specificities and new links for the nation which is the basis, as well as other things which are in the service of this basis.

The local condition and specificity is not therefore a weakness on the part of the nation if its basic umbrella is unity. On the contrary, it may be the state desired, and the nation's true point of strength, whereas the assimilation which negates the specificity may be a state which is harmful to Arab unity. Recent past experiences have shown us this, as has the examination of the specificities of our ancient Arab history.

Just as when we say that Ta'mim Province has its specificities, as do Basra Province and the Baghdad capital, we do not suppose, for obvious reasons, that they are the same as in Salah al-Din Province, we must also say that the Arab countries within the nation, unity and state of the Arabs should have their specificities. But will we look at these from an insular and isolated regional point of view, or will we look at them from an objective and practical point of view in relation to the principles, which serve unification?

It is only natural for us to look at them from realist and principles perspectives, since when we see their reality and true shape we behave towards them in a way which helps and strengthens unification, and not in a way which weakens it or substitutes local regional specificities for unification. This is the point where we nurture and respect specificity, and this we are doing to serve unity and not the opposite.

5 - Democracy, Marxism and the Communist Party

Democracy is-the slogan now raised in more than one Third World and Arab country. It is also that raised by certain opponents to the socialist experiment in Iraq, including the traditional leadership of the Iraqi Communist Party, which has moved outside the framework of the Progressive Nationalist and Patriotic Front. The truth is that here I have some questions I would like to put to you, even though I have an idea of what your answers will be as I have been following the Iraqi experiment for years. Nevertheless, I would like to hear your answers and perhaps confirm my preconceptions.

* You have often spoken of your conviction that the Front is a strategic action and not a temporary tactical move. It now appears, however, that this conviction is being hindered in its realization by problems arising from the recent stands taken by the Communist Party. In your view, then, what is the future picture from the angle of the relationship between the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party and the Communist Party? Are there any specific conditions to be followed by either side for the Front to revert to its former self? And what are they? If, instead of conditions, there are bases for the relationship as you have previously stated, then is there any possibility of laying new bases and within what framework and how?

* Does your difference with the Iraqi Communist Party mean differences with all other Arab Communist Parties?

* Could your disputes or conflicts with one party or another about the political practices of the Arab Communist Parties reach the point of "anti-communism" and hostility towards its adoption as an official state policy?

* To what extent do you make a distinction between "Marxism" as a concept and "communism" as the policy adopted by the official communist parties in the Arab world?

* What is your position towards those Arab Communist organizations, which are not officially recognized internationally, yet share more or less similar nationalist views on some issues, such as those of Arab unity, Palestine, and ideological independence from the ideologies of the major powers?

* To what extent do you view the possibility of a meeting between the nationalist concept adopted by the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party and Marxism as a method of social analysis or proof of action with regard to the development of society?

* You will shortly be launching a new democratic experiment. What will be its characteristics, and to what extent will its intentions succeed in entrenching democracy within Iraqi society? And what will its future development be?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Like socialism, democracy is a human condition. We cannot treat any of its experiments or formulae as if they can be manufactured in a closed laboratory or meditation chamber, nor can we spread them in this way without them losing the warmth, humanity and significance of their interaction with life in their spirit, renewed movement, and link with man. This is the most important point. At the same time, democracy must be linked to the specificity of the overall theory in general to those who apply it. We said before that socialism is a human bridge joining general concepts over

the history of man, but it also has its specificities and own particular nationalist and patriotic bridges. Democracy too is a joint bridge in terms of its general concepts and man's execution of his role within society and the state organizations, and it too has its specificities. On this basis, we also have our own theory of democracy and socialism, and naturally enough, our own practical formulae for expressing it.

Let us pause here and return to your question on the connection with the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party, and our often—repeated claim that our view of The Front is a strategic view. When we made this claim, we did not mean that the Front and the parties to it at its establishment would continue forever with an absolute guarantee from us. What we did say, and still wish to say, is that we must all have an outlook on the Front's relations, which tends towards the strategic. The basis of this idea is that our party leads the way, being the party, which alone ignited the revolution, and demonstrated a superior and truly skilful ability to affect the leading role. This understanding imposes on us all commitments and duties towards some of ourselves, and towards the shared condition and the joint bridge upon which we walk and which links us together. All parties to The Front are required to prevail in striving for the permanence and strength by which we can cross to the other shore. Thus, when any of the parties to the Front abandon their commitments, we are unable to give any firm guarantee that the strategic condition in the relations of these parties continues. We said this on the premise of a certain desire for the Front to continue with the Ba'ath Party playing a clear leading role, as laid down in the Front's own charter, and since the Ba'ath Party engineered the Revolution, lead its triumphant course, and paved the way for the Front. So when others defer on their commitments, it is only natural that the relationship with them cannot be described as strategic.

