

RASHID AALI AL-GAYLANI COUP D'ÉTAT, 1941 POSITION OF BAGHDAD JEWS

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ABSTRACT: *Jews of Baghdad enjoyed a normal life in the Iraqi society throughout different stages of history until the Arab-Zionist conflict in Palestine, which cast shadow on the relationship of Jews with other people in the Iraqi society. This study highlights the position of Jews in Baghdad of Rashid Aali al-Gaylani coup d'état against the British authorities in Iraq, 1941, and the role some of them played against this coup and in favor of British forces. This position raised the ire of Iraqi society, which held the whole Jewish community in Baghdad responsible for al-Gaylani defeat. This led to what is known as the 'Farhud', or the violent dispossession (pogrom) against Jews in Baghdad. This study depended mainly on Zionist resources and references, where it has been noticed that it attempted to hold different groups the responsibility for the Farhud, without acknowledging the responsibility of the Zionist acts in Baghdad for the massacres that aimed at uprooting them from a society they used to live in for thousands of years, and relocate them to Palestine in order to achieve the Zionism objectives, which caused turmoil among the Iraqi Jews decades before the Farhud. In fact, the Zionist movement was the first beneficiary from the Farhud; they forced the Jews to emigrate from Iraq to Palestine. In spite of many viewpoints that dominated the Jewish communities, the Farhud incidents formed a historic twist, at least regarding the Jewish presence in Baghdad.*

KWYWORDS: Rashid Aali al-Gaylani, Coup D'état, Baghdad, Jews

INTRODUCTION

Events preceding the *Farhud*

Being a fundamental component of the Iraqi society, Jews lived in Iraq for thousands of years. They faced atrocities and violence against the Iraqi society, especially in late Ottoman Empire and World War I. People of Iraq in general complained these actions, and Iraqi merchants have been affected badly, especially Jews who dominated economics of Iraq. All of which led to discontent of Iraqi Jews from the Ottomans, and they started to win British to their side. The latter made use of Jews and entrusted them many professions, such as counselors, company managers, public auditors, governors, authors and translators. They could also be found in departments of railways, ports, postal, insurance, income tax and even the police and the army¹.

¹ Darwish, Salman: **Everything is Calm in the Clinic**, League of Jewish Graduates displaced from Iraq, Jerusalem, p.45. Referred to elsewhere as 'Darwish, Salman: **Everything**'

Conflict in Palestine affected conditions of Iraqi Jews. A commission has been formed of Iraqi opposition leaders on August 30th, 1929, few days after al-Buraq clashes, which included Yassin el-Hashimi and Ja'afar Abu el-Tamin. They inflamed people to protest against Zionists and British policy in Palestine². Despite the fact that Jews have not been harmed, they started to develop anxiety towards relation with Muslims, especially in terms of Palestine and Zionism. Jews had to take a declared stand against Zionism³. Iraqi authorities also banned Zionist newspaper sent from Palestine, and Jewish teachers who came from Palestine were forced out of Iraq⁴. Zionist sources said that the reason behind strained Jewish-Islamic relations in Baghdad was the visit of Jerusalem mufti to Iraq, 1932 and appointing Akram Zu'aier and Darwish el-Miqdadi –who fled to Iraq following 1929 turmoil- as officials in the teachers institute, high school and the Arab press campaign in different occasions⁵. Additionally, there have been reports on financial and Nazi media propaganda against Jews⁶. Zionist sources cited that only one Jew has been killed in Basra outside Baghdad, 1936 and no incident was reported whether in 1929 or from 1936-1940. That could be attributed –in sources' view- to the fact there were not Palestinians and Syrians outside the capital to inflame the crowds, and that Arabs did not hate Jews, so Jews lived in peace in absence of outsiders⁷.

The Zionist sources ignored that Zionist acts were key factors of strained relations between Jews and Iraqi society. For example: mail sent from Palestine was one mean to circulate Zionist thought, where messages received from the youth in 'Land of Israel' encouraged Jews who settled and worked in Iraq. Messages received from there are circulated among people and stirred nostalgia to migrate despite all difficulties⁸.

