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Welcome

Almost exactly a month since the Iraq election the results so far are broken down by party. It may help you to refer to issue 55 for the background of the various parties involved.

Ariel Sharon's stroke on Jan. 4th came a day before a scheduled operation. Israel's volatile politics had earlier been stirred by his breaking from Likud to form a new party, Kadima. Now the future of this party is uncertain without its leading figure. Inside, we include a review of Sharon's life and background to his career.

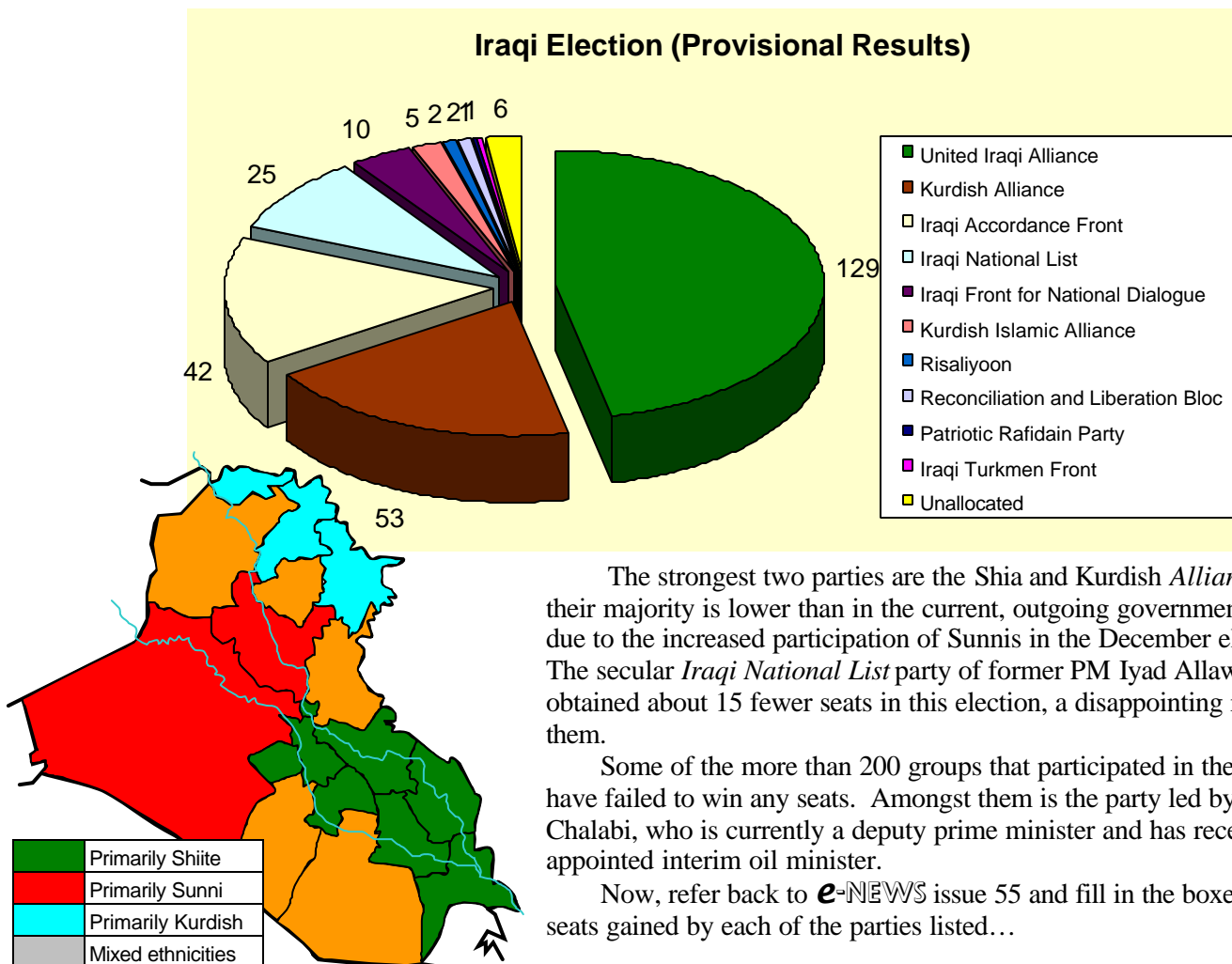
Email your responses to pkclark@pmbx.net & check the web for back issues.

Iraqi Election Results

Counting of ballots has continued since the Dec. 15th election, and most of the seats have been allocated on the basis of votes counted so far. Six seats still remain vacant, whilst counting and verification continues on the remaining boxes.

Seats provisionally break down as follows:

Iraqi Election (Provisional Results)



The strongest two parties are the Shia and Kurdish *Alliances*, but their majority is lower than in the current, outgoing government. This is due to the increased participation of Sunnis in the December election. The secular *Iraqi National List* party of former PM Iyad Allawi has obtained about 15 fewer seats in this election, a disappointing result for them.