The state of alienation is neither a fabrication on our part, nor an escape imposed on us at any specific time. Instead, we have chosen to have a positive and continual relationship with the parties to the Front, including the Iraqi Communist Party. It is essentially apparent also that we have chosen a state of division, because we have adhered to the principles of the Front and the conditions laid down in terms of duty and commitment. Hence, we have not chosen division through any malice on our part, but because we have rejected the negative action taken by the Iraqi Communist Party.

It would appear that the Communist Party believed in and started from a false premise, namely that any non-Marxist or non-Leninist party could at best only be a party of the petty bourgeoisie. The Communist Party has made a correct analysis when it says that Iraqi society, for the most part, is revolutionary in its social make-up in the sense that it has a popular revolutionary structure. The authority of the "petite bourgeoisie" will therefore be rejected by any society with a popular structure. In this case, the relationships of the Front will become temporary and reach a marked point where the Communist Party leads the way, and the others, including our party, will at best follow them. We never mentioned the gloom of prison or the poles of the gallows. It would appear that the Communist Party has finally realized that it cannot be, nor permitted to be like that. It committed another mistake, instead of correcting its intellectual dictum and its mistaken theory about our party and our people. It again made another fault in believing that this was the right moment in terms of time and technical capability to enter into conflict and opposition with the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party. It therefore ended outside the Front, the course and the people.

Where is the Communist Party to the Iraqi people and the masses you yourself see everyday? Which is better? The state it has ended in as the result of a faulted or forced will, or that of a worthy participation in the course being followed? Participation in its fruits, and the use of some of these to the benefit of its political reputation, and agreeing that this successful course is the result of the interacting role of the Communist Party with the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party? They could have attributed many of the events of the course followed to their role, had they continued? It is now continuing and moving upwards without them, however, and none of its events can therefore be ascribed to their ideas or policies.

We have said before and say again now that we make a distinction between dependency and friendship. We know that the communist parties of the world must have friendships with other communist parties owing to the common intellectual ground they share. There is no harm in such relationships, but we reject the notion of any local Iraqi party having a dependent connection with any state or body in the world, no matter what form it takes.

When we go on to consider our national responsibilities and our nationalist theories, we can see no injury in the Arab communist parties having friendly connections with any other communist party, but we regard with suspicion links of dependency. The differences between friendship and dependency are defined by tangible phenomena, modes of behaviour, ideas and policies. Most important, however, are the attitudes of these parties established according to an external strategic influence, or according to a clearly pinpointed national and patriotic interest? Therefore, when any Arab party, communist or otherwise, is used in external strategic interests, be its link with this external body weak or strong, then we are against such behaviour. This is despite the fact that our party, as we said in the beginning, starts from the assumption that there is no human experience, and no experience requiring a comprehensive human outlook and profound human attitude, which is divorced from the influences of the experiences and concepts of others in the world. The result of human development now is the result of the interplay between all human experiences and their ideas and theories across time. It is therefore illogical for us to prescribe an intellectual basis for our programme or to contradict it in practical terms. On this basis, we cannot say that the condition of intellectual of endeavour is rejected in our society, but like all nations, we say that it should promote the nationalist interest of the nation and be under the umbrella of the Revolution.

* No other nation would propound otherwise, but the Soviet Union permits no intellectual endeavour outside the framework of Marxist—Leninist thought.

This is the experience and policy of China and other, communist states, as well as in the Western states in terms of the outcome, even if their form and premises on this subject are different than those of the communist countries. Had the communists come to the point where they threatened the intellectual framework of the interest of the United States and the prevailing intellectual and social theory therein, I would have behaved towards the communists in a different way, after having made great progress by practicing their activity according to the liberal freedom of action within American society.

This freedom, as a result and in practical terms, is that given to American monopolist companies and those who now have their interests linked to them.