The Palestine defense committee, headed by the Iraqi parliament member Saeed Thabet, in the wake of 1936 revolution, and issued a statement denouncing Jewish crimes in Palestine. Meanwhile, Jews in Baghdad were attacked in the Jewish New Year eve, 16 September 1936, and two Jews were killed. September 17th, 1936 was declared as Palestine Day, when demonstrations walked off all mosques, two Jews were killed and one was injured⁹. It seems that someone wanted to hold Baghdad Jews responsible for Zionist crimes in Palestine.

It also seems that Iraqi Jews were asked to exonerate themselves of Zionist acts in Palestine through donating money to the Palestinians. Huge amounts have been collected from Jewish

² Documents of the British Department of State, fo. 371\20024,E 5484\94\31

³ Hayyim J. Cohen, **The Anti Jewish Farhud in Baghdad** –middle Eastern studies 1941-N01- October 1966. P. 5

⁴ Hayyim J coher ,**The Jewish of Middle East 1860-1972**, Keter press, Jerusalem ,1972,p26

⁵ Central Zionist Archive, **Report on Jews of Iraq**, 18/10/1936, 9824/S25

⁶ Central Zionist Archive, **Memo of a dialogue with Mr. Archibald Clark-Care & Mr. Rind**, February 4th, 1935, 9824/S25

⁷ Cohen, **The Jewish of Middle East**, p. 28

⁸ Central Zionist Archive, **From Reauvin Zaslini-Shiluah**, Baghdad 7/6/1934, 3234/Z4 (Hebrew)

⁹ Cohen, **The Jewish of Middle East**, p. 229

merchants, which the Zionist sources claimed they were collected against their will¹⁰, or through several articles where Jewish intellectuals attacked Zionism and its bad impact on Iraqis Jews, besides telegrams sent by Iraqis Jews all over Iraq supporting legitimate and historical right of the Palestinian people to their land, and condemning Zionist crimes¹¹. Some local newspapers called upon Jews to publish an advertisement stating they do not have any interest in Palestine. The advertisement was published, with signature of head of Jewish league rabbi Sasson Khadouri¹². The Iraqi government, in turn, threatened those causing turmoil among people, which made Jews feel safe and reopen their shops¹³.

Rashid Aali al-Gaylani coup d'état

Emir Abdul Illah became the throne guardian following death of King Ghazi, April 1939, and Rashid Aali al-Gaylani formed a new government on March 31st, 1940, which lasted until late January 1941 and succeeded by Taha al-Hashimi¹⁴. A coup d'état took place on April 1st, 1941 led by colonels of military's four divisions; Salah Eddin al-Sabbagh, Fahmi Saeed, Mahmoud Salman and Kamil Shabib. As a result, Taha al-Hashimi government was forced to resign, the throne guardian Emir Abdul Illah fled to Amman, and he was joined there by some of the resigned ministers. A provisional military government was formed and called the 'National Defense Government', and entrusted to Rashid Aali al-Gaylani. On April 10th, 1941 the Iraqi parliament convened and decided to dismiss Emir Abdul Illah and name Sharif Sharaf a throne guardian instead. The latter accepted Taha al-Hashimi government resignation and tasked Rashid Aali al-Gaylani to form a new government, which was formed two days after Iraqi parliament session¹⁵.

The new government adopted the impartiality policy and refused British troops coming into bases in Iraq, which instigated war between Iraqis and the British in early May¹⁶. Rashid Aali al-Gaylani gave his word to a delegation from the Jewish League that they will not be harmed as long as he is in office¹⁷. Despite that, Jews in Baghdad anticipated the attacks every day, but nothing happened during his short term in office¹⁸. Rashid Aali al-Gaylani, Hajj Amin el-

¹⁰ Central Zionist Archive, **Report on Jews of Iraq**, 9824/S25

¹¹ Nissim Rejwan, **The Jewish of Iraq 3000 year of History and culture**, London ,1985 , p219