Some of the more than 200 groups that participated in the election have failed to win any seats. Amongst them is the party led by Ahmad Chalabi, who is currently a deputy prime minister and has recently been appointed interim oil minister.

Now, refer back to **e-NEWS** issue 55 and fill in the boxes for the seats gained by each of the parties listed...

Ariel Sharon, etc.

Sharon was born in British Mandate Palestine in 1928. Having joined the underground military organization, Haganah (inset), he fought in the war for independence in 1948-49. He was a platoon commander during the second Battle of Latrun.

After independence Sharon was leader of the newly-formed Unit 101, a special forces unit that conducted raids against Arab *fedayeen*. It was criticized for its acts of violence against civilians, including a 1953 reprisal raid led by Sharon on Qibya, in which 60 Arab civilians were killed.

The Israeli army, the IDF, was formed from Haganah after the war, and Sharon continued to serve, rising to the rank of Brigadier-General. In the 6-Day War of June, 1967, Sharon commanded a military division. It was during this war that Israel captured the West Bank and Gaza – as well as the Sinai and the Golan Heights.

In 1973 Sharon was one of the founders of Likud, which rose to success after the initially weak response of the Israeli military in the Yom Kippur war. During the 25 years that followed he occupied various ministries under a number of Prime Ministers, including the position of Minister of Defense in 1982, during which time he led the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In 1983 an Israeli commission found him indirectly responsible for the massacre of hundreds of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in Lebanon.

He took over control of Likud after Benjamin Netanyahu lost the 1996 election, and succeeded Ehud Barak as Prime Minister in 2001, after the failed Camp David talks of 2000 and the beginning of the 'Al Aqsa' Intifada.

After strong resistance to his withdrawal from Gaza from right-wing members of Likud, Sharon left the party he had begun, and formed a new party, Kadima, with which he intended to fight the upcoming elections scheduled for March 28.

Haganah was initially a paramilitary group that was organized during the early 1920s to protect the kibbutzim. After the 1929 riots in which 133 Jews were killed in Jerusalem and Hebron the Haganah increased its presence and organization, and by the time of the 1936 uprising it could count on as many as 50,000, including reservists. In this structure it cooperated with the British administration in policing the Jewish areas, and defending the Iraqi petroleum pipeline from Arab sabotage.

The **Irgun Tsvei Leumi**, (*Irgun*, or *Etzel* in Hebrew) split from Haganah after 5 Jews were killed at a Kibbutz in 1937, and began a series of attacks against Arab targets. Its members actively resisted British rule, recognizing the growing British sympathies with the Arab population – and desire to restrict Jewish immigration. Irgun was seen by the British and many Jews as a terrorist organization.

When Irgun declared a truce in their anti-British operations in 1940-43, the **Stern Gang** (or *Lehi*) formed an splinter group, which continued their activities against British interests. The future Israeli Prime Minister, **Yitzhak Shamir** was part of this splinter group and actually led Lehi after the founder, Avraham Stern, was killed in 1942.

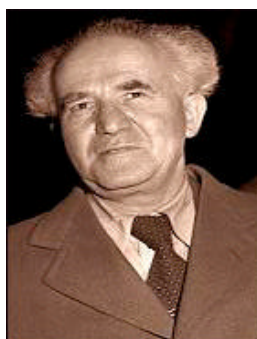
In November 1944 Lehi under Shamir assassinated *Lord Moyne*, the British resident official in Cairo at the time. After this assassination the Jewish Agency condemned them and other Jewish paramilitary groups as terrorists.

It was the Irgun, led by **Menachim Begin**, that bombed the *King David Hotel*, a British HQ, in July 1946, killing 91 people. Irgun and Lehi cooperated in acts against the British and Arabs between 1946 and 1948, including the attack on *Deir Yassin* that led to the killing of up to 254 Arab villagers, primarily women and the elderly. It was reports this attack, more than any others, that led Arabs to flee the advancing Jewish forces for the security of other West Bank population centers and Transjordan.

In 1948 Begin was on board a ship transporting arms for the Jewish war effort, when the ship was sunk on the orders of **David Ben Gurion**. The commander of the force firing on the *Altalena* was Yitzhak Rabin.

Another branch of the Haganah, the **Palmach**, was established in 1941 by cooperation with the British to resist the Nazi threat in Palestine. After the British ordered the Palmach disbanded in 1942 (after the victory at El Alamein removed the threat from North Africa) the organization instead went undercover, dispersing among the kibbutzim. After the war the Palmach conducted raids against British installations – roads, rail, bridges, police stations – actions that contributed to the British decision to relinquish the Mandate in 1948. **Yitzhak Rabin** served in the Palmach between 1941 and the 1948 war for independence.