Therefore, those who strategically differ from the American policy of the United States are permitted to state their opinion by methods, which are incapable of influence, such as Marxist ideas. The same applies to England and France, but why not to us, the Arab nation? We do not have an abnormal view of what should be the ideas and outlook of man, who is part of the nation. On the contrary, we are in a natural state in terms of the birth of the nation historically.

It is therefore natural and obvious for us to express our pleasure each time we see the communist parties strengthen their link with local and nationalist social life, and for us to express displeasure every time we see them weakening their links with the nationalist framework and the popular Arab masses and their aspirations and interests. Evidently we encourage the former and hamper the latter. This is no secret in our policy and method, but is the normal human thing which any man with a nationalist and patriotic responsibility towards his people and the nation would do. The world must realize that, on the level of Iraq, we are a small state, whereas on the level of the nation, we are divided. Hence, the ties of any group or party, even if it has little strategy or unusual influence, with a major state can only constitute a threat to the national security of our people and our nation, and an inevitable hindrance to the unity of the Arab nation owing to the difference in the external nation's interests and strategies, in whole or in part, from the strategy of the Arab nation's unity, liberation and independence. Hence, the success of the different fronts in performing the duties of the nationalist and patriotic interests in Third World countries, including the Arab nation, can only be achieved when one of its 'basic conditions is the absence of ties by any of the parties to the Fronts with any foreign state or strategy. The parties to the Fronts will otherwise be the doors through which one international side or another will enter and demolish the independent nationalist and patriotic building process.

But do we ourselves adopt this attitude in our relations with other communist parties outside the Arab world? The answer is no, for here we are discussing the Arab nation, whereas to discuss other nations and peoples who have chosen communism, Marxism, or Marxist—Leninism is another matter, left to your choice. This we do not regard with suspicion, but we do have misgivings about a condition, which is an extension of a foreign communist strategy, which may be detrimental to the nation.

We are equally suspicious of any "liberal bourgeois" condition which is again an extension of a strategy harmful to the nation, or an extension of American and other strategies. Of these we are wary. It is another matter, however, when it concerns a non-hostile liberal condition practiced by a nation bordering the Arab nation within its nationalist and patriotic specificities. This is because it presents no threat to the nation, but when it is a mouth and sword for a foreign strategy then we naturally hold it in suspicion. Otherwise, we have no mistrust of any communist or Marxist experiment with a patriotic specificity, or any other form, carried out by the other nations outside the Arab nation.

Let us go back to democracy, and say that the formulae of the type we now practice express our integral theory of man and life, and of the nationalist and patriotic struggle and its circumstances and potentialities. At the same time, however, in terms of its formulae, our democratic experiment interacts with human experiences. We have thus elected that the formulae, which now express our democracy, be within the constitution soon to be put into practice via our National Assembly. The latter, however, is not the

only method of expressing democratic practices, for there is also the People's Assembly, and we have organizations, unions and syndicates which study all matters pertaining to life and put forward their views. The same applies to more than a million organizers in the Democratic Party on a wide and profound scale as regards discussing the people's affairs, the decisions taken thereon, and governmental issues. We have now added a new convention by adopting a resolution, two weeks ago, obliging every ministry which proposes a new law to first discuss it with the social sector concerned before raising it before the Revolution Command Council, otherwise it will not be considered. Therefore, when we come to look into a law concerning the worker and employment, we must meet and discuss with the worker's representatives. We do not necessarily have to adopt their opinions as such, but we must discuss them with them, and assume that the spokesman for the people, however simple, is capable of revealing great ideas to us. If not, then he is surely able to do so all the way along the line, and it is on this basis that we must meet, interact and listen to him.

Complete freedom will be given to all those who wish to nominate themselves as candidates and try their luck in the elections to the National Assembly. The conditions for nomination apply to him and to all parties and political movements falling under the general umbrella of the Revolution, which work to this framework.

As to those who have gone beyond the limits and oppose the Revolution, they have no right to it, nor do they have any democratic right as long as they continue to behave undemocratically towards the Revolution and its course.

Our party had the leading role in making the people accept and digest the fact of dealing with the Communist Party after the bitter experiences of Iraq in 1959, and after the massacres and butchery carried out by the Iraqi Communist Party against our party and the Iraqi people. This was so even though it had not then yet assumed power, although it did share in it and hold important positions, of which you yourself are aware.