¹² Central Zionist Archive, **Report on Jews of Iraq**, 9824/S25

¹³ Cohen, **The Jewish of Middle East**, p27

¹⁴ Nissim Rejwan, **The Jewish of Iraq** , p221

¹⁵ Ahmad Yaghi, Ismael: **Rashid Aali al-Gaylani Movement**, al-Talyah Press, Beirut, 1974, p110

¹⁶ Nissim Rejwan, **The Jewish of Iraq** , p221

¹⁷ Central Zionist Archive, **Report on Jews of Iraq**, 5289/S25

¹⁸ Bebe, Murchai: **Leading Secret Movement in Iraq**, Benyamin Journal, issue 4, 1981 (Hebrew), p82-84

Husseini and a number of followers left for Iran on May 29th, 1941 when they found out that the British troops are approaching Baghdad¹⁹.

The only minister in Rashid Aali al-Gaylani government who did not flee was Yunus el-Saba'awi, who called head of Jewish community Khadouri and asked him to inform Jews not to leave houses for the next three days (May 30, May 31, June 1), and to refrain from making phone calls²⁰. It was clear that el-Saba'awi intended to protect Jews against any attacks, but the Zionist sources considered that this was one of the means of elimination, citing that the Muslim and Christian shopkeepers have marked their shops with letters in the week before the *Farhud*²¹. Baghdad governor at the time Arshad el-Omari had consultations with the American consul in Baghdad to form an internal security and order committee, formed of the police general director and brigadier Noor Eddin Mahmoud. This committee met on May 30th, 1941 and the British embassy approved conditions of the truce. The day after, a truce has been signed between Iraqis and the British, with Arshad el-Omari representing Iraqis and ambassador Kanahan Cornoalis as the British representative²². After that, the internal security committee arrested el-Saba'awi, expelled him to Iran and dismantled the youth brigades, a para-military groups formed and armed by el-Saba'awi to keep internal security. The committee asked members of this organization to hand firearms they had, and gave a third order threatening with strict penalties for any anarchy²³. Jews of Baghdad expected attacks every day, but nothing happened as promised by Rashid Aali al-Gaylani during his term in office. Strikes actually started since the British reached outskirts of Baghdad, together with the guardian and his Iraqi fellows, when the capital was ruled by the provisional administration²⁴. What happened to Jews in May Revolution was not planned beforehand but was a manifestation of chaos.

Causes of the *Farhud*

When the compulsory military service in the Ottoman army was one of the factors leading to discontent of Iraqi Jews and courtship to the British, in addition to other factors that paved the way for this courtship such as crucial and violent measures taken against Iraqis during WWI, resentment of Iraqis in general towards these measures and damage incurred by Iraqi merchants, taking into account that Jews dominated economics of Iraq. The British made use of Jews and entrusted them many professions, such as counselors, company managers, public auditors,

¹⁹ **Farhud in Baghdad**, translated by Palestinian Studies Center, publisher unavailable, p40, Cohen, **The Anti Jewish**,p9

²⁰ Svil Wonra, Ben: **Report on May 1941 Incidents**, Central Zionist Archive, **Report on Jews of Iraq**, 5289/S25

²¹ Svil Wonra, Ben: **Report on May 1941 Incidents**

²² Nissim Rejwan, **Rashid Ali 95 month of war**, midstream (A monthly Jewish Review), January 1983, New York, p. 28; E-lei Kedourie, **The Sack of Basra and Farhud in Baghdad**, Arabic Political memos and other Studies, London, 1974, p. 35

²³ Central Zionist Archive, **Report on Jews of Iraq**, 5289/S25, and Bebe, Murchai: **Secret Movement**, p94

²⁴ Central Zionist Archive, **Report on Jews of Iraq**, 5289/S25, and Bebe, Murchai: **Secret Movement**, p94

governors, authors and translators. They could also be found in departments of railways, ports, postal, insurance, income tax and even the police and the army²⁵.