In 1948 the Lehi group assassinated the UN representative, *Count Bernadotte*. This Swedish aristocrat had earlier assisted thousands of Jews in evading Nazi death camps during WW II.



Ben Gurion



Yitzhak Shamir



Menachim Begin



Yitzhak Rabin



Ariel Sharon

Islamic Interface – Dhimmi

Islam erupted from the Arabian peninsula during the 7th Century. By 637, after the defeat of the Byzantine army at Yarmouk, Jerusalem had been captured. In the years that followed Muslim armies conquered territory in Asia (Kabul, 670; Bukhara, 674), North Africa (Egypt, 659; Morocco, 772) the Mediterranean (Cyprus, 647; Rhodes, 672), and Europe (Spain, 711).

Much of Islamic jurisprudence was formulated after the century-long wave of expansion, but seeks to explain the Quranic authority for the different ways that conquered peoples were treated. *Jihad* itself has always been seen by Islam as a divine ordinance, though, as al-Qayrawani wrote in the tenth century: “it is preferable not to begin hostilities with the enemy before having invited the latter to embrace the religion of Allah except where the enemy attacks first. They have the alternative of either converting to Islam or paying the poll tax (*jizya*), short of which war will be declared against them.”

The fate of those defeated by Muslim forces varied: if they converted they were allowed to keep their property; if they sued for peace they were obligated to pay a large sum, and renew it each year; if they resisted then they were either killed or enslaved. As has already been mentioned, the legal commentaries were after the fact, and in many cases the offer of conversion to Islam was not made available until the conquest had run its course. This allowed Muslim coffers to be continually replenished with booty from the captured cities

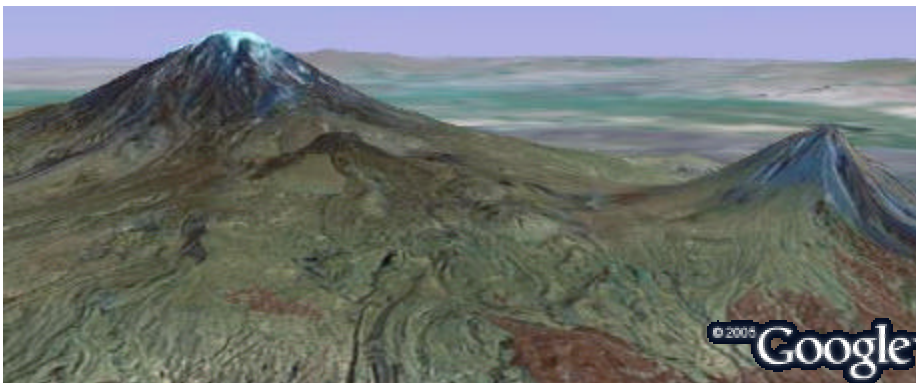
When other *people of the book* (Jews or Christians) were conquered they were allowed to remain in subjugation within what was now Muslim territory, but payment of the poll tax, *Jizya*, was enforced. This placed these people under the protection of Islam law, and they became *Dhimmi*, second-class citizens within the Muslim world.

One of the consequences of *dhimmitude* was that the Dhimmi's land was appropriated by the Muslim ruler. They were, however, allowed to occupy it, so long as their rulers did not choose it for themselves. The discriminatory nature of *dhimmitude* is evidenced in the lack of legal recourse by Christians (or Jews) when accused in court by a Muslim. Similarly, their testimony could not be accepted in court against a Muslim. Hence it was not infrequent that they would be unjustly accused, and thereby deprived of their property; or victimized and unable to bring a case against the perpetrator if he was a Muslim. Such a situation is still common in Muslim countries.

Dhimmis were unable to defend themselves, in case they injured a Muslim in the process, in which case they would lose their lives. Additionally, they were forbidden from carrying weapons. Frequently populations of Dhimmi were expelled from the towns in which they were living, and deported to more remote, harsh environments. A recurring example is that suffered by the Armenian Christians, who were deported from Julfa in 1604 by Shah Abbas, and then from Isfahan by his successor, Abbas II. In 1735 a large number were deported from the Ararat region by Nadir Shah. During the First World War again a large number of Armenians were massacred in eastern Turkey in the process of being moved from the volatile eastern border region.

[Some of the information in this article is derived from a 2002 lecture by Bat Ye'or. See also: http://www.dhimmi.com/dhimmi_overview.htm]

Next: *Life as a Dhimmi, yesterday and today*



Mt. Ararat is located at the eastern tip of Turkey. It is of volcanic origin, with a second large peak and a number of smaller mounds. The picture is facing North with Armenia in the background. Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, is within sight of the summit, though border restrictions would prevent access from there.