Are we to avoid meeting with the Communist Party in the future? We do not wish to, nor can we, choose the future, but neither can we speak of a link without having any foundation. The bases which must exist if we are to one day achieve a meeting are the very same with which we began the relationship, and they are those which any new and friendly relationship exhort. In other words, the Communist Party must concede that the Revolution exists, not only as a practical condition, but also as a concept, as a practical revolutionary reality, and as an existing integral theory, which deals with the affairs of life from revolutionary and socialist intellectual premises, which are known and understood. This is to say that it is not an insignificance required in order to follow the Communist Party, but a leader. This leading role does not only arise out of the distinguished organizational reality of the Ba'ath Party as being larger in size and number than the Communist Party, and as being responsible for the Revolution. It also basically results from the fact that the Ba'ath Party's ideas are of a higher conceptual quality than those of the Communist Party, since it has been able to lead the masses and bring them to conclusively accept its leadership. These are the masses that were largely apathetic about the Revolution in the beginning, whilst some expressed caution, and still others supported it to the point of martyrdom.

6 - The Future of the Theory of International Multi-Polarization.

International relations hold a prominent place, in your view. In your book, *Our Struggle and International Politics*, you put forward your theory on international multi-polarization

over the next twenty years, and in more than one instance, stressed the promotion of the concept of "non-alignment" and the necessity of assisting the neutral states to resist the major powers and create new possibilities for a new world.

* Why do you regard as unlikely the possibility of a return to normal of the relations between China and the Soviet Union? And why do you think remote, the possibility of certain Eastern European states becoming ideologically and politically independent, and forming other poles within Europe?

* In your discussion of France's prominent role in Western Europe, it would appear that you do not envisage the possibility of the French Communist Party reaching power in the near future, either alone or through an alliance with the left. Do you think that France's outstanding role in Western Europe may change or be modified if this were to happen? And what is your general position on this issue?

* How do you view the possibility of Japan leaving the framework of American political tutelage and capitalist influence to move towards producing arms, particularly since this will upset the balance of power in Eastern Asia, and perhaps in the entire world?

* Even within the limits of the possibility of your theories on international multi-polarization being fully realized, do you think that this multiplicity will eliminate the duality of the ultimate hegemony of liberalism on the one hand, and socialism on the other, over the world balance of international relations, particularly in relation to the small countries of the Third World?

* Finally, how do you regard the future of the non-aligned states in view of the fact that some of them are actually aligned in their political- and ideological choices, perhaps because of the pressure of their economic and social circumstances?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: I would ask you not to forget that we said this is how we see the world over the next twenty years. That was in 1975, and so only five years have passed. At the same time, however, we do not deny the hypotheses in your question to the effect that changes may occur in the current relations between China and the Soviet Union, and between Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, over these twenty years we do not envisage any essential change which will prove faulty our concept of the world over these years, irrespective of the developments in relation between the Soviet Union and China and Eastern Europe, or even if the French Communist Party in an alliance with the Left should reach power. Even was this to happen, it would not radically change France's role in Europe, but the Communist Party, upon reaching power, would be compelled to adjust its policy and modify its doctrine in accordance with many considerations within French Society and Europe, and in accordance with the new development in international politics.

How do we envisage Japan's independence from America? The answer is that when Japan wants independence from America, it will find it. The Japanese have the wherewithal to find independence from America whenever they see it is in their interest to do so, as Japan is not a small state, and its technical, scientific and economic potential is well-known. In any case, independence does not mean isolating oneself from the world, including America. What it does mean is halting the bridges over which hegemony comes, and putting into operation bridges of co-operation with others. The basic issue, however, in Japan's relationship with America is represented by two points: the ghost of World War II which still haunts the Japanese, and their belief that any return by Japan to an international policy outside the framework of this model, or one close to it,

as far as America and Europe are concerned, may lead it to war and conflict. The second point concerns the agreements which came out of World War II, and which America regards as a commitment which Japan must respect, and which the Japanese view, within the actual politics of the current international situation, as a commitment they must respect if they are to benefit from the American nuclear umbrella, quite apart from other considerations which are mostly well-known.

As for the non-aligned movement, we know that some of its members have alignments to one international party or another.