The British troops wanted to make use of the courtship with Jews in order to encounter Rashid Aali al-Gaylani revolution. The 'Intelligence Times' brought news about British troops arriving from Palestine to H3 area on October 15th, 1940, where 136 armed soldiers with three officers arrived in seven lorries using Ramadi road.... among them were a number of volunteers Palestine Jews, all without passports or official access documents²⁶. The British army admitted that it secretly recruited Zionist sabotage experts to execute a mission in Iraq, which was bombing Iraqi oil reserve and bring a quick end to the war, as reported by British officials.

That Jewish group consisted of leader Harifid Razbiel, who was also leader of the secret 'Argun' movement, Yaakov Maredur²⁷, in addition to another two members whose names were never disclosed as they were Iraqi origins. The group was trained to act as Arabs, and it was attacked while in Fallujah by a German fighter plane, where Razbiel was killed and buried in a British army base²⁸. Maredur said: 'we conditioned the following to the British after the job is done: we wanted their permission to arrest and return Jerusalem mufti Hajj Amin el-Husseini to Palestine to stand trial. The British reply was to do that if we could, but say nothing about us'. Maredur added that when there, it turned out they did not have any information, entrapped and that all Arab Iraqis they could trust their knowledge are afraid to step a foot out of British bases²⁹. The group was tasked with destroying oil tanks for Iraqi and German airplanes that used to bomb el-Hibbanya Base, but Rashid Aali al-Gaylani warned the British that he will arrest the sixty four employees of the British embassy in Baghdad and take them as hostages, and he will kill them if oil facilities were destroyed. The British wanted to achieve their goal through the Zionist group without jeopardizing the British, where Zionist sources tend to believe that their job in Iraq was unsuccessful. However, Maredur asserted that the group remained in Iraq for another ten days and played an important role in ending rule of Rashid Aali al-Gaylani³⁰.

The relation between British troops and Zionism, joined by little number of Iraqi Jews, sparked a reaction against Jewish community, which led to deteriorated relations between Muslims and Jews. Rumors circulated among the public that Jews are spying on Iraqis by directing British fighter planes to where Iraqi troops gather, so the public looked at Jews as responsible for Iraqi

²⁵ Darwish, Salman: **Everything**

²⁶ El-Sudani, Sadiq: **Zionist Actions in Iraq 1914-1952**, Baghdad, 1978, p141

²⁷ Yaakov Maredur: deputy leader of 'Argun', leader upon return to Palestine and abdicated leadership two years later to Menachim Begin. David Raziell, **Operation Baghdad, The Jerusalem Post Magazine**, March 8, 1991, p. 6

²⁸ David Raziell, **Operation Baghdad**, p. 7

²⁹ 'Anba'a' Weekly edition, 1/7/1983, p12

³⁰ David Raziell, **Operation Baghdad**, p. 7

army defeat³¹. These rumors were increased by wide purchase of arms by Jews, where 1000-1500 guns were sold at that time³².

Zionist sources ignored all reasons and circumstances preceding the *Farhud*, so Zionism will not be held responsible, but they depended on report of the probe committee formed by Britain allies; the guardian and the prime minister. The committee included Mohammed Tawfiq el-Naeb, Saedi Saleh and Abdullah el-Kassab, and –as expected and planned- held Rashid Aali al-Gaylani government and May revolution responsible. The report ignored the fact that the Jewish community has not been harmed a long as he was the prime minister. The committee listed main reasons for turmoil as the Nazi propaganda aired by German Commission, and Jerusalem mufti hajj Amin el-Husseini who managed Nazi propaganda in the name of Arabism and Islam, and provoked Palestinian and Syrian teachers against Jews and the British. Radio stations that broadcasted in Arabic in Germany helped circulating Nazi propaganda in Iraq, and Iraqi radio stations broadcasted reports in March and April on crime committed in Palestine, which incorporated explicit incitement against Jews³³.

