



MAR SHIMUN: AN INJUSTICE CORRECTED

LAUDS BAKR AND REVOLUTIONARY GOV'T FOR RESTORING HIS IRAQI CITIZENSHIP

*'BAGHDAD OBSERVER' INTERVIEWS A
40-YEAR-IN-EXILE PATRIARCH*

**CALLS MARCH 11 MANIFESTO A
GREAT ACT OF STATESMANSHIP**

SPEAKS OF HIS PLANS AFTER CONCLUSION OF HIS FORMAL VISIT

HIS HOLINESS MAR ESHAÏ SHIMUN XXIII, CATHOLICOS PATRIARCH OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST, WHO RETURNED TO HIS BELOVED HOMETLAND OF IRAQ RECENTLY AFTER SPENDING 37 YEARS IN EXILE, IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH "THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER" HAILED THE STEP TAKEN BY THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ IN RESTORING TO HIS HOLINESS THE IRAQI CITIZENSHIP WHICH WAS STRIPPED OF HIM BY THE MONARCHIC REGIME.

At the onset of the question-and-answer interview, His Holiness was very pleased to answer the following questions put to him:

After 40 years in exile Your Holiness stepped on the soil of revolutionary Iraq on a beautiful sunny day. How did you feel when your eyes fell on the big crowd of people thronged on the airport balcony ecstatically applauding. How do you compare this picture with that of tumultuous ovation given by the masses when you appeared with President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr on the balcony of the Presidential Palace?

The great spontaneous reception which was accorded us by the thousands of Iraqi Assyrians was the release of a tension which had been building up for a period of thirtyseven years. This was further evidence during the church service and by the emotional outburst from the thousands of Assyrians as we left the church. The tumultuous applause at the Presidential Palace constituted the climax of this historic occasion in the history of the Assyrian community and the Church of the East. It was an uncontrolled expression of gratitude by the great multitude to His Excellency Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, President of the Republic of Iraq,