* If we supposed the existence of several poles, if France, China and Japan were each to become a pole, would this eliminate any future possibility of American hegemony?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: It would not destroy its centres, but it would diminish its chances. Hegemony existed in former political history. It is not only restricted to the current international political situation, but has existed ever since the different states of the world were created. It is our belief, however, that the existence of two poles and two heads of the two poles will divide the influence and chances of hegemony more than if there were more centres of polarization than just these two poles.

An increase in the number of centres of polarization is something we would not hope for did the matter depend on us, as the formula we want is for people to live with no centres of polarization, no hegemony, no exploitation, and no extortion.

It is a different matter, however, if it concerns an actual choice between what exists and what it is realistically possible may exist. Hence, the instance of an increase in *• the centres of influence is preferable to that of two single poles deciding the fate of the world as long as the possibility of eliminating polarization is out of the question. In this case, a weak will does not create the potential required. We therefore think this path is possible, whilst certain others think the way possible is not to assert independence in the manner we understand it. Nevertheless, we must strive to entrench the non-aligned plan within the non-aligned movement, and convince many of the aligned of the need to return to the principles and premises of the movement whilst observing the new developments in international politics and their requirements. In this way, the flexibility of the small states in obtaining their chances is greater, whilst the hold the larger states is less.

Within the non-aligned movement itself, there are those aligned for the reasons I have given, as well as for other reasons such as a weak political will. This is because independence, as we have stated, is not only a matter of potential, but also essentially one of will.

7 - From the Diaries of Saddam Hussein.

* After the assassination attempt on Abd al-Karim Qasim you went to Syria, and then on to Cairo. Why did you not stay in Syria?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: We went to Egypt as the result of a decision made and a wish expressed by the United Arab Republic at the time. The decision of the need for us to leave Syria for Egypt was based on an analysis to the effect that the party had a fundamental presence in Syria, meaning that there was a wide-scale Ba'athist atmosphere from which we should isolate ourselves. The decision therefore obliged us to go to Egypt.

* Your life in Cairo is almost completely unknown, and three years is a considerable period in one's life. Can you tell us something about these years? How did you live there? How did you spend your time? Where did you visit in Egypt? How was your relationship with the Egyptians? What memories do you have of this stage in your life?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: It is unknown, in fact, because I lead a normal life. The exceptional part of it was the secret work, the life of a Ba'athist student who lived in a simple house, read and studied. Unlike others, he was unconcerned with the bright lights of Cairo. My life was completely ordinary. I carried out secret organizational work. We were then responsible for our organization's leadership in Gaza, and for organizing the Party in Arab North Africa, Sudan, The Gulf and Arabian Peninsular, and Egypt. In terms of secret work, I had large responsibilities, because establishing the nationalist leadership was difficult, and we could not carry out the work on Syrian territory. Most of its members were in Lebanon, and there were language difficulties owing to the sensitivity of the regime at that time towards the Party, so we were given all this responsibility, and we were branch members of the leadership.

* Did you spend the whole time in Cairo, or did you go to other places? Did you live in one house or did you move around?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: I spent the whole time in Cairo, although I visited some towns and other places outside. For most of my stay I lived in a house overlooking the Nile in the Qasr al-Aini area. I spent most of my time in this house, and about a year in Agouza.

* Did you visit Luxor and Aswan?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: I went to Luxor and Aswan, and on the day of the Ramadan Revolution (1963) I was on my way back. We were on a university student trip. I also went to Alexandria, where I spent fifteen days. About seven of us stayed in one apartment. I also visited Hilwan and Marsa Matruh, where I spent two days.

• Do you have any particular personal memories?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: We all used to meet together in a coffee shop in Dokki. At the end of the month when we had no money, we would pool the little we had left and all cook together in one place for the last two or three days. We were like one big family. Once I went to an Umm Kalthum concert.

* Did you go to the theatre there?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Once or twice—once in Alexandria and once in Cairo, as far as I remember.

* Who were your Egyptian friends?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: I had a friend called Muhammad, and he and his family visited me in Baghdad after the Revolution. One of our other friends was called Walim. We wanted to establish friendships with Egyptians, but I avoided befriending them for fear of causing them harm. I wanted to strengthen my friendships with them, but I was afraid they'd have trouble or harassment from the Egyptian intelligence. I even visited this friend in secret. Once I went to his house and met his family, but after that I explained to him that I didn't want to cause him any problems with the government or secret police.