However, the probe committee ignored to explain the reason why firing orders against burglars were not given in the first hours of *Farhud* but the day after. British troops and Iraqi forces supporting the guardian were at the outskirts of Baghdad, and they were ordered to remain outside the city, whereas Iraqi soldiers have been discharged and allowed into Baghdad on individual basis or in small packs, not in bigger formations³⁴. It seems that the guardian refrained from giving any early orders because he did want to offend the army known for being anti-Britain. The British sources explained that they preferred to wait until Kurdish forces supporting the guardian arrived at the city and quickly suppressed unrests, all not to leave an impression that the guardian entered the city ‘on British tanks’. However, Jews believed that the British waited on purpose so the public would direct scorn and resentment towards the escape goat; the Jews³⁵.

Return of the guardian was declared June 1, when a huge number of Jews descended to the streets to receive him. That day coincided with Joshua Day and Jews were dressing neatly, so there was an impression among Muslims that Jews were joyful and celebrating country’s defeat by the British troops³⁶. That was probably a bad coincidence, but not far from reality; the Jewish bias to monarchy as there was not better and acceptable alternative, so Jews were seen by many

³¹ Fawzi, Hisham: *Zionist Actions in Iraq during British Occupation 1941-1946*, Palestinian Affairs, issue 186, 1988, p62

³² Mayer, Yusef, *Beyond the Desert: the Leading Secret Movement in Iraq*, translated by Hilmi Zubei, Baghdad, 1975, p66

³³ S. Land Shut, *Jewish Communities in the Muslim Countries of the Middle East*, Huperion Press, N. d, P. 42

³⁴ Nissim Rejwan, *Rashid Ali's*, p. 221

³⁵ Mayer, Ester: *Policy of Jewish Agency and Israel Government upon Jewish Immigration from Iraq 1941-1950*, PhD, Tel Aviv University, 1991, p37 (Hebrew), Cohen, *The Anti Jewish*, p. 14

³⁶ Nissim Rejwan, *The Jewish of Iraq*, p. 222

people as Britain allies, a fact expressed by US ambassador in Baghdad: ‘One of the direct reasons for bedlam offense against Jews –according to Arab Muslim sources- is the cheerful attitude of Baghdad Jews, where a number of them explicitly celebrated the British triumph and could not hide their contempt and disdain to Arabs and Muslims in general’³⁷.

The Zionist sources tried to hold several circles responsible for the *Farhud*, without acknowledging responsibility themselves. However, a report given by the British department of state says: ‘after consideration and investigation, it has been concluded that responsibility for what happened (*Farhud*) is neither held by those who committed looting and murder, nor by policemen and the military who did not observe duties well, but the whole responsibility is held in fact by Balfour Declaration and Zionism, which brought bad reputation to Iraqi Jews’³⁸. It was evident that *Farhud* was not planned in advance but was the result of a Zionist-British alliance and their policy in Palestine and Iraq’.

The *Farhud*

Jews took precautionary measures and a few of them left houses on Saturday. By Sunday, they felt safe enough to get down the streets, and many of them even crossed Tigris to al-Kharkh to be as close as possible to the place where the guardian comeback celebrations will be held. Part of them was attacked on their way home, and this is where all unrests started³⁹. On Sunday June 1st, 1941 and the day after (June 2nd), residents of the capital outskirts took part in looting, and everything turned into ultimate chaos that included Jews and non-Jews⁴⁰. Zionist sources tried to overstate Jews’ losses, where they claimed that hundreds killed, thousands injured and thousands of houses were looted. The committee set by head of the Jewish League, however, acknowledged that 179 Jews killed, 450 injured and 586 stores and 911 houses were looted⁴¹.

Zionist sources held the military and the police (who were, as they put it, hate-fueled against Jews) responsible for that pogrom, whereas civilians and bedlams were responsible for most of looting. This is evidenced by the police shooting in the air in order to intimidate and confuse Jews, so the room will be open to attackers⁴². Contradiction was evident in Zionist account of events, where shooting in the first day was meant to confuse Jews, while the second day evening shooting made hooligans escape. Moreover, if all rioters and the police took part in killing and

³⁷ Luks, *Iraqi Jewish*, p. 43-44

³⁸ E-lei Kedourie, *The Sack at Basra and The Farhud in Baghdad*, Arabic Political Memos and Other Studies, London, 1974., p. 37

³⁹ Nissim Rejwan, *The Jewish of Iraq*, p. 222

⁴⁰ Sadok H. Masliyah, *Zionism in Iraq*, Middle East Studies, r2, 1989, p. 221. Mayer, Ester: *Policy of Jewish Agency*, p34

⁴¹ Sadok H. Masliyah, *Zionism in Iraq*, Middle East Studies, r2, 1989, p. 221. Mayer, Ester: *Policy of Jewish Agency*, p34

⁴² Svil Wonra, Ben, *Zionist Archive*, S28/S25

looting, the casualties would have been twice as many⁴³. It could be said that what happened was the result of chaos brought by the war and lack of law order in Baghdad, which was exploited for gaining some easy money.

It was noticed that Karradeh neighborhood, as well as some Baghdad outskirts where Jews are majority, have seen a little of what happened, some did not witness any events at all⁴⁴. Jewish houses in nearby quarters have been defended, with some exceptions, and hundreds of Jews were saved and protected throughout riots by Muslim neighbors, who sometimes sacrificed themselves or part of bodies. According to one account, the spiritual leader of Shiites in Baghdad Saeed Abu el-Hasan al-Mawsawi helped save many Jews when he ordered followers not to participate in looting and killing. He also refused to give fatwa to call upon sacred war against Jews⁴⁵, a fact reiterated by Samir el-Naqqash: 'if without chivalry of overwhelming majority of Iraqi people and defending their Jewish brothers, not a single Jew would remain alive all over Baghdad'⁴⁶.

Actually, the British forces are responsible for these incidents. They stopped, as per orders given, three miles to the west and five miles to the north of Baghdad, and maintained position according to strict orders of British officers. These orders included not to interfere with internal administrative affairs of Iraq, not to undermine Iraq independence with emphasis that British troops are not to enter Baghdad as this will endanger them, especially in narrow streets⁴⁷. This was confirmed by the British intelligence command officer Sommer Sett Dogber: 'reasons behind ignorance towards killing taking place in full view of us were part of policy adopted by the British department of state... it was evident that if we interfered and backed the guardian upon arrival, this would undermine this ally of us'⁴⁸. That terrible massacre, as Samir el-Naqqash states, has left a wound that will never heal in the hearts of Iraqi Jews. Zionist sources, however, did not put it in the right context, as not only Jews who have been looted, but also Iraqis of different religions and origins. Additionally, some government departments and official institutions were looted. Chaos was everywhere.

Aftermath of *Farhud* on Iraqi Jews

These events made Iraqi Jews open to Zionist ideology and propaganda, which failed as some could not market them properly and introduce them to Iraqis life. Despite Zionism started off moderately in early 1920s, and even though it was known to Iraqi Jews even before that, Zionism adopted actual line of action in Baghdad, especially among the youth, after anti-Jews riots⁴⁹.