* I have a strong impression from what I know of your life that your reason has control over your emotion, but could I ask about the nature of your relationship with your wife before and after your marriage, and with your children?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: We cannot say that reason has a strong control over human emotion. I believe that any man devoid of human emotion cannot seriously be of any benefit to humanity. Rational political and principled action can only be a human act, in which case, any man whose emotion falls below the human level acceptable for his duties has very little to offer as a human being. This is my conviction, and I believe that man's rational side must grow and deepen the greater his responsibility. But when this happens,

it does not necessarily have to be at the expense of the legitimate human emotional side. In other words, rational growth and composure does not mean a diminishing of the human role in legitimate emotion. On the contrary, the two accompany and balance each other.

When I was young, and before I had seen my wife, my mother would tell me stories and got me to know my relatives, one of them, a cousin. We were then in Ta'mim Province, where we stayed three years feuding with our relatives. The custom then was that anyone who fell out with his relatives had to express his displeasure by moving some distance away. So we moved from Awja in Salah al-Din to Huwayja in Ta'mim. My mother told me that my grandfather had offered me my cousin. At that time, this was not something one questioned, so I grew up with it until I entered first primary form, and then I saw her. I went to primary school late, and was about nine or ten. This was the first time I saw my cousin within the family. The whole thing was in my mind, but I couldn't do or say anything about it because it wasn't allowed. Then, as I grew older the feelings of love increased, naturally, but I couldn't tell her of my feelings towards her, even though we were one family and I was part of it. I officially announced my wish to marry my cousin for the first time in Cairo in 1961. My aunt agreed and we got married on May 5th, 1963, in Baghdad following my return after the Ramadan Revolution in 1963.

Despite my preoccupation with work, I rarely take it home with me, and I am particularly able to do this. When I'm in the house, be it one, two or three hours, we have the normal relationship of any two people. I have three daughters and two sons, but the boys didn't get the same affection as the girls, something that age has a part in. Of course they all feel this tie, and act marvelously in accordance. Sometimes I take the youngest girl with me to the department.

* Did the loss of your father when you were in the cradle have an effect on you? And what was it? Did your upbringing by your aunt and uncle compensate?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: It would actually seem so, because I would sometimes remember my childhood and wonder if I felt bitter at the time. The answer is that I didn't, and the family compensated, not absolutely, but well enough. So, when I recall the past and ask myself if I felt sorrow at being left an orphan, the answer is no. Perhaps the simplicity of life in the countryside played a part in that, because I saw everything as natural. Of course, life would have been better had my father been alive, and so I can't say that the family compensated totally, but the compensation I did get from my aunts and uncles, and my mother in particular, was wonderful.

* Do you go to see her?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Yes, of course.

* How long is it between each visit?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: I go from time to time according to circumstance, but she also comes to me when I don't go to her, and doesn't stay in the village.

* What type of relationship do you have with your colleagues inside The Party? Is it a purely political relationship, or an overall human relationship where there is friendship and affection despite the differences at the leadership level within the party pyramid?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: It is basically a deep friendly human relationship because we don't call a "pure" political relationship one of revolutionaries or Baathists. As long as our principles and revolutionary work suppose we are all prepared to spill our blood and mix it with that of our colleagues in defense of the principles as happened in the time of

covert struggle, how can this relationship be merely political? If it were, it would fall outside the framework of proper human behaviour and that of the Party ethics and principles. Myself, I don't feel any formality in the tie, or I play down formality with the important men and don't emphasize it with the less important.

I behave naturally with my colleagues without allowing the relationship to be established on a technical form or according to a bureaucratic mentality. My relationship with them is therefore normal, human and fully appropriate. It's natural for us to laugh and joke, and to be serious and prudent when called for, and likewise lenient and tolerant when called for. In other words, we behave as normal human beings in order to provide the maximum and finest revolutionary action for serving human principles.

* You have read many of the works of philosophers, statesmen and literati. Which of them has influenced your thinking? And which has influenced your emotions? In your youth did you have an exemplary ideal amongst any historical and political figures? What do you read now and when?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: From the deep intellectual and political point of view, Lenin was actually the person who attracted my attention most as a thinker and profound-thinking revolutionary. When one reads Lenin, one is reading life with its living movement and warmth. Gamal Abdul-Nasser influenced me, despite our party's sensitivity to his experiment and his sensitivity towards our party. I was particularly interested in his personality, as well as De Gaulle's. Both had their ways of dealing with things, but each had a prominent nationalist stand in his country, and a particular nationalist role in his nation with a touch of heroism. It was a great thing when De Gaulle said to the English: "Make a record of what you give to France so we can repay it after independence." De Gaulle played his part in reviving France after it had fallen to its knees, Abdul Nasser in his personality, and Lenin in his thought and political eminence.