⁴³ Cohen, **The Anti Jewish**, p. 30

⁴⁴ Nissim Rejwan, **Rashid Ali's**, p. 244

⁴⁵ Nissim Rejwan, **The Jewish of Iraq**, p. 224

⁴⁶ Naqqash, Smir: el-Hayat Newspaper, issue 11705, March 9th, 1995, p17

⁴⁷ E-lei Kedourie, **The Sack**, p. 20

⁴⁸ Maurice M. Sawdayee, **The Baghdad Connection**, n.d, P. 109

⁴⁹ Nissim Rejwan, **Rashid Ali's**, p. 44

Zionism exploited that atmosphere to its benefit; David Ben Gurion gave an order to the Ha Ganna and the Mosad (Israeli intelligence) to set a rescue mission for the Jewish community in Iraq. A group from the Mosad actually arrived at Baghdad, led by someone called Avigur disguised in British military uniform, with Enzo Serini who officially represented the construction company 'Solel Boneh', which worked for the British army. They were accompanied by a third one called Mayer Maredur, whose mission was to set self-defense units in Jewish quarters. The first arms shipment arrived in Baghdad from Palestine in late 1942, which included guns and small grenades hidden in buses of 'Eged' and 'Dan' companies, which transported several British military units between mandated Palestine and Iraq⁵⁰. Additionally, Zionism sent memos to London, Washington and the high commissioner demanding deportation of Iraqi Jews, and pressured Palestine government for immigration licenses⁵¹. Despite that, it's wrong to think that Zionism was widespread amongst Iraqi Jews as a whole, or to think that Zionism actions were the only and main way for expression for Jewish youth in Baghdad, or even amongst the more politically active and aware.

Zionist sources attempted to exaggerate aftermath of the *Farhud* on Baghdad Jews, and claimed they established the so-called 'salvation movement', which is a small group set by three enthusiasts in high school, but attracted a little number of followers in its short lifetime⁵². Enzo Serini, a Zionist missionary, wrote in a report of the Jewish Agency, February 1943, that 'impression left by those events on Jews was terrifying... the harmony with Arabs dream vanished in just two days, the hope that Jews could live normal life in the Iraqi Jewish quarter has gone and there has been an increasing desire to leave Iraq. If all roads were not closed, if some roads were open, all Iraqi Jews would have long gone⁵³'. The crisis was in fact severe, particularly among the educated class that wanted to integrate into Iraqi society and culture, along with cooperation with authorities. Therefore, several trends appeared amongst Iraqi Jews, among them one calls upon self-defense as long as Jews decided to stay in Iraq, by setting organizations to that end. Most of people in favor of this trend were the youth and students. There was another trend, which called upon Jews resume normal lives they used to live before, as what happened was nothing but casual and odd incident that became something from the past, most of people adopting this theory were the elderly⁵⁴.

Many Jews joined the secret Communist Party of Iraq, especially 1942 onwards, as Jewish youth considered it as their savior. They thought that assuming power by the communist party will bring equality and freedom, so some Jews joined and became active members⁵⁵. They were not

⁵⁰ Itan, Steve: *An Eye on Tel Aviv*, an Israeli intelligence document, translated by Mutawe' el-Safadi, Beirut, p78

⁵¹ Mayer, *Policy of Jewish Agency*, p66

⁵² Masliyah, *Zionism in Iraq*, p. 221

⁵³ Moshe Gate, *The Connection Between the Bombing in Baghdad and the Emigration of the Jews From Iraq 1950-1951*, Middle Eastern Studies, No.3, 1988, P. 312

⁵⁴ Bebe, *Secret Movement*, p95. Nissim Rejwan, *The Jewish of Iraq*, p. 230

⁵⁵ Masliyah, *Zionism in Iraq*, p. 223

convinced that Zionism was the right path to follow, so they formed anti-Zionism leagues and secretly cooperated with communists. The most famous of these was the 'Zionism Fighting League', established 1945 by 25 Jewish government officials working in railways department⁵⁶. Following the *Farhud* and fear it would occur again, the geographic distribution of Jews in Baghdad has been significantly reshuffled. El-Aathamya quarter has been emptied of Jews, who left it and re-gathered in southern Battawein quarter of Baghdad and reached el-Karradeh. Jewish ghettos scattered throughout Muslim quarters started to disappear gradually⁵⁷, and a few Jews left for India, Iran and Palestine, but most of them returned in 1942 when political situation in Iraq settled, and the economic situation unprecedentedly improved in all kinds of business⁵⁸. Commerce has flourished and prices increased on daily basis, with profit margins that increased accordingly.

Prosperity witnessed by Jews due to years of war diverted the attention from existing suffering and pessimistic vision to possible risks that will happen, so Jews, especially elderly, have forgotten about what happened in 1941, and became fully busy with their daily businesses⁵⁹.

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⁵⁶ Sawdayee, **The Baghdad Connection**, P. 127

⁵⁷ Mayer: **Beyond the Desert**,, p95

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