* How do you achieve the principle of democracy at home, and how do you practice your authority as a father in everyday life? And to what degree does your wife enjoy her rights as a woman at home and in life in general?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: At home, we follow the general educational direction. As to the domestic details, my wife deals with almost all daily matters. I haven't time to worry about the kitchen, or the furniture and how it should be arranged. But when it's necessary to discuss even small things, then we do so.

* Do you intervene in the general political directions for example?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Naturally it's part of the educational process, since the most important thing is for my children not to think they are the children of a King, so I always have to talk to them when I'm in the house. I sometimes provoke discussion and give guidance. Sometimes, I make certain kinds of behaviour the subject of discussion, and sometimes I comment on the behaviour of others, like the domestic worker, for example. To me, the most important thing is for my children not to think they are above others, but the same, and to realize that their distinction is not a social one, but one of the requirements of life which has been imposed by the reality of official responsibility. In other words, my family must understand that what it has and enjoys is not a matter of privilege, but one of necessity. The fact that they have a chauffeur, a government car, cooks and domestic servants exists to serve the position I hold, and not because they are privileged above others. It is only natural in this case for me to practice any educational

role using the ideas of the party, and so my two sons are party members organized within party cells.

* How old is Uddai now?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: He's sixteen, and will be seventeen on June 18th.

* Hajj Ibrahim mentioned to me that you sometimes visit the village, Awja. What are your personal sentiments when you sit on the floor beside him in the mud house he still lives in when you are the head of one of the richest Arab countries?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: I actually take pride in it. I want them to stay in the mud house, whilst at the same time wish for them to live elsewhere. The two cases are analogous. It is a case of applying principles and the desire to reply to those rulers who have fallen into the shallowness of life, whilst family loyalty prompts me to wish for them to live in a better house. I therefore feel great pride when I enter this mud house. At the same time, I don't deny that I would also like those who have offered a great service to the people to live like others in a suitable place. So, Hajj Ibrahim has now laid the foundations for a stone house.

* What are your views on love, marriage, fatherhood, fate, death and resurrection?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: I can't imagine that there is anyone who can live without love. A person of that type is more hurtful than anyone who has deliberately decided to do so. I can't imagine life without love. Love is a state, which is not only connected to man and his fiancée or wife, for it also connects man and his children, and man and mankind. The strongest love, however, which makes man create and live in an atmosphere as if for the first time, and as if outside the glove and its materialism, is love for the people. The strongest love is interaction with history with all the spiritual facts of history and those of the life of history. I am not saying that man's tie with his wife and children is insignificant, but this state is higher and more profound.

* I have heard a recording of you telling part of your life in which you said: "It has never occurred to me that; I might die, even though I have been faced with death."

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Yes. There are times in my life when I have been close to death in a physical sense, but as another state I saw it as distant.

* Is the reason for that the sense of a historic role, or of a connection to a cause or mission?

SADDAM HUSSEIN: It is emphatically the result of a connection to a cause, and derived from the spiritual influences arising from the link with the cause itself. We were required to undertake work which has not yet been achieved, and we must complete it and not die now, I say this with a total belief in fate, because I am a total believer, but I do not think that this contradicts my faith. We all know we must die, but I sometimes have the feeling that man can sometimes overcome when he is linked to a principled cause of high objectives.

* You believe in the idea of resurrection or a sense of permanence...

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Yes, and what concerns me now is not only what is said about us now, but also what will be said about us five hundred years hence. Once, when discussing Abdul Nasser's experiment and the bitterness of Sadat's conduct, I said and repeated to my colleagues in the leadership that we must not fall. We do not fear death, but what comes after death, because when we are safe in the afterlife we may see what is happening on earth. I still believe that this is not in contradiction to my faith, and that man can see beyond death, particularly if he is strongly bound to a principled cause,

which he leads or is required to lead. He will die vanquished if he sees things on earth going badly, and this is my belief